

STATE PERFORMANCE PLAN / ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: PART B

for STATE FORMULA GRANT PROGRAMS under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

**For reporting on
FFY 2022**

Vermont



PART B DUE February 1, 2024

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202**

Introduction

Instructions

Provide sufficient detail to ensure that the Secretary and the public are informed of and understand the State's systems designed to drive improved results for students with disabilities and to ensure that the State Educational Agency (SEA) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) meet the requirements of IDEA Part B. This introduction must include descriptions of the State's General Supervision System, Technical Assistance System, Professional Development System, Stakeholder Involvement, and Reporting to the Public.

Intro - Indicator Data

Executive Summary

The office of the Secretary for the Vermont Agency of Education (VT AOE) provides direction to the Student Support Services Division which is composed of the Special Education, Vermont Multi-Tiered System of Support (VTmtss), and Early Education Teams. These teams work in collaboration to provide leadership, oversight, technical assistance, and support for building capacity at the Local Education Agency (LEA) level to meet state and federal requirements for Special Education rules and regulations.

The VT AOE Special Education Team is comprised of a State Director, an Assistant State Director, six program staff, a part-time phone support provider, a Program Monitoring Manager, and a Monitoring Coordinator. The team provides the field with technical assistance, professional development, compliance oversight, and continuous improvement support. The Special Education Monitoring staff review ongoing regulatory compliance submissions and addresses noncompliance with the field utilizing integrated monitoring activities. Issues, concerns, and findings are shared with the Special Education Programming staff, who identify and design universal, targeted, and intensive technical assistance (TA) in response to statewide LEA needs. From November 1st of 2022 until December of 2023, the VT AOE and Special Education Team was without a Special Education Director. This period includes the data collection, analysis and majority of the writing of the FFY2022 SPPAPR. During this time, the responsibilities of the State Director of Special Education have been assumed by the director of the Student Services Division and the Interim State Director. Additionally, Vermont's State Board of Education alongside the Governor is searching for the next Education Secretary. The position has been filled by the deputy secretary as the interim secretary since April of 2023. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) was without a division director since mid-February of 2023 and hired for this position in November of 2023. DMAD has also been without a Data Deputy Directors since February 2023. The VT AOE is actively searching to fill any vacant positions.

VT AOE Special Education Team meets weekly to share information and resolve problems of practice related to supporting LEAs, parents/families, and other community partners and organizations. In addition to the weekly meetings, the Team meets monthly with representatives from other teams/divisions at VT AOE including Data, Fiscal, Early Learning, Assessment, and the Interagency Coordinator (responsible for residential/independent school placement concerns for students with disabilities). These meetings follow the same format as the weekly Team meetings and include topics that span multiple divisions with these cross-team discussions leading to collaborative solutions and action items. The team also reviews patterns and trends across multiple data sources, to drive priority setting, and spotlight current and anticipated concerns within the field during Data Retreats. The Federal Reporting Group under the Data Management and Analysis Division hosts a IDEA Data Meeting twice a month with the special education team to review data related to SPPAPR Indicators, Significant Disproportionality and data sources related to students with disabilities.

The Special Education Team is also actively engaged in collaboration with agency-wide programmatic activities such as reviewing data related to Vermont's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan, participating in school and LEA-level continuous improvement conversations, serving on internal teams that coordinate responses to state law and policy, advising on independent school rate setting and multi-tiered system of supports, as well as spearheading technical assistance and supports related to IDEA B requirements.

Members of the VT AOE Special Education Team serve on councils, workgroups and engage with stakeholders throughout the state. As part of the work with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Hire Ability, members serve on the State Rehabilitation Council and State Core Team. Two agency representatives serve on the autism workgroup in conjunction with the Vermont department of health and the University of Vermont, representing Early Education Special Education and K-12/Age 22 Special Education. In collaboration with Vermont's designated agencies that serve students, members also serve on the Vermont Interagency Coordinating Council, Governor's Councils for the Employment of People with Disabilities, Developmental Disabilities Council, Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired State Rehabilitation Council, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Council including participating in a school aged-subcommittee, and Vermont Assistive Technology Council. Members of the special education team also serve on the State Advisory Council to ensure that the Agency of Education and Special Education team are leading to innovation, creating efficient processes, increasing success for Vermont students with disabilities.

As a result of Vermont's Act 173, all Special Education Rule changes went into effect July 1, 2023. VT AOE offered a series of supports which can be found on the rule changes website and includes webinars, guidance documents, and tools detailing expectations and impacts for education in Vermont, which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/rule-changes>. The VT AOE also hosted webinars with the parent training center, Vermont Family Network, regarding the rule changes to parents and families and will continue to provide support to LEAs regarding these rule changes through ongoing webinars and guidance documents and individualized technical assistance.

The lasting effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent statewide staffing shortages have emphasized the need for our continued partnership with CEEDAR Center, Vermont Mentoring Special Educators for Excellence (VMSEE) and OSEP-funded technical assistance centers regarding recruitment and retention of educators and post-pandemic data collections. According to U.S. Dept of Ed Raise the Bar report (<https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/eliminating-educator-shortages-compensation-preparation-leadership>) as of July 2023, local government education employment in Vermont remains 9.6% below pre-pandemic levels, the second lowest state. According to VT AOE's Special Education Personnel survey, in SY23, the number of vacancies among special education teachers in Vermont was 2.79 times the pre-pandemic level, resulting in a vacancy rate of 5.50%. In addition, the number of educators pursuing an alternate route for special education certification was 1.43 times the pre-pandemic level, which has resulted in 13.63% positions either vacant or filled with new and inexperienced special education teachers.

In July and December of 2023 historic flooding affected many families and communities throughout Vermont. Many school buildings and government buildings were deemed inoperable during this time. While two Vermont United States Post Service offices serving a few of the larger school districts were inoperable, the VT AOE delayed sending a second mailer for the parent involvement survey (Indicator 8) to provide time for LEAs, communities, and post offices to reorganize processes for mail distribution. The VT AOE will continue to provide support to the LEAs affected by this flooding during the 2023-2024 school year. For FFY2022 there were no other data collection issues due to the flooding, VT AOE will continue to investigate any potential issues with data collection for FFY2023.

VT AOE maintains a website dedicated to special education services which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education>

Additional information related to data collection and reporting

As part of a comprehensive and robust General Supervision System, our data inform the work of the VT AOE Special Education Team. The data contained in this SPP/APR were obtained through the following collection methods:

Note that some indicators utilize data from more than one source and are listed multiple times.

Formal Data Collections:

- DC#06/Fall Student Census (Indicators 9, and 10)
- DC#04/End of Year Census (Indicator 4. Some indicator 3 inputs.)
- Child Count (Indicators 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 14. Some indicator 3 inputs.)
- Child Count Exiting (Indicators 1, 2, 7, and 14)

Surveys:

- Parent Involvement Survey (Indicator 8)
- Post-Secondary Outcomes Survey (Indicator 14)

Other Data Sources:

- Monitoring Cycle (Indicators 11, 12, 13)
- Assessment Extracts (Indicator 3)
- Dispute Records (Indicators 15 & 16)
- Fidelity of teaching mathematics practices (Indicator 17)
- Mathematics instruction Professional development feedback (Indicator 17)
- Coaching impact for participating LEAs (Indicator 17)

There continues to be collaborative and interactive meetings among the VT AOE Special Education Team and members of Data, Finance, and other VT AOE areas to understand data sources, and analyze patterns and trends to determine unmet needs, targeted technical assistance, need for policy and/or guidance, and improvement activities at the VT AOE and LEA levels. Examples of this work include the Data meeting, the SPP/APR Weekly Work Sessions, Bi-Weekly IDEA Data Work Group.

Number of Districts in your State/Territory during reporting year

51

General Supervision System:

The systems that are in place to ensure that the IDEA Part B requirements are met (e.g., integrated monitoring activities; data on processes and results; the SPP/APR; fiscal management; policies, procedures, and practices resulting in effective implementation; and improvement, correction, incentives, and sanctions).

Vermont Agency of Education's (VT AOE) General Supervision System reflects a commitment to providing leadership and oversight, to ensure all students have equitable access to educational opportunities. This system frames compliance and improvement conversations with LEAs, with the goal of ensuring that every student receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The purpose of our general supervision system is to ensure that LEAs appropriately implement the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and Vermont State Board of Education Rules pertaining to Special Education, improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Special Education Program Monitoring utilizes an escalated system in response to LEAs that receive findings of noncompliance. Each LEA is assigned to one of three publicly listed cohorts, resulting in mandatory cyclic monitoring once every three years. Data is collected within a state-developed monitoring system utilizing a secure file transfer system. Cyclic monitoring activities open each September, with submissions due in February of that same school year. Reviews of cyclic monitoring data occur from February through March, with monitoring reports provided during May. Monitoring reports contain an overview of each component of data submitted and report to LEAs whether the data is compliant or noncompliant. A detailed review of data is provided in specific review sheets, allowing the LEA to examine exactly where findings of noncompliance occurred. The data from these processes are used to inform the LEA Special Education Determination as well as the SPP/APR.

In addition, VT AOE reserves the right to conduct monitoring activities for any LEA at any time, independent of the state's monitoring cycle or risk assessment results, if information made available or presented to VT AOE reveals the need for additional investigation or support. VT AOE will continually analyze available data and information (including SPP/APR data, monitoring data, dispute resolution data, call center data, information from other departments at the state agency, and other mechanisms that relate to IDEA implementation) to consider whether an area of concern requires targeted monitoring and/or other due diligence activities.

LEAs that do not demonstrate 100% compliance during cyclic monitoring are escalated to mandatory selective monitoring during September through November of the following school year. A review of data submitted during selective monitoring occurs in December, and selective monitoring reports are provided during January.

LEAs that do not demonstrate 100% compliance during selective monitoring are then escalated into mandatory targeted monitoring during January through June. A review of data submitted during targeted monitoring occurs in June, and targeted monitoring reports are provided no later than the end of July.

LEAs that do not demonstrate 100% compliance during targeted monitoring are then identified as having long-standing noncompliance and continue to be placed in mandatory targeted monitoring during September through November of the following school year, and then again during January through June of that school year, if applicable. This pattern continues until the LEA has been verified as correcting 100% of findings of individual noncompliance and that systemic noncompliance has been corrected.

In selective and targeted monitoring and subsequent iterations of targeted monitoring, LEAs are required to correct each individual finding of noncompliance and demonstrate that systemic noncompliance is not occurring. VT AOE verifies updated data. Further information regarding VT AOE's General Supervision System for Special Education can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-vt-general-supervision-system-for-special-education.pdf>

VT AOE's differentiated monitoring process determines areas of an LEA's special education practices that require change in fiscal and program

management and ensures that students in each LEA receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE). LEAs can expect a variety of technical assistance and support based on LEA special education determination (LSED) status, potential findings resulting from monitoring activities, and proactively as part of their engagement in routine monitoring activities.

Through the LEA Special Education Determination report, the VT AOE deploys Collaborative Improvement Plans or Corrective Action Plans for LEAs in Needs Intervention, aimed at grounding improvement activities from factors derived using root cause analyses. This work involves the collaboration of Special Education Team, Finance, Data, and Legal utilizing the other components of the general supervisions system such as integrated monitoring, targeted technical assistance, and effective policies.

The VT AOE's finance team monitors expenditures and updates and revises policies, procedures, and practices that support monitoring for the distribution and use of funds. Uniform guidance is disseminated to the field; dedicated staff provide technical assistance to LEAs and manage grants through VT AOE's central Grants Management System (GMS). The VT AOE uses a risk assessment tool to assess subrecipients. VT AOE Finance staff utilizes monitoring activities such as desk audits, the collection of assurances, program reviews, single audit reviews, desk reviews, frequent financial reporting, and site visits, to verify appropriate expenditure of funds. To make this determination, fiscal and program teams consider variables including risk assessments, the complexity of program requirements, and the scope of the review. During reviews, VT AOE request LEA's fiscal or programmatic documentation, to determine that fiscal spending aligns with funding restrictions and the grant agreement. Findings are communicated to subrecipients, which are required to address noncompliance through corrective actions tracked to completion by the finance team. Final fiscal reports are shared with the Special Education Team. A designated staff member meets weekly with the Director of Special Education, biweekly with a combination of Special Education Team and Data Team staff, and monthly with the entire Special Education team.

Data for many Special Education Team activities are collected, verified, and reported by the VT AOE's Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD). DMAD members responsible for Special Education data include a Federal and Special Education Data Director and two IDEA Data Analysts. DMAD and Special Education Team members collaborate on every indicator to refine data collection, reporting, and analytic practices and evaluate the impact of technical assistance.

Dispute Resolution is led by the VT AOE Legal Division, which works in collaboration with Special Education Team staff to offer a mediation and due process hearing system, and an administrative state complaint process. The Legal Division reviews dispute resolution data to identify issues related to LEA performance, and to inform monitoring and technical assistance activities. FFY2022's improvements to the dispute resolution process include: Due process decisions and timely web postings to our dispute resolution webpage and improvements to the administrative complaint form, including expanding the library of languages that the form is offered in online. Looking ahead to FFY2023, we are looking at capacity building for the other branches of dispute resolution and working with Student Support Services to clarify the role of dispute resolution as one component within the structure of VT AOE's general supervision and monitoring duty.

Additional information on the VT AOE's general supervision and monitoring activities may be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/general-supervision-and-monitoring-system>

Technical Assistance System:

The mechanisms that the State has in place to ensure the timely delivery of high quality, evidence-based technical assistance and support to LEAs.

The VT AOE Special Education Program staff collaborate with Monitoring staff at least weekly if not more frequently, sharing patterns and trends occurring in the field. Program staff offer direct support to the field, focusing their work on unmet LEA needs, and sustaining best practices for children and youth with disabilities. Additionally, Program staff participate in on-site monitoring teams or support data/evidence reviews and Monitoring staff assist in the provision of technical assistance as appropriate. In partnership with the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, the program staff meets with special education directors in a regional monthly meeting to provide direct support. The VT AOE Early Childhood Special Education Team is comprised of special education specialists who also reside on the Early Education team and provide ongoing technical assistance and support throughout the state to all public and private early childhood programs.

Findings of noncompliance identified during technical assistance are shared with the Program Monitoring Team as soon as they are identified. Once noncompliance is identified, a written notification is sent to the LEA within three months. This includes citation of the requirement(s) the LEA has demonstrated noncompliance with and a requirement that the LEA correct the noncompliance as soon as possible, and in no case more than one year after the date of the notification. Each LEA is notified in writing when correction of noncompliance has been verified, no later than three months after VT AOE reviews the LEA's submitted data demonstrating correction.

Close collaboration between the VT AOE Special Education Team is common with multiple divisions and teams at VT AOE. Collaboration is not limited to the Finance and Data Divisions, but relationships have been developed with representatives of the other teams in the Student Support Division (Early Education, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support), the Federal Student Education Programs Division (Title funding staff members and Interagency Coordinator), the Education Quality Division (independent school coordinator, licensing and school improvement specialists), and the Student Pathways Division (general education staff). The VT AOE Special Education Team is an active part of the cross-team and cross-division collaboratives in order to ensure that technical assistance and professional learning provided in support of IDEA and state rules and regulations are aligned across state initiatives. These activities are designed to ensure access, opportunity, and equity with the goal of improving student outcomes.

The VT AOE Special Education Team provides a range of professional development and technical assistance activities to LEAs, professionals, and families with the intention of improving student outcomes and compliance with IDEA. Technical assistance and professional learning are provided by the special education program team staff at three levels of engagement, universal, targeted, and intensive.

Universal resources are available to all LEAs, professional staff and families. Universal TA is based on statewide priorities identified through quarterly data meetings, input from the field, and OSEP communications. Resources for the field can be found posted on our website at <https://education.vermont.gov/special-education-resources-special-educators-and-administrators>. Technical assistance requests and professional development are found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development> including a resource library.

Targeted Technical Assistance is offered individually to LEAs based on the results of a targeted monitoring activity, performance on Local Special Education Determinations (LSED), participation in SSIP, or performance on other federal program requirements, which generally require short-term engagement between LEA and the VT AOE Special Education Team to improve student outcomes. Targeted technical assistance is also offered when LEAs complete the Professional Development request form found at <https://education.vermont.gov/webform/special-education-professional-development-request-form>. The specific nature of the technical assistance will depend on the urgency or severity of identified need but could include remote or in-person coaching, targeted workshops, webinars, and office hours.

Intensive technical assistance is required for a small number of LEAs based on the results of noncompliance and/or performance issues supported by multiple data sources, often as a result of a targeted monitoring activity or the annual assignment of Needs Intervention/Needs Substantial Intervention status or from an administrative compliant and due process hearing. Intensive TA may require sustained and in-depth engagement between LEA and VT AOE Special Education Team to improve student outcomes. These supports are coordinated and/or delivered to the LEA by special education and extended special education staff members as part of a LEA improvement or corrective action plan. The specific nature of the intensive technical assistance depends on the urgency or severity of identified need but could include remote or in-person coaching, targeted workshops, webinars, and office hours. TA plans are developed for LEAs that have the need and capacity to engage in an ongoing, deep systems transformation endeavor with VT AOE. This category of TA is designed to result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased LEA capacity and/or improved outcomes at multiple systems levels. Any LEA with a Needs Intervention or Needs Substantial Intervention Determination from VT AOE is offered Intensive TA, which is customized for each LEA and described in a collaboratively developed Intensive TA Plan. Additionally, the State may also engage in Intensive TA based on an intake process that includes collaboratively assessing with the LEA, their needs and readiness to engage in Intensive TA.

Professional Development System:

The mechanisms the State has in place to ensure that service providers have the skills to effectively provide services that improve results for children with disabilities.

The VT AOE Special Education Team reviews data and findings from integrated monitoring activities, field reviews and site visits; reflects on statewide feedback collected informally and through regional events like regional meetings with LEA Special Education Directors; evaluates technical assistance requests; and conducts research on national trends in special education. Based on these data, the team outlines a plan for professional development and establishes a calendar of implementation and data-based decision making. Throughout the process, there is an emphasis on utilizing principles of implementation science with respect to program design and evaluation.

The AOE has a list of vetted TA providers, and when posting a request for proposals (RFP) providers are required to submit documentation of successful work being sought, as well as credentials. In many cases there is direct observation of provision of services to ensure evidence-based practices are consistent.

VT AOE professional development offerings for FFY2022 included but are not limited to:

- Webinars, documents, guidance and office hours related to Vermont's special education rule changes
- Statewide training on specific indicators
- IEP Goal Writing
- PBIS and Social Emotional Supports
- Universal Resources Website Library
- Restraint and Seclusion, and Disproportionality
- Professional Learning Sessions on Discipline for students with disabilities
- Inclusive Practices
- Universal Design for Learning
- Multi-State Alternate Assessments trainings and office hours
- Requirements for Post-Secondary Transition and Goal Writing
- Special Education Presentation to Multilingual Office Hour

The final portion of the special education rule changes were formally adopted in July of 2023. Several resources have been released to support LEAs with implementation. In the spring of 2023, special education directors received weekly newsletter from technical assistance that offered guidance around each section of the rule changes. These weekly communications, titled "TA Tuesdays," can be found on the VT AOE website: "Archive: TA Tuesdays" (<https://education.vermont.gov/special-education-recent-guidance-news-and-events>). Additionally, live office hours were held monthly on the following topics, in coordination with other teams under the student support services division: General Educators and the Impact of Special Education Rule Changes (in coordination with VTmtss team), CEIS Funds (in coordination with the special education finance team), Special Education Rule Changes and Functional Skills, Special Education Rule Changes and Adverse Effect, Special Education Rule Changes and Specific Learning Disabilities, and Special Education Rule Changes and Specially Designed Instruction. The presentations from each live office hour were recorded into webinars. Webinars and slide decks for each session can be found on the VT AOE website: Special Education Rule Changes (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/rule-changes>).

The VT AOE partnered with VTmtss team to provide intensive TA to districts, ranging from our largest district revising its system in response to monitoring findings to co-presenting on the intersectionality of MTSS and special education. The VT AOE provides supports, leadership, oversight, and expertise for the Vermont Positive Behavioral Intensive Supports (VTPBIS) Summer Institute in June and our VTPBIS Annual Forum in August. VT AOE also partners with HireAbility (Vermont's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Vermont's Assistive Technology Program to ensure that service providers have the skills to effectively provide services that improve results for children with disabilities.

The VT AOE works with OSEP-funded national Technical Assistance Providers to inform and improve our practices. VT AOE receives feedback on guidance, tools, and materials prior to statewide dissemination. OSEP-funded national providers deliver technical assistance to the VT AOE through facilitating large stakeholder meetings, conducting stakeholder input activities, and compiling and analyzing input. The centers and staff provide insight on special education data collection and analysis and provide other technical assistance as needed. From the technical assistance provided to the VT AOE from these OSEP-funded providers, VT AOE has created guidance documents, analyzed data and provided technical assistance to local education agency staff. These OSEP-funded national providers include but are not limited to National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), Center for IDEA Fiscal reporting (CIFR), IDEA Data Center (IDC), IRIS, Institute of Education Science (IES), Early Childhood Personnel Center, National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSY), and the National Center on Intensive Intervention. VT AOE has been a member of the Results-Based Accountability Cross-State Learning Collaborative and the Evidence Based Practice Cross Learning Collaborative through NCSI. VT AOE also attend the SSIP Data Quality Peer Group hosted by IDC and IDC's monthly Technical Assistance calls.

Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the VT AOE began work with Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) and AmeriCorps. In 2021, the VT AOE implemented an alternate pathway to licensure in special education which requires: (1) A minimum of a bachelor's degree, (2) A passing score on the Praxis II assessment for special education within 120 days of issuance of the license, (3) An assigned a mentor who has agreed to participate in an AOE-sponsored mentor training titled Vermont Mentoring Special Educators for Excellence (VMSEE), (4) Completion of an AOE-identified introductory series of special education modules, and (5) Admittance to an approved pathway to special education licensure. In SY21-22, 29 candidates began this program; of those, 4 candidates obtained licensure, 5 are awaiting peer review and 7 are continuing the pathway with a completion date of Spring 2024. In SY22-23, 62 candidates began this program with an expected completion date of

Spring 2024; 4 candidates have already obtained licensure through this pathway. In SY23-24, 86 candidates began this pathway with an expected completion date of Spring 2025. This alternate pathway is continuing to grow with higher education and LEA partnerships, with plans for improving and expanding our efforts as more teachers pursue licensure in special education.

Stakeholder Engagement:

The mechanisms for broad stakeholder engagement, including activities carried out to obtain input from, and build the capacity of, a diverse group of parents to support the implementation activities designed to improve outcomes, including target setting and any subsequent revisions to targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Apply stakeholder engagement from introduction to all Part B results indicators (y/n)

YES

Number of Parent Members:

44

Parent Members Engagement:

Describe how the parent members of the State Advisory Panel, parent center staff, parents from local and statewide advocacy and advisory committees, and individual parents were engaged in setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.

Parent Membership of the State Advisory Panel has more than doubled since the last reporting period. Parent members of the Panel engaged with other Panel members and AOE staff in looking at current and historical data related to the SPP/APR. This elicited the request for additional data sources and spurred recommendations from the Panel on areas of unmet need and suggestions for improvement efforts. AOE staff who were experts in data and who represented the indicator being presented attended monthly meetings with the Panel to ensure they were confident with the task at hand. The Panel has been instrumental in advising on changes to instruments and methodologies. Parent Center Staff, are part of the State Advisory panel. Additionally, members of the Vermont Family Network meet quarterly with the State Director to discuss concerns and needs of families and identify ways the VFN can partner and collaborate with the AOE on statewide initiatives. As appropriate, data sources are used to ground the conversation. This has led to coordinated professional learning sessions related to areas of need in the state and work toward improved VT AOE internal processes related to dispute resolution.

Activities to Improve Outcomes for Children with Disabilities:

The activities conducted to increase the capacity of diverse groups of parents to support the development of implementation activities designed to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.

The Special Education Advisory Panel has a membership committee dedicated to maintaining 51% parent membership and is recruiting for diversity. As an incentive to participate, non-state employee members receive a \$50 stipend per meeting, including subcommittee meetings. The AOE supports membership recruitment through advertisements in its Weekly Field Memo and a monthly communication called The Nuggets. The Panel is effective in identifying needs to improve their capacity to serve as VT AOE advisors and has a budget to draw from. In order to accommodate individuals who cannot access technology during virtual meeting sessions, members or VT AOE staff physically open a meeting room with technology during virtual meetings. The Panel has moved to night-time meetings to better accommodate parents. The Panel receives annual training on its role, mission, vision, and data during a full day in-person training retreat was held in September of 2023 with facilitation by an NCSI TA provider. The VTAOE staff routinely partner with the Vermont Family Network (VFN) to offer training and information sessions with families or with school staff concerning the needs of families. The AOE recently contracted with VFN to develop training materials for new special educators on how to support and build capacity with parents and families. Information related to the Special Education Advisory Panel can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/state-board-councils/special-education-advisory-panel>

Soliciting Public Input:

The mechanisms and timelines for soliciting public input for setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress.

The VT AOE is committed to messaging the SPP to the field, and holds conversations with special education partners, including the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP), about their role in general supervision. Within this reporting year VT AOE Special Education team meet with the SEAP to analyze data from the FFY2021 APR and other data sources to develop improvement strategies. The VT AOE continues to seek advisement from the SEAP in regard to the SPP/APR and all aspects of Special Education in Vermont. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines related to assessment proficiency when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets for specific indicators to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

VT AOE will replicate the following process for soliciting input for setting targets, analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, and evaluating progress, as previously reported in FFY2021: Beginning in January 2021, the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) received an introduction to SPP/APR using FFY 2019 data, February 2021 changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-2025 package, data sources and calculations. VT AOE continued monthly meetings with the SEAP to review specific indicator data, disaggregated data, data source and measurement of the indicator, improvement activities and long-term considerations for evaluating indicator progress. VT AOE provided information, resources along with direct links to SPP/APR target setting webpage, SPP/APR reports, and data request form for further data needs. The SEAP not only contemplated targets but began making recommendation on improvement activities from their representative perspectives. The SEAP unanimously approved their recommendations on November 17, 2021 and submitted to the AOE. For the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, the VT AOE presented on June 2021 regarding the target setting process and provided information and resources along with direct links to the SPP/APR target setting webpage. VT AOE subsequently reached out for further input from VCSEA and the Executive Director. On December 21, 2021 the Executive Director of VCSEA accepting of the targets for the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package. For the Vermont Family Network, the VT AOE began soliciting feedback and provided information and resources along with direct links to the SPP/APR target setting webpage. The VFN is represented on the Special Education Advisory Panel and on December 2, 2021 agreed with the recommendations put forth by SEAP. The VT AOE Team evaluated progress each month with the SPP/APR and data indicator report out to the Special Education Team. Progress was also monitored as part of the Biweekly Data Team meeting. VT AOE leadership was consulted at the beginning and at the end of the project.

Making Results Available to the Public:

The mechanisms and timelines for making the results of the target setting, data analysis, development of the improvement strategies, and evaluation available to the public.

Final targets for SPP/APR FFY2020-2025 were presented as part of LEA Directors' Bi-weekly Check-In January 2022 and sent to SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN in January 2022. Results of data analysis, development of the improvement strategies and evaluations available to the public are shared with the special education directors, VCSEA, VFN and SEAP which are publicly posted at <https://education.vermont.gov/tags-events/past-special-education-advisory-panel-meetings>. Annual Performance Reports, Local Annual performance Reports and assessment reports can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/data-and-reporting/school-reports/special-education-reports>. State Systemic Improvement Plan reports can be found: <https://education.vermont.gov/state-systemic-improvement-plan> Final Indicator targets for the FFY2020-2025 package are publicly posted at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/compliance-and-monitoring/apr-indicator-list-and-descriptions> and a memo from the Secretary of Education describing the background of the SPP/APR, the target setting process and the targets for results and compliance indicators can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/memo-french-spp-arpr-indicator-targets>

Reporting to the Public

How and where the State reported to the public on the FFY 2021 performance of each LEA located in the State on the targets in the SPP/APR as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days following the State's submission of its FFY 2021 APR, as required by 34 CFR §300.602(b)(1)(i)(A); and a description of where, on its Web site, a complete copy of the State's SPP/APR, including any revisions if the State has revised the targets that it submitted with its FFY 2021 APR in 2023, is available.

Vermont has publicly reported on the FFY 2021 (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) performance of each LEA located in the State on the targets in the State's performance plan as required by Section 616(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I) of IDEA at https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-local-annual-performance-reports-sy-2021-2022-list_0.pdf

Please note that in all public reporting, Vermont protects student privacy by suppressing any sensitive and/or potentially personally identifiable information from fewer than 11 students. Vermont's rule ensuring student confidentiality, Vermont State Board of Education rule 2555, can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-2500> (pages 5-6).

Intro - Prior FFY Required Actions

The State's IDEA Part B determination for both 2022 and 2023 is Needs Assistance. In the State's 2023 determination letter, the Department advised the State of available sources of technical assistance, including OSEP-funded technical assistance centers, and required the State to work with appropriate entities. The Department directed the State to determine the results elements and/or compliance indicators, and improvement strategies, on which it will focus its use of available technical assistance, in order to improve its performance. The State must report, with its FFY 2022 SPP/APR submission, due February 1, 2024, on: (1) the technical assistance sources from which the State received assistance; and (2) the actions the State took as a result of that technical assistance.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

The VT AOE works with OSEP-funded national Technical Assistance Providers to inform and improve our practices. VT AOE receives feedback on guidance, tools, and materials prior to statewide dissemination. OSEP-funded national providers deliver technical assistance to the VT AOE through facilitating large stakeholder meetings, conducting stakeholder input activities, and compiling and analyzing input. The centers and staff provide insight on special education data collection and analysis and provide other technical assistance as needed. From the technical assistance provided to the VT AOE from these OSEP-funded national providers, VT AOE has created guidance documents, analyzed data and provided technical assistance to local education agency staff. These OSEP-funded national providers include but are not limited to National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), The Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE), Center for IDEA Fiscal reporting (CIFR), IDEA Data Center (IDC), IRIS, Institute of Education Science (IES), Early Childhood Personnel Center, National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) and the Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems (DaSY), National Center on Intensive Intervention. VT AOE has been a member of the Results-Based Accountability Cross-State Learning Collaborative and the Evidence Based Practice Cross Learning Collaborative through NCSI. VT AOE also attend the SSIP Data Quality Peer Group hosted by IDC and IDC's monthly Technical Assistance calls.

Intro - OSEP Response

The State's determinations for both 2022 and 2023 were Needs Assistance. Pursuant to Section 616(e)(1) of the IDEA and 34 C.F.R. § 300.604(a), OSEP's June 23, 2023 determination letter informed the State that it must report with its FFY 2022 SPP/APR submission, due February 1, 2024, on: (1) the technical assistance sources from which the State received assistance; and (2) the actions the State took as a result of that technical assistance. The State provided the required information.

Intro - Required Actions

The State's IDEA Part B determination for both 2023 and 2024 is Needs Assistance. In the State's 2024 determination letter, the Department advised the State of available sources of technical assistance, including OSEP-funded technical assistance centers, and required the State to work with appropriate entities. The Department directed the State to determine the results elements and/or compliance indicators, and improvement strategies, on which it will focus its use of available technical assistance, in order to improve its performance. The State must report, with its FFY 2023 SPP/APR submission, due February 1, 2025, on: (1) the technical assistance sources from which the State received assistance; and (2) the actions the State took as a result of that technical assistance.

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 2022 SPP/APR, use data from 2021-2022), 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	77.73%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target >=	86.00%	86.00%	86.00%	77.00%	77.00%
Data	82.14%	79.88%	82.91%	77.73%	79.12%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	79.00%	81.00%	83.00%	85.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during

the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma (a)	649
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a state-defined alternate diploma (b)	
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by receiving a certificate (c)	2
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by reaching maximum age (d)	13
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out (e)	248

FFY 2022 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 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
649	912	79.12%	79.00%	71.16%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

From FFY2021 to FFY2022, 33 fewer students with IEPs in Vermont graduated. At the same time, 81 more students dropped out, increasing the denominator of the measure for Indicator 1. The year-to-year change in graduates reflected decreases in 54.90% of LEAs in the state. Graduate counts decreased for ages 17, 18, and 20, held steady for age 19 and increased for age 21; counts for age 16 were below the state-set data suppression limit of 11 in both SYs. The decrease occurred overwhelmingly among white students; graduates of multiple races also decreased slightly and Black or African American graduates rose slightly. Counts of graduates for other races and ethnicities were below the state-set data suppression limit of 11 in one or both SYs; taken together as a group, these graduates increased in number. Among disability categories, the largest decreases in graduating student counts occurred in students with other health impairment and specific learning disability, 2 of the 3 largest disability categories for the 14-21 age group.

Decreases in graduate counts were widespread, very racially homogenous (in a largely racially homogenous state) and were larger in students receiving services for other health impairment and specific learning disability. VT AOE has spoken with several other states observing a decrease in graduates and an increase in drop outs from FFY2021 to FFY2022; the trend may be a result of stress among individuals, families, and school systems from spending multiple years in a public health emergency. Much of the two school years preceding FFY2022 were characterized in Vermont, like many other states, by distance or hybrid learning models and social distancing protocols, which afforded students less in-person interaction and less direct access to educators.

VT AOE will further investigate any correlation among disability, particularly other health impairment and specific learning disability, and graduation trends.

Graduation Conditions

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

In Vermont, each high school creates their own local graduation requirements. In situations where a student's disability is impacting their access to the graduation requirements, IEP teams have the flexibility to improve how that student accesses the proficiency-based graduation requirements. This allows for some modifications of the performance indicators – that is, how the student will showcase how they have met the proficiency-based graduation requirements. This system was developed with key VT education experts as well as NTACTION and some other OSEP designated TA providers. For more information on the PBGR Access Plan system please visit: <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-proficiency-based-graduation-requirements-pbgr-access-plan.pdf>

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)

VT AOE created the Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) – Access Plan in order to help LEAs make the graduation requirements accessible for all students including those with intensive needs. The PGBR-Access Plan can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-proficiency-based-graduation-requirements-pbgr-access-plan>

VT AOE created The Vermont Graduation Readiness Tool to address a longstanding challenge for IEP teams in Vermont, which is, how to determine the graduation date for students with disabilities particularly students with developmental disabilities, which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/vermont-graduation-readiness-tool>

VT AOE provided guidance around participation in graduation ceremonies for students who have extended education access due to their disability <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/participation-in-graduation-activities-for-students-eligible-for-special-education>

VT AOE provided multiple trainings throughout the year with individual LEAs around the PBGR Access plan. Additionally, VT AOE provides training to independent schools serving student with disabilities around the PBGR Access Plan process as well via Office Hours in collaboration with another VT AOE division that covers independent schools.

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to graduation for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-1>

1 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

1 - OSEP Response

1 - Required Actions

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 EDFacts 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 2022 SPP/APR, use data from 2021-2022), 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	20.31%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target <=	3.25%	3.20%	3.20%	20.00%	20.00%
Data	4.17%	3.05%	3.35%	20.31%	19.37%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target <=	18.00%	17.00%	16.00%	15.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the

effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a regular high school diploma (a)	649
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by graduating with a state-defined alternate diploma (b)	
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by receiving a certificate (c)	2
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education by reaching maximum age (d)	13
SY 2021-22 Exiting Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS009; Data Group 85)	05/24/2023	Number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to dropping out (e)	248

FFY 2022 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 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
248	912	19.37%	18.00%	27.19%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

The year-to-year change in students dropping out reflected increases in 62.75% of LEAs in the state. Increases were observed at ages 16-19; n-sizes for one or both SYs were below the state-set data suppression limit of 11 for ages 15, 20, and 21. 100% of the increase occurred among white students; n-sizes for non-white races and ethnicities were below the state-set data suppression limit of 11 and totaled to 0. Dropouts increased especially in students receiving services for other health impairment and specific learning disability, 2 of the 3 largest disability categories for the 14-21 age group. Additionally, VT noted that more students without disabilities also dropped out in FFY2022, although the percent change was less drastic.

Increases in drop outs were widespread, very racially homogenous (in a largely racially homogenous state), and were larger in students receiving services for other health impairment and specific learning disability. VT has spoken with several other states observing an increase in drop outs and decrease in graduates from FFY2021 to FFY2022; the trend may be a result of stress among individuals, families, and school systems from spending multiple years in a public health emergency. Much of the two school years preceding FFY2022 were characterized in Vermont, like many other states, by distance or hybrid learning models and social distancing protocols, which afforded students less in-person interaction and less direct access to educators.

VT AOE has been investigating potential causes by conducting LEA-specific reviews and interviews to examine any correlation among disability categories, particularly other health impairment and specific learning disability, and dropout trends. While the VT AOE has found explanations in some individual cases, these investigations are ongoing and will continue to determine more significant trends.

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

Vermont defines a drop out as follows:

Students who were enrolled at the start of the reporting period, were not enrolled at the end of the reporting period and did not exit special education through any of the other exit reasons. This includes dropouts, runaways, expulsions, status unknown, and students who moved and are not known to be continuing in another educational program. Students with 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences are included in the report as dropouts.

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

NO

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

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

The VT AOE created and facilitated the implementation of the high school completion program which is a highly flexible personalized plan for graduation. It continues to be a solution for some students who may otherwise drop out. VT AOE also created the graduation readiness tool for IEP teams. This tool facilitates an IEP team discussion (annually beginning in freshman year) on student engagement across all areas of secondary transition planning. The tool also allows the IEP team to quantify the level of student access across many different areas pertinent to successful transition planning. The graduation readiness tool is on the VT AOE website in the secondary transition section in the resources for special educators section, this can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/vermont-graduation-readiness-tool>

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to indicator 2: drop out for special education administrators and educators which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-2>

2 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

2 - OSEP Response

2 - Required Actions

Indicator 3A: Participation for Children with IEPs

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

3A. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using ED Facts file specifications FS185 and 188.

Measurement

A. Participation rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs participating in an assessment) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs enrolled during the testing window)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The participation rate is based on all children with IEPs, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3A: Provide separate reading/language arts and mathematics participation rates for children with IEPs for each of the following grades: 4, 8, & high school. Account for ALL children with IEPs, in grades 4, 8, and high school, including children not participating in assessments and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

3A - Indicator Data

Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2018	96.50%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2018	94.00%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	86.80%
Math	A	Grade 4	2018	96.60%
Math	B	Grade 8	2018	94.30%
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	86.80%

Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%	95.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont’s FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont’s Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director’s Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS188; Data Group: 589)

Date:

01/10/2024

Reading Assessment Participation Data by Grade (1)

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs (2)	1,133	1,128	1,228
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations (3)	461	570	634
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations (3)	572	441	377
d. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	69	55	58

Data Source:

Date:

01/10/2024

Math Assessment Participation Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs (2)	1,132	1,130	1,228
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations (3)	618	707	725
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations (3)	414	304	280
d. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards	69	55	57

(1) The children with IEPs who are English learners and took the ELP in lieu of the regular reading/language arts assessment are not included in the prefilled data in this indicator.

(2) The children with IEPs count excludes children with disabilities who were reported as exempt due to significant medical emergency in row a for all the prefilled data in this indicator.

(3) The term "regular assessment" is an aggregation of the following types of assessments, as applicable for each grade/ grade group: regular assessment based on grade-level achievement standards, advanced assessment, Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) pilot assessment, high school regular assessment I, high school regular assessment II, high school regular assessment III and locally-selected nationally recognized high school assessment in the prefilled data in this indicator.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	Number of Children with IEPs	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	1,102	1,133	96.17%	95.00%	97.26%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	1,066	1,128	92.75%	95.00%	94.50%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	1,069	1,228	82.51%	95.00%	87.05%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Participating	Number of Children with IEPs	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	1,101	1,132	96.26%	95.00%	97.26%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	1,066	1,130	93.09%	95.00%	94.34%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	1,062	1,228	81.59%	95.00%	86.48%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Regulatory Information

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

Public Reporting Information

Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.

Vermont's practice is, to the extent possible, to provide public reports of assessment results for students with disabilities in the same place as it provides comparable data for nondisabled students. Please see the following areas of our website for public reports of assessments:

(1a) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments with and without accommodations for 2022 can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-swd-assessment-accommodations-sy-2022>

(1b) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards can be found at <https://schoolsnapshot.vermont.gov/snapshot/academicproficiency?organizationid=eee2db64-033e-4c01-a21d-adbd5d63f357&tab=additional%20information#aa-aaas-assessed-students>

(2) The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children on those assessments: <https://education.vermont.gov/document/vermont-education-dashboard-datasets-assessment> (download the Zip file titled "assessment-vermont-education-dashboard-dataset-february-2024" and open the file titled "Assessment_February2024", open the folder titled "Assessment" and open "Vermont Alternative Assessment_Assessment_2022". "Disability" in the "AssessGroup" column indicates the data disaggregated by student disability status).

Please note that in all public reporting, Vermont protects student privacy by suppressing any sensitive and/or potentially personally identifiable information from fewer than 11 students. VT AOE performs complementary suppression or suppression that occurs if more than one piece of information that has been released to the public would enable others to discern the identity of individual students in a report. Vermont's rule ensuring student confidentiality, Vermont State Board of Education rule 2555, can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-2500> (pages 5-6). Due to the small number of students with disabilities in many Vermont districts, assessment data by grade contains many suppressed values.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE student participation in Statewide Assessment continues to improve upon previous years, and as the state recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students in grade 4 met targets for participation (>95% in both ELA and Math), while students in grades 8 and 9 improved participation from FFY2021 data yet still failed to meet the target for participation.

In Spring of 2023, VT AOE selected a new Statewide Assessment vendor for ELA, Math, and the Vermont Science Assessment. The new vendor was chosen for its approach to diversity, equity and inclusion in assessment development and implementation. The same vendor also chosen as the vendor for the Alternate Assessment. This decision to have both assessments hosted by the same vendor was intended to help streamline and clarify the state assessment process.

Leading up to and during initial rollout for the Statewide Assessments, the VT AOE experienced a staffing turnover in roles that support assessment. The Director of Assessment role was vacant until March, 2023 and the Alternate and Accommodated Assessment Coordinator role was vacant until April, 2023. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) was without a division director since mid-February of 2023 and hired for this position in November of 2023. DMAD has also been without a Data Deputy Directors since February 2023. Given these vacancies, some key support in transition to a new vendor and centralized communication to the field was impacted. Once these roles were filled, VT AOE Assessment Team alignment strategies were implemented to ensure that communication to the field regarding both testing modalities (accommodations for the general assessment and the alternate assessment) for students with IEPs was centralized.

One challenge that initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general assessment and alternate assessment did not align, which caused confusion in the field that lead to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the VTCAP. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue by more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

In the wake of COVID-19 creating boundaries for students considered to be "medically frail" in accessing in-person instruction, there is some lingering confusion in the field regarding the purpose and applicability of medical exemption requests. Due to this confusion, some students on IEPs were not assessed despite not being approved for medical exemption. This process was clarified to the field during the administration window of FFY2022, but it is notable that this topic requires further clarification and conversation with the field. VT AOE will be clarifying the utility of medical exemptions for emergency circumstances in the FFY2023 testing year.

VT AOE does not have a process by which families can formally request to opt their children out of statewide assessment. However, this process was still sought by LEAs and families, alike, in the FFY2022 testing year. Further communication regarding assessment will be made available both to LEAs and to student families in the FFY2023 testing year in order to increase comprehension of why all students are expected to participate in assessment, how this creates educational equity, and the ways in which student data is used.

Weekly meetings were held with the assessment vendors to support new assessment rollout, and office hours were provided to LEAs to support test administration. Additional information was made available to LEAs for VTCAP on the vendor support site, the addition of these support site options allowed for faster conveyance of real time updates during the assessment administration window.

For FFY2022, the rollout of the new assessment was shortened due to complications with securing the initial contract. VT AOE addressed the shortened training timeline by distributing training documents and materials as speedily as possible, holding weekly technical support sessions for LEA assessment administrators and coordinators, and making AOE staff available to provide support or technical assistance to any school or district personnel who needed it.

During the testing window, VT AOE staff provided monitoring of both the general and alternate assessments in person. One noted issue in fidelity of provided accommodations was that Vermont's current issues with understaffed schools created challenges for proctoring with 1:1 and small-group administration for students who required these accommodations. Changes to the accommodation modality for the VTCAP (i.e., replacing the need for a human reader with computer-automated text-to-speech) are projected to alleviate this burden on schools experiencing staffing shortages in FFY2023.

3A - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

3A - OSEP Response

3A - Required Actions

Indicator 3B: Proficiency for Children with IEPs (Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards)

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

3B. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using ED Facts file specifications FS175 and 178.

Measurement

B. Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3B: Proficiency calculations in this SPP/APR must result in proficiency rates for children with IEPs on the regular assessment in reading/language arts and mathematics assessments (separately) in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

3B - Indicator Data

Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2018	12.80%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2018	9.50%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	10.80%
Math	A	Grade 4	2018	12.40%
Math	B	Grade 8	2018	5.90%
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	3.10%

Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	12.80%	13.80%	13.80%	14.80%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	9.50%	10.50%	10.50%	11.50%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	10.80%	11.80%	11.80%	12.80%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	12.40%	13.40%	13.40%	14.40%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	5.90%	6.90%	6.90%	7.90%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	3.10%	4.10%	4.10%	5.10%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

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of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

Date:

01/10/2024

Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade (1)

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment	1,033	1,011	1,011
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	83	113	61
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	100	40	23

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

Date:

01/10/2024

Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade (1)

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the regular assessment	1,032	1,011	1,005
b. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	49	41	45
c. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	23	5	11

(1)The term “regular assessment” is an aggregation of the following types of assessments as applicable for each grade/ grade group: regular assessment based on grade-level achievement standards, advanced assessment, Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) pilot assessment, high school regular assessment I, high school regular assessment II, high school regular assessment III and locally-selected nationally recognized high school assessment in the prefilled data in this indicator.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Regular Assessment	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	183	1,033	10.86%	12.80%	17.72%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	153	1,011	6.94%	9.50%	15.13%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	84	1,011	8.71%	10.80%	8.31%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group C, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the general assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

During monitoring of accommodations provided on the general assessment, it was evident that some students requiring accommodations for reading were not being given those accommodations with fidelity. One reason that was shared from LEAs to the VT AOE was that a lack of full staffing made it impossible for schools to provide proctor 1:1 readers for all students for whom this was indicated on their IEP. Given this lack of adherence to the IEP accommodations these students would have been afforded, performance on the assessment may not be indicative of actual academic achievement. For FFY2023, modifications to the accommodations provided without proctor support have been made that will serve to alleviate the staffing pressures on schools.

As FFY2022 was the first year of the new assessment vendor, there were some technological difficulties that were prominent in test administration that led to frequent restarts of the test. VT AOE is aware that many students were reported to be feeling the effects of burnout/fatigue caused by these technological errors. It is possible that the effects of the difficulties these students faced in accessing their assessment may have impacted their effortful performance. For FFY2023, modifications to the process by which students' tests will be reset are underway to decrease the stress/impact on students and proctors when technological errors may arise.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Regular Assessment	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	72	1,032	9.53%	12.40%	6.98%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Regular Assessment	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
B	Grade 8	46	1,011	2.28%	5.90%	4.55%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	56	1,005	2.89%	3.10%	5.57%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the general assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

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As FFY2022 was the first year of the new assessment vendor, there were some technological difficulties that were prominent in test administration that led to frequent restarts of the test. VT AOE is aware that many students were reported to be feeling the effects of burnout/fatigue caused by these technological errors. It is possible that the effects of the difficulties these students faced in accessing their assessment may have impacted their effortful performance. For FFY2023, modifications to the process by which students' tests will be reset are underway to decrease the stress/impact on students and proctors when technological errors may arise.

Regulatory Information

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

Public Reporting Information

Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.

Vermont's practice is, to the extent possible, to provide public reports of assessment results for students with disabilities in the same place as it provides comparable data for nondisabled students. Please see the following areas of our website for public reports of assessments:

(1a) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments with and without accommodations for 2022 can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-swd-assessment-accommodations-sy-2022>

(1b) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards can be found at <https://schoolsnapshot.vermont.gov/snapshot/academicproficiency?organizationid=eee2db64-033e-4c01-a21d-adbd5d63f357&tab=additional%20information#aa-aaas-assessed-students>

(2) The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children on those assessments: <https://education.vermont.gov/document/vermont-education-dashboard-datasets-assessment> (download the Zip file titled "assessment-vermont-education-dashboard-dataset-february-2024" and open the file titled "Assessment_February2024", open the folder titled "Assessment" and open "Vermont Alternative Assessment_Assessment_2022". "Disability" in the "AssessGroup" column indicates the data disaggregated by student disability status).

Please note that in all public reporting, Vermont protects student privacy by suppressing any sensitive and/or potentially personally identifiable information from fewer than 11 students. VT AOE performs complementary suppression or suppression that occurs if more than one piece of information that has been released to the public would enable others to discern the identity of individual students in a report. Vermont's rule ensuring student confidentiality, Vermont State Board of Education rule 2555, can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-2500> (pages 5-6). Due to the small number of students with disabilities in many Vermont districts, assessment data by grade contains many suppressed values.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

For FFY2022, the rollout of the new assessment was shortened due to complications with securing the initial contract. VT AOE addressed the shortened training timeline by distributing training documents and materials as speedily as possible, holding weekly technical support sessions for LEA assessment administrators and coordinators, and making AOE staff available to provide support or technical assistance to any school or district personnel who needed it.

During monitoring of accommodations provided on the general assessment, it was evident that some students requiring accommodations for reading were not being given those accommodations with fidelity. One reason that was shared from LEAs to the VT AOE was that a lack of full staffing made it impossible for schools to provide proctor 1:1 readers for all students for whom this was indicated on their IEP. Given this lack of adherence to the IEP accommodations these students would have been afforded, performance on the assessment may not be indicative of actual academic achievement. For FFY2023, modifications to the accommodations provided without proctor support have been made that will serve to alleviate the staffing pressures on schools.

As FFY2022 was the first year of the new assessment vendor, there were some technological difficulties that were prominent in test administration that led to frequent restarts of the test. VT AOE is aware that many students were reported to be feeling the effects of burnout/fatigue caused by these technological errors. It is possible that the effects of the difficulties these students faced in accessing their assessment may have impacted their effortful performance. For FFY2023, modifications to the process by which students' tests will be reset are underway to decrease the stress/impact on students and proctors when technological errors may arise.

Leading up to and during initial rollout for the Statewide Assessments, the VT AOE experienced a staffing turnover in roles that support assessment. The Director of Assessment role was vacant until March 2023 and the Alternate and Accommodated Assessment Coordinator role was vacant until April 2023. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) was without a division director since mid-February of 2023 and hired for this position in November of 2023. DMAD has also been without a Deputy Director since February 2023. Given these vacancies, some key support in transition to a new vendor and centralized communication to the field was impacted. Once these roles were filled, VT AOE Assessment Team alignment strategies were implemented to ensure that communication to the field regarding both testing modalities (accommodations for the general assessment and the alternate assessment) for students with IEPs was centralized.

One challenge that the initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the general assessment. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue through more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the general assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

3B - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

3B - OSEP Response

3B - Required Actions

Indicator 3C: Proficiency for Children with IEPs (Alternate Academic Achievement Standards)

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

3C. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using ED*Facts* file specifications FS175 and 178.

Measurement

C. Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against alternate academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3C: Proficiency calculations in this SPP/APR must result in proficiency rates for children with IEPs on the alternate assessment in reading/language arts and mathematics assessments (separately) in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

3C - Indicator Data

Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2018	55.40%
Reading	B	Grade 8	2018	54.40%
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	46.50%
Math	A	Grade 4	2018	45.60%
Math	B	Grade 8	2018	37.10%
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	42.20%

Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A >=	Grade 4	57.00%	59.00%	61.00%	63.00%
Reading	B >=	Grade 8	56.40%	58.40%	60.40%	62.40%
Reading	C >=	Grade HS	48.50%	50.50%	52.50%	54.50%
Math	A >=	Grade 4	47.60%	49.60%	51.60%	51.60%
Math	B >=	Grade 8	41.10%	43.10%	45.10%	47.10%
Math	C >=	Grade HS	46.20%	48.20%	50.20%	52.20%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 Data Disaggregation from EDFacts

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (EDFacts file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

Date:

01/10/2024

Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	69	55	58
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	30	21	19

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

Date:

Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned for the alternate assessment	69	55	57
b. Children with IEPs in alternate assessment against alternate standards scored at or above proficient	36	29	28

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	30	69	61.33%	57.00%	43.48%	Did not meet target	Slippage
B	Grade 8	21	55	44.90%	56.40%	38.18%	Did not meet target	Slippage
C	Grade HS	19	58	76.09%	48.50%	32.76%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the alternate assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

One challenge that the initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the general assessment. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue through more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

For FFY2022, the rollout of the new assessment was shortened due to complications with securing the initial contract. VT AOE addressed the shortened training timeline by distributing training documents and materials as speedily as possible, holding weekly technical support sessions for LEA assessment administrators and coordinators, and making AOE staff available to provide support or technical assistance to any school or district personnel who needed it.

Provide reasons for slippage for Group B, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the alternate assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

One challenge that the initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the general assessment. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue through more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

For FFY2022, the rollout of the new assessment was shortened due to complications with securing the initial contract. VT AOE addressed the shortened training timeline by distributing training documents and materials as speedily as possible, holding weekly technical support sessions for LEA assessment administrators and coordinators, and making AOE staff available to provide support or technical assistance to any school or district personnel who needed it.

Provide reasons for slippage for Group C, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the alternate assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to

be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

One challenge that initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate Assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the VTCAP. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue by more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

For FFY2022, the rollout of the new assessment was shortened due to complications with securing the initial contract. VT AOE addressed the shortened training timeline by distributing training documents and materials as speedily as possible, holding weekly technical support sessions for LEA assessment administrators and coordinators, and making AOE staff available to provide support or technical assistance to any school or district personnel who needed it.

Additionally, cut scores for the alternate assessment are normed for high school students based upon a student population that represents the alternate assessment consortium as a whole. VT AOE is the only entity within the consortium who assesses high school students in grade 9. There is ongoing debate about whether the cut scores normed for the consortium are appropriate to be used as proficiency determination for VT AOE's assessment of grade 9 students.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group	Group Name	Number of Children with IEPs Scoring At or Above Proficient Against Alternate Academic Achievement Standards	Number of Children with IEPs who Received a Valid Score and for whom a Proficiency Level was Assigned for the Alternate Assessment	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	36	69	56.00%	47.60%	52.17%	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	29	55	17.65%	41.10%	52.73%	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	28	57	25.58%	46.20%	49.12%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable

Regulatory Information

The SEA, (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, LEA) must make available to the public, and report to the public with the same frequency and in the same detail as it reports on the assessment of nondisabled children: (1) the number of children with disabilities participating in: (a) regular assessments, and the number of those children who were provided accommodations in order to participate in those assessments; and (b) alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards; and (2) the performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children, including children with disabilities, on those assessments. [20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(16)(D); 34 CFR §300.160(f)]

Public Reporting Information

Provide links to the page(s) where you provide public reports of assessment results.

Vermont's practice is, to the extent possible, to provide public reports of assessment results for students with disabilities in the same place as it provides comparable data for nondisabled students. Please see the following areas of our website for public reports of assessments:

(1a) The number of children with disabilities participating in regular assessments with and without accommodations for 2022 can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-swd-assessment-accommodations-sy-2022>

(1b) The number of children with disabilities participating in alternate assessments aligned with alternate achievement standards can be found at <https://schoolsnapshot.vermont.gov/snapshot/academicproficiency?organizationid=eee2db64-033e-4c01-a21d-adbd5d63f357&tab=additional%20information#aa-aaas-assessed-students>

(2) The performance of children with disabilities on regular assessments and on alternate assessments, compared with the achievement of all children on those assessments: <https://education.vermont.gov/document/vermont-education-dashboard-datasets-assessment> (download the Zip file titled "assessment-vermont-education-dashboard-dataset-february-2024" and open the file titled "Assessment_February2024", open the folder titled "Assessment" and open "Vermont Alternative Assessment_Assessment_2022". "Disability" in the "AssessGroup" column indicates the data disaggregated by student disability status).

Please note that in all public reporting, Vermont protects student privacy by suppressing any sensitive and/or potentially personally identifiable information from fewer than 11 students. VT AOE performs complementary suppression or suppression that occurs if more than one piece of information that has been released to the public would enable others to discern the identity of individual students in a report. Vermont's rule ensuring student confidentiality, Vermont State Board of Education rule 2555, can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/state-board-rules-series-2500> (pages 5-6). Due to the small number of students with disabilities in many Vermont districts, assessment data by grade contains many suppressed values.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE student participation in Statewide Assessment continues to improve upon previous years, and as the state recovers from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students in grade 4 met targets for participation (>95% in both ELA and Math), while students in grades 8 and 9 improved participation from FFY2021 data yet still failed to meet the target for participation.

In Spring of 2023, VT AOE selected a new Statewide Assessment vendor for ELA, Math, and the Vermont Science Assessment. The new vendor was chosen for its approach to diversity, equity and inclusion in assessment development and implementation. The same vendor also chosen as the vendor for the Alternate Assessment through partnership in the alternate assessment consortium. This decision to have both assessments hosted by the same vendor was intended to help streamline and clarify the state assessment process.

Leading up to and during initial rollout for the Statewide Assessments, the VT AOE experienced a staffing turnover in roles that support assessment. The Director of Assessment role was vacant until March 2023 and the Alternate and Accommodated Assessment Coordinator role was vacant until April 2023. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) was without a division director since mid-February of 2023 and hired for this position in November of 2023. DMAD has also been without a Deputy Director since February 2023. Given these vacancies, some key support in transition to a new vendor and centralized communication to the field was impacted. Once these roles were filled, VT AOE Assessment Team alignment strategies were implemented to ensure that communication to the field regarding both testing modalities (accommodations for the general assessment and the alternate assessment) for students with IEPs was centralized.

One challenge that the initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the general assessment. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue through more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

In the wake of COVID-19 creating boundaries for students considered to be "medically frail" in accessing in-person instruction, there is some lingering confusion in the field regarding the purpose and applicability of medical exemption requests. Due to some of this confusion, some students on IEPs were not assessed despite not being approved for medical exemption. This process was clarified to the field during the administration window of FFY2022, but it is notable that this topic requires further clarification and conversation with the field. VT AOE has a plan for clarifying the utility of medical exemptions for emergency circumstances in the FFY2023 testing year.

VT AOE does not have a process by which families can formally request to opt their children out of statewide assessment. However, this process was still sought by LEAs and families, alike, in the FFY2022 testing year. Further communication regarding assessment will be made available both to LEAs and to student families in the FFY2023 testing year in order to increase comprehension of why all students are expected to participate in assessment, how this creates educational equity, and the ways in which student data is used.

Weekly meetings were held with the assessment vendors to support new assessment rollout, and office hours were provided to LEAs to support test administration. Additional information was made available to LEAs for VTCAP on through vendor support site, which can be accessed through <https://education.vermont.gov/student-learning/assessments>. The addition of these support site options allowed for faster conveyance of real time updates during the assessment administration window.

3C - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

3C - OSEP Response

3C - Required Actions

Indicator 3D: Gap in Proficiency Rates (Grade Level Academic Achievement Standards)

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Participation and performance of children with IEPs on statewide assessments:

- A. Participation rate for children with IEPs.
- B. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards.
- C. Proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.
- D. Gap in proficiency rates for children with IEPs and all students against grade level academic achievement standards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

3D. Same data as used for reporting to the Department under Title I of the ESEA, using ED*Facts* file specifications FS175 and 178.

Measurement

D. Proficiency rate gap = [(proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2022-2023 school year) subtracted from the (proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2022-2023 school year)]. Calculate separately for reading and math. Calculate separately for grades 4, 8, and high school. The proficiency rate includes all children enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

Instructions

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Include information regarding where to find public reports of assessment participation and performance results, as required by 34 CFR §300.160(f), i.e., a link to the Web site where these data are reported.

Indicator 3D: Gap calculations in this SPP/APR must result in the proficiency rate for children with IEPs were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2022-2023 school year compared to the proficiency rate for all students who were proficient against grade level academic achievement standards for the 2022-2023 school year. Calculate separately for reading/language arts and math in each of the following grades: 4, 8, and high school, including both children enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year. Only include children with disabilities who had an IEP at the time of testing.

3D - Indicator Data

Historical Data:

Subject	Group	Group Name	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
Reading	A	Grade 4	2018	37.90
Reading	B	Grade 8	2018	43.38
Reading	C	Grade HS	2018	45.78
Math	A	Grade 4	2018	34.17
Math	B	Grade 8	2018	34.07
Math	C	Grade HS	2018	31.82

Targets

Subject	Group	Group Name	2022	2023	2024	2025
Reading	A <=	Grade 4	37.90	36.90	36.90	35.90
Reading	B <=	Grade 8	43.40	42.40	42.40	41.40
Reading	C <=	Grade HS	45.80	44.80	44.80	43.80
Math	A <=	Grade 4	34.20	33.20	33.20	32.20
Math	B <=	Grade 8	34.10	33.10	33.10	32.10
Math	C <=	Grade HS	31.80	30.80	30.80	29.80

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the

SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director’s Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 Data Disaggregation from ED*Facts*

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Reading (ED*Facts* file spec FS178; Data Group: 584)

Date:

01/10/2024

Reading Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade (1)

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	5,476	5,463	5,643
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	1,033	1,011	1,011
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	2,955	2,969	2,379
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	134	76	41
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	83	113	61
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	100	40	23

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Assessment Data Groups - Math (EDFacts file spec FS175; Data Group: 583)

Date:

01/10/2024

Math Assessment Proficiency Data by Grade (1)

Group	Grade 4	Grade 8	Grade HS
a. All Students who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	5,485	5,454	5,625
b. Children with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency was assigned for the regular assessment	1,032	1,011	1,005
c. All students in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	1,881	1,943	1,834
d. All students in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	33	20	24
e. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with no accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	49	41	45
f. Children with IEPs in regular assessment with accommodations scored at or above proficient against grade level	23	5	11

(1)The term “regular assessment” is an aggregation of the following types of assessments as applicable for each grade/ grade group: regular assessment based on grade-level achievement standards, advanced assessment, Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) pilot assessment, high school regular assessment I, high school regular assessment II, high school regular assessment III and locally-selected nationally recognized high school assessment in the prefilled data in this indicator.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Reading Assessment

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	17.72%	56.41%	33.09	37.90	38.69	Did not meet target	Slippage
B	Grade 8	15.13%	55.74%	36.01	43.40	40.61	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	8.31%	42.88%	37.26	45.80	34.58	Met target	No Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage for Group A, if applicable

VT AOE leadership and subject matter experts recommended against comparing FFY2022 data to FFY2021 data given that Vermont adopted a new assessment between FFY2021 and FFY2022. VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the general assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

During monitoring of accommodations provided on the general assessment, it was evident that some students requiring accommodations for reading were not being given those accommodations with fidelity. One reason that was shared from LEAs to the VT AOE was that a lack of full staffing made it impossible for schools to provide proctor 1:1 readers for all students for whom this was indicated on their IEP. Given this lack of adherence to the IEP accommodations these students would have been afforded, performance on the assessment may not be indicative of actual academic achievement. For FFY2023, modifications to the accommodations provided without proctor support have been made that will serve to alleviate the staffing pressures on schools.

As FFY2022 was the first year of the new assessment vendor, there were some technological difficulties that were prominent in test administration that led to frequent restarts of the test. VT AOE is aware that many students were reported to be feeling the effects of burnout/fatigue caused by these technological errors. It is possible that the effects of the difficulties these students faced in accessing their assessment may have impacted their effortful performance. For FFY2023, modifications to the process by which students' tests will be reset are underway to decrease the stress/impact on students and proctors when technological errors may arise.

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data: Math Assessment

Group	Group Name	Proficiency rate for children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	Proficiency rate for all students scoring at or above proficient against grade level academic achievement standards	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A	Grade 4	6.98%	34.90%	28.74	34.20	27.92	Met target	No Slippage
B	Grade 8	4.55%	35.99%	26.29	34.10	31.44	Met target	No Slippage
C	Grade HS	5.57%	33.03%	23.18	31.80	27.46	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

In Spring of 2023, VT AOE selected a new Statewide Assessment vendor for ELA, Math, and the Vermont Science Assessment. The new vendor was chosen for its approach to diversity, equity and inclusion in assessment development and implementation. The same vendor also chosen as the vendor for the Alternate Assessment through partnership in the alternate assessment consortium. This decision to have both assessments hosted by the same vendor was intended to help streamline and clarify the state assessment process.

Leading up to and during initial rollout for the Statewide Assessments, the VT AOE experienced a staffing turnover in roles that support assessment. The Director of Assessment role was vacant until March 2023 and the Alternate and Accommodated Assessment Coordinator role was vacant until April 2023. The Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD) was without a division director since mid-February of 2023 and hired for this position in November of 2023. DMAD has also been without a Deputy Director since February 2023. Given these vacancies, some key support in transition to a new vendor and centralized communication to the field was impacted. Once these roles were filled, VT AOE Assessment Team alignment strategies were implemented to ensure that communication to the field regarding both testing modalities (accommodations for the general assessment and the alternate assessment) for students with IEPs was centralized.

One challenge that the initial rollout faced was that the testing windows for the general (Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program; VTCAP) and alternate assessments did not align, which caused confusion in the field that led to some students who were eligible to take the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) missing the appropriate testing window or being inappropriately asked to sit for the general assessment. Assessment rollout in Spring 2024 will address this issue through more centralized communication to the field as well as a fully-aligned testing window for the two assessments.

In the wake of COVID-19 creating boundaries for students considered to be “medically frail” in accessing in-person instruction, there is some lingering confusion in the field regarding the purpose and applicability of medical exemption requests. Due to some of this confusion, some students on IEPs were not assessed despite not being approved for medical exemption given an expectation that these students were exempt from participation due to their chronic health conditions. This process was clarified to the field during the administration window of FFY2022, but it is notable that this topic requires further clarification and conversation with the field. VT AOE has a plan for clarifying the utility of medical exemptions for emergency circumstances in the FFY2023 testing year.

Vermont does not have a process by which families can formally request to opt their children out of statewide assessment. However, this process was sought by LEAs and families, alike. Further communication regarding assessment will be made available both to LEAs and to student families in the FFY2023 testing year in order to increase comprehension of why all students are expected to participate in assessment, how this creates educational equity, and the ways in which student data is used.

The VT AOE Assessment team holds monthly virtual Town Halls for District Test Administrators and Alternate Assessment District Test Administrators on testing updates and provides time for general questions and answers from the field. The Assessment teams also published a monthly newsletter with testing updates and links to manuals and professional development. The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to assessment for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-3>

VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for the general assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in assessment, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

3D - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

3D - OSEP Response

3D - Required Actions

Indicator 4A: Suspension/Expulsion

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results Indicator: Rates of suspension and expulsion:

- A. Percent of local educational agencies (LEA) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of LEAs that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A); 1412(a)(22))

Data Source

State discipline data, including State's analysis of State's Discipline data collected under IDEA Section 618, where applicable. Discrepancy can be computed by either comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates for nondisabled children within the LEA or by comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State.

Measurement

Percent = [(# of LEAs that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rates of suspensions and expulsions for more than 10 days during the school year of children with IEPs) divided by the (# of LEAs in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable))] times 100.

Include State's definition of "significant discrepancy."

Instructions

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of LEAs totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement.

Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, use data from 2021-2022), including data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to determine if significant discrepancies, as defined by the State, are occurring in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) of children with IEPs, as required at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(22). The State's examination must include one of the following comparisons:

- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State; or
- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates of suspensions and expulsions for nondisabled children within the LEAs.

In the description, specify which method the State used to determine possible discrepancies and explain what constitutes those discrepancies.

Because the measurement table requires that the data examined for this indicator are lag year data, States should examine the section 618 data that was submitted by LEAs that were in operation during the school year before the reporting year. For example, if a State has 100 LEAs operating in the 2021-2022 school year, those 100 LEAs would have reported section 618 data in 2021-2022 on the number of children suspended/expelled. If the State then opens 15 new LEAs in 2022-2023, suspension/expulsion data from those 15 new LEAs would not be in the 2021-2022 section 618 data set, and therefore, those 15 new LEAs should not be included in the denominator of the calculation. States must use the number of LEAs from the year before the reporting year in its calculation for this indicator. For the FFY 2022 SPP/APR submission, States must use the number of LEAs reported in 2021-2022 (which can be found in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR introduction).

Indicator 4A: Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation (based upon LEAs that met the minimum n and/or cell size requirement, if applicable). If significant discrepancies occurred, describe how the State educational agency reviewed and, if appropriate, revised (or required the affected local educational agency to revise) its policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, to ensure that such policies, procedures, and practices comply with applicable requirements.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If discrepancies occurred and the LEA with discrepancies had policies, procedures or practices that contributed to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and that do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, describe how the State ensured that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with OSEP QA 23-01, dated July 24, 2023.

If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

4A - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	1.67%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target <=	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target <=	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont’s FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont’s Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director’s Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Has the state established a minimum n/cell-size requirement? (yes/no)

NO

Number of LEAs that have a significant discrepancy	Number of LEAs in the State	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
0	51	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	Met target	No Slippage

Choose one of the following comparison methodologies to determine whether significant discrepancies are occurring (34 CFR §300.170(a))

Compare the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs among LEAs in the State

State’s definition of “significant discrepancy” and methodology

Vermont compares the rates of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs among LEAs in the State as described in option 1 in the Measurement Table. Vermont's method for determining significant discrepancy is reasonably designed in accordance with the first variation (adding to the state-level rate) on the B4A example #1a from the IDC TA Guide Measuring Significant Discrepancy: An Indicator B4 Technical Assistance Guide, on page 20 (https://ideadata.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017-09/measuring_significant_discrepancy-an_ind.pdf). According to the most recent 2022 PART B FFY 2020 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis Booklet (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/PartB-IndicatorAnalysis-FFY2020.pdf>), using the state-level rate to set the bar is the most commonly used method among all states. Vermont uses addition to the state-level rate rather than multiplication due to the very low state-level rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities. The baseline for indicator B4A was established in FFY2005; Vermont set the threshold in that year. During the baseline year when the 3.00 percent bar was set, Vermont's state-level rate of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions greater than ten days was 0.51 percent; therefore, the bar was the state-level rate plus 2 percentage points, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point (2.51 percent rounded up to 3.00 percent).

An LEA is found to have a significant discrepancy if the number of students experiencing out-of-school suspension/expulsions greater than 10 days is more than the threshold of 3.00 percent of that LEA's total special education population. The out-of-school suspension/expulsion rate is derived from the total number of out-of-school suspension/expulsions more than 10 days for special education students in an LEA (numerator) divided by the total number of special education students in the LEA (denominator). Only children with IEPs are considered. The information for the numerator in the LEA calculations was sourced from the "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Suspensions/Expulsions" EDFacts file for school year 2021-2022. The information for the denominator in the LEA calculations was sourced from the "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) School Age" and "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Early Childhood" EDFacts files for the school year 2021-2022.

Vermont's methodology is reasonably designed to identify significant discrepancies in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions among the state's LEAs, some of which are quite small (<40 total students with disabilities). Due to the small number of students with disabilities in many Vermont districts, discipline rate percentages are prone to considerable fluctuation. Additionally, Vermont's methodology is reasonably designed with respect to the state's very low rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions by using addition rather than multiplication. According to the 44th Annual Report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA, 2022, which is the latest available at the time of writing (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/44th-arc-for-idea.pdf>), Vermont was tied for the second-lowest rate of students suspended out-of-school or expelled for more than 10 days at 5 students per 10,000 served. In fact, 39 of Vermont's 51 LEAs in school year 2021-2022 had zero long-term suspensions and expulsions. Vermont set its threshold in the baseline year (FFY2005) and has kept the threshold consistent so LEAs always know in simple terms what the threshold is. While the threshold has remained consistent, Vermont's state-level rate of out-of-school suspension/expulsions greater than ten days has improved over time to 0.14 percent in FFY2022.

Vermont acknowledges that OSEP examines state methodologies for reasonableness by creating and comparing rate ratios using states' thresholds and state-level rates of long-term suspension and expulsion. Vermont does not use a rate ratio to set its threshold. VT AOE believes that a rate ratio is not appropriate for Vermont due to our small size as a state, small LEAs, and very low state-level rate of long-term suspension and expulsion. As discussed above, Vermont is an outlier among states with respect to both the size of LEAs and the rate of long-term suspension and expulsion. Rates as low as those in Vermont cause rate ratio calculations to be unstable and potentially misrepresentative. Furthermore, in Vermont, a rate ratio equal to the median for all states would equate to fewer than one long-term suspension or expulsion for one-third of Vermont districts, meaning that one case would be enough to identify an LEA as having a significant discrepancy.

As part of our continuous improvement of processes, VT AOE has engaged with IDC technical assistance in FFY2022 to review our methodology for suspension/expulsion data. VT AOE will continue to engage with IDC technical assistance and stakeholders in FFY2023.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Please note that in the FFY2021 Introduction, Number of Districts in your State/Territory during reporting year, VT AOE reported 52 LEAs; the correct number of LEAs for FFY2021 was 51. The Department of Corrections was included in that count; VT AOE verified that the Department of Corrections is not legally an LEA and should not have been included in that count.

VT AOE is currently engaged in a cross-division process of defining suspensions and issuing guidance on what is not only legally sound but considered best practice for ALL students, not just those with disabilities.

VT AOE produced a guidance document to outline new legislation that limits LEA's, Kindergartens and public pre-K programs, and independent schools from suspending or expelling students under the age of 8. This document can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-determining-the-appropriateness-of-suspension-or-expulsion-for-students-under-age-eight.pdf>

Over a decade ago, VT AOE invested in an initial train-the-trainers model of conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments and Function-Based Behavior Support Plans (FBA/BSP). Since then, the SEA has infused the state with professionals who are skilled at conducting these and have built capacity to provide ongoing training and coaching in the area of FBA/BSPs. It is commonplace in Vermont schools for FBA/BSP procedures to be implemented at each tier in an MTSS framework. This work and knowledge is imperative when preserving the rights of students with disabilities facing exclusionary discipline and is rightly a part of federal legislation. VT AOE's trainings and resources regarding FBA/BSPs can be accessed at <https://www.pbisvermont.org/training-resources/functional-behavior-assessment-behavior-support-plan-fbabspl/>

The Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environment report to the House and Senate committees on Education provides recommendations for legislative action. This report includes a review of suspension and expulsion data and data collection processes for VT AOE as well as for LEAs, other states' approaches to exclusionary discipline, definitions for the most serious behaviors and recommendations. It is guiding our current work on having discipline be educational, equitable, inclusive and legally sound. This report can be found at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/edu-legislative-report-equitable-inclusive-school-environments-final-report-20220315.pdf>

Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices (completed in FFY 2022 using 2021-2022 data)

Provide a description of the review of policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

Should there be an instance of noncompliance, the VT AOE has developed and is in the process of revising templates to lead the LEA in a self-assessment of policies, procedures and practices regarding the implementation of IEPs. A version of those templates will also be used by the VT AOE to monitoring, documenting and enforcing accountability to avoid students' denial of a Free and Appropriate Public Education. That same process is paired with and highlighted with regard to procedural safeguards. The use of positive behavioral interventions and supports is written into Vermont statutes and monitored closely. The VT AOE is currently engaged in a cross-division process of defining suspensions and issuing guidance on what is not only legally sound but considered best practice for ALL students, not just those with disabilities.

The State DID NOT identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b)

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

4A - Prior FFY Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must explain how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs, including how the State's threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions is reasonably designed.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

VT AOE has described how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs, including how the State's threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions is reasonably designed, in the above section "State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology." Vermont's method for determining significant discrepancy is reasonably designed in accordance with the first variation on the B4A example #1a from the IDC TA Guide Measuring Significant Discrepancy: An Indicator B4 Technical Assistance Guide, on page 20 (https://ideadata.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017-09/measuring_significant_discrepancy-an_ind.pdf). It is designed with a view to the small size of school districts in Vermont.

4A - OSEP Response

OSEP's Required Actions in response to the State's FFY 2021 SPP/APR required the State to explain, in its FFY 2022 SPP/APR, how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs. OSEP appreciates the State reported it reviewed its methodology to determine if it is reasonably designed. However, OSEP notes that the State's methodology results in a threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspension and expulsion rates of children with IEPs that falls above the median of thresholds used by all States.

4A - Required Actions

Indicator 4B: Suspension/Expulsion

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Compliance Indicator: Rates of suspension and expulsion:

- A. Percent of local educational agencies (LEA) that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and
- B. Percent of LEAs that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A); 1412(a)(22))

Data Source

State discipline data, including State's analysis of State's Discipline data collected under IDEA Section 618, where applicable. Discrepancy can be computed by either comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to rates for nondisabled children within the LEA or by comparing the rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State.

Measurement

Percent = $\left[\frac{\text{\# of LEAs that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups that have: (a) a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 days during the school year of children with IEPs; and (b) policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards}}{\text{\# of LEAs in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups}} \right] \times 100$.

Include State's definition of "significant discrepancy."

Instructions

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of LEAs totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement.

Describe the results of the State's examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, use data from 2021-2022), including data disaggregated by race and ethnicity to determine if significant discrepancies, as defined by the State, are occurring in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) of children with IEPs, as required at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(22). The State's examination must include one of the following comparisons:

- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs among LEAs within the State; or
- The rates of suspensions and expulsions for children with IEPs to the rates of suspensions and expulsions for nondisabled children within the LEAs

In the description, specify which method the State used to determine possible discrepancies and explain what constitutes those discrepancies.

Because the measurement table requires that the data examined for this indicator are lag year data, States should examine the section 618 data that was submitted by LEAs that were in operation during the school year before the reporting year. For example, if a State has 100 LEAs operating in the 2021-2022 school year, those 100 LEAs would have reported section 618 data in 2021-2022 on the number of children suspended/expelled. If the State then opens 15 new LEAs in 2022-2023, suspension/expulsion data from those 15 new LEAs would not be in the 2021-2022 section 618 data set, and therefore, those 15 new LEAs should not be included in the denominator of the calculation. States must use the number of LEAs from the year before the reporting year in its calculation for this indicator. For the FFY 2022 SPP/APR submission, States must use the number of LEAs reported in 2021-2022 (which can be found in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR introduction).

Indicator 4B: Provide the following: (a) the number of LEAs that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups that have a significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, by race or ethnicity, in the rates of long-term suspensions and expulsions (more than 10 days during the school year) for children with IEPs; and (b) the number of those LEAs in which policies, procedures or practices contribute to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If discrepancies occurred and the LEA with discrepancies had policies, procedures or practices that contributed to the significant discrepancy, as defined by the State, and that do not comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards, describe how the State ensured that such policies, procedures, and practices were revised to comply with applicable requirements consistent with OSEP QA 23-01, dated July 24, 2023.

If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

Targets must be 0% for 4B.

4B - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2009	0.00%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Has the state established a minimum n/cell-size requirement? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, LEAs that met the State-established n/cell size. Report the number of LEAs excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.

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Number of LEAs that have a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity	Number of those LEAs that have policies, procedure or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements	Number of LEAs that met the State's minimum n/cell-size	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
0	0	2		0%	0.00%	Met target	N/A

Choose one of the following comparison methodologies to determine whether significant discrepancies are occurring (34 CFR §300.170(a))

Compare the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs among LEAs in the State

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?

YES

State's definition of "significant discrepancy" and methodology

Vermont compares the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs in each of the seven race and ethnicity groups among LEAs in the State as described in the Measurement Table. Vermont's method for determining significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity is reasonably designed in accordance with the first variation- (adding to the state-level rate) on the B4B example #1a from the IDC TA Guide Measuring Significant Discrepancy: An Indicator B4 Technical Assistance Guide, on page 45 (https://ideadata.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017-09/measuring_significant_discrepancy-an_ind.pdf). According to the most recent 2022 PART B FFY 2020 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis Booklet (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/PartB-IndicatorAnalysis-FFY2020.pdf>), using the state-level rate to set the bar is the most commonly used method among all states. Vermont uses addition to the state-level rate rather than multiplication due to the very low state-level rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities. The baseline data for indicator B4B is from FFY2009; Vermont set both the minimum cell size and the threshold in that year. During the baseline year when the 3.00 percent bar was set, Vermont's state-level rate of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions greater than ten days was 0.53 percent; therefore, the bar was equivalent to the state-level rate plus 2 percentage points, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point (2.53 percent rounded up to 3.00 percent).

AOE calculates rates of long-term suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities disaggregated by race for all LEAs with a non-zero count of long-term suspensions and expulsions by dividing each LEA's total number of IEP students who were suspended or expelled out of school for greater than 10 days in each race and ethnicity category, by the total number of IEP students in the LEA for that race and ethnicity category. For each LEA, all rates of long-term out-of-school suspensions and expulsions by race and ethnicity are compared to the same threshold of 3.00 percent. An LEA is found to have a significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity if the number of students in a race or ethnicity group experiencing out-of-school suspensions and expulsions greater than 10 days meets a cell size of 4 and is more than 3.00 percent of that LEA's special education population in the race or ethnicity group. Only children with IEPs are considered, and the data used is disaggregated by race and ethnicity. All race and ethnicity groups are held to the same 3.00 percent threshold.

Vermont's use of a cell size is reasonably designed to reduce volatility of risk calculations for small populations, and is at the low end when compared across states; according to the most recent 2022 PART B FFY 2020 SPP/APR Indicator Analysis Booklet (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/PartB-IndicatorAnalysis-FFY2020.pdf>), 77% of states used cell and/or n-sizes ranging from 2 to 75.

The out-of-school suspension/expulsion rate is derived from the number of out-of-school suspension/expulsions more than 10 days for special education students in an LEA, disaggregated by race and ethnicity (numerator) divided by the total number of special education students in the LEA, disaggregated by race and ethnicity (denominator). Only children with IEPs are considered. The information for the numerator in the LEA calculations was sourced from the "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Suspensions/Expulsions" EDFacts file for school year 2021-2022. The information for the denominator in the LEA calculations was sourced from the "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) School Age" and "Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Early Childhood" EDFacts files for the school year 2021-2022.

Vermont's methodology is reasonably designed to identify significant discrepancies by race and ethnicity in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions among the state's LEAs, some of which are quite small (<40 total students with disabilities). Due to the small number of students with disabilities in each race/ethnicity group in many Vermont districts, discipline rate percentages are prone to considerable fluctuation. Additionally, Vermont's methodology is reasonably designed with respect to the state's very low rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions by using addition rather than multiplication. According to the 44th Annual Report to Congress on the implementation of IDEA, 2022, which is the latest available at the time of writing (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/44th-arc-for-idea.pdf>), Vermont was tied for the second-lowest rate of students suspended out-of-school or expelled for more than 10 days at 5 students per 10,000 served. In fact, 39 of Vermont's 51 LEAs in school year 2021-2022 had zero long-term suspensions and expulsions. Vermont set both the minimum cell size and the threshold in the baseline year (FFY2009) and has kept both consistent so LEAs always know in simple terms what the cell size and threshold are. While the cell size and threshold have remained consistent, Vermont's state-level rate of out-of-school suspension/expulsions greater than ten days has improved over time to 0.14 percent in FFY2022.

Vermont acknowledges that OSEP examines state methodologies for reasonableness by creating and comparing rate ratios using states' thresholds and state-level rates of long-term suspension and expulsion. Vermont does not use a rate ratio to set its threshold. VT AOE believes that a rate ratio is not appropriate for Vermont due to our small size as a state, small LEAs, and very low state-level rate of long-term suspension and expulsion. As discussed above, Vermont is an outlier among states with respect to both the size of LEAs and the rate of long-term suspension and expulsion. Rates as low as those in Vermont cause rate ratio calculations to be unstable and potentially misrepresentative. In Vermont, a rate ratio equal to the median for all states would equate to fewer than one long-term suspension and expulsion for one-third of Vermont districts, meaning that one case would be enough to identify an LEA as having a significant discrepancy.

As part of our continuous improvement of processes, VT AOE has engaged with IDC technical assistance in FFY2022 to review our methodology for suspension expulsion data. VT AOE will continue to engage with IDC technical assistance and stakeholders in FFY2023.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Please note that in the FFY2021 Introduction, Number of Districts in your State/Territory during reporting year, VT AOE reported 52 LEAs; the correct number of LEAs for FFY2021 was 51. The Department of Corrections was included in that count; VT AOE verified that the Department of Corrections is not legally an LEA and should not have been included in that count.

The VT AOE is currently engaged in a cross-division process of defining suspensions and issuing guidance on what is not only legally sound but considered best practice for ALL students, not just those with disabilities. Over a decade ago, VT AOE invested in an initial train-the-trainers model of conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments and Function-Based Behavior Support Plans (FBA/BSP). Since then, VT AOE has infused the state with professionals who are skilled at conducting these things and have built capacity to provide ongoing training and coaching in the area of FBA/BSPs. It is commonplace in Vermont schools for FBA/BSP procedures to be implemented at each tier in an MTSS framework. This work and knowledge is imperative when preserving the rights of students with disabilities facing exclusionary discipline.

VT AOE's Positive Behavioral Interventions provides resources to the field which can be found at <https://www.pbisvermont.org/training-resources/equity-resources/>. The BEST VT PBIS State Team commitment to equity can be found at <https://www.pbisvermont.org/best-vtpbis-state-team-commitment-to-equity/>

VT AOE published a guidance document to outline new legislation that limits LEA's, kindergartens and public pre-K programs, and independent schools from suspending or expelling students under the age of 8, this guidance can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-determining-the-appropriateness-of-suspension-or-expulsion-for-students-under-age-eight.pdf>

The Task Force on Equitable and Inclusive School Environment report to the House and Senate committees on Education provides recommendations for legislative action. This report includes a review of suspension and expulsion data and data collection processes for VT AOE as well as for LEAs, other states' approaches to exclusionary discipline, definitions for the most serious behaviors and recommendations. It is guiding our current work on having discipline be educational, equitable, inclusive and legally sound. This report can be found at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/edu-legislative-report-equitable-inclusive-school-environments-final-report-20220315.pdf>

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to suspension/exclusion for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-4>

Review of Policies, Procedures, and Practices (completed in FFY 2022 using 2021-2022 data)

Provide a description of the review of policies, procedures, and practices relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

Should there be an instance of noncompliance, the VT AOE has developed and is in the process of revising VT templates to lead the LEA in a self-assessment of policies, procedures and practices regarding the implementation of IEPs. A version of those templates will also be used by VT AOE to monitor, document and enforce accountability to avoid students' denial of a Free and Appropriate Public Education. That same process is paired with and highlighted with regard to procedural safeguards. The use of positive behavioral interventions and supports is written into Vermont statutes and monitored closely. Vermont's PBIS trainings, resources and practices emphasizes the disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity and provides training, resources and guidance on racial equity at each tier of an MTSS framework.

The State DID NOT identify noncompliance with Part B requirements as a result of the review required by 34 CFR §300.170(b)

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

4B - Prior FFY Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must explain how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies, by race and ethnicity, are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs, including how the State’s LEAs are being examined for significant discrepancy, by race and ethnicity, under the State’s chosen methodology; and how the State’s threshold for measuring significant discrepancy, by race and ethnicity, in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions is reasonably designed.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

VT AOE has described how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs, including how the State’s threshold for measuring significant discrepancy in the rate of long-term suspensions and expulsions is reasonably designed, in the above section “State’s definition of “significant discrepancy” and methodology.” Vermont’s method for determining significant discrepancy by race or ethnicity is reasonably designed in accordance with the first variation on the B4B example #1a from the IDC TA Guide Measuring Significant Discrepancy: An Indicator B4 Technical Assistance Guide, on page 45 (https://ideadata.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017-09/measuring_significant_discrepancy-an_ind.pdf). It is designed with a view to the small size of school districts in Vermont.

4B - OSEP Response

OSEP’s Required Actions in response to the State’s FFY 2021 SPP/APR required the State to explain, in its FFY 2022 SPP/APR, how its methodology is reasonably designed to determine if significant discrepancies, by race or ethnicity, are occurring in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs. OSEP appreciates the State reported it reviewed its methodology to determine if it is reasonably designed. However, OSEP notes that the State’s methodology included a very low percentage of the State’s LEAs in its analysis of rates of suspension and expulsion of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.

4B- Required Actions

Indicator 5: Education Environments (children 5 (Kindergarten) - 21)

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served:

- A. Inside the regular class 80% or more of the day;
- B. Inside the regular class less than 40% of the day; and
- C. In separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A))

Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the IDEA, using the definitions in ED Facts file specification FS002.

Measurement

- A. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular class 80% or more of the day) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.
- B. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served inside the regular class less than 40% of the day) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.
- C. Percent = [(# of children with IEPs aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements) divided by the (total # of students aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 with IEPs)] times 100.

Instructions

Sampling from the State's 618 data is not allowed.

States must report five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in kindergarten in this indicator. Five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in preschool programs are included in Indicator 6.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA, explain.

5 - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Part	Baseline	FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
A	2020	Target >=	79.00%	79.00%	79.00%	80.00%	80.00%
A	80.22%	Data	77.82%	77.86%	78.87%	80.22%	81.06%
B	2020	Target <=	7.00%	7.00%	7.00%	4.50%	4.50%
B	4.96%	Data	4.61%	4.56%	4.48%	4.96%	4.74%
C	2020	Target <=	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	6.50%	6.50%
C	6.09%	Data	6.03%	6.36%	6.49%	6.09%	5.83%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	81.00%	81.00%	82.00%	82.00%
Target B <=	4.10%	4.10%	3.80%	3.80%
Target C <=	6.25%	6.25%	6.00%	6.00%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been

developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	Total number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21	14,106
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	A. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day	11,562
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	B. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day	567
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	c1. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in separate schools	743
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	c2. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in residential facilities	119
SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS002; Data group 74)	08/30/2023	c3. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 in homebound/hospital placements	19

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Education Environments	Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class 80% or more of the day	11,562	14,106	81.06%	81.00%	81.97%	Met target	No Slippage
B. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside the regular class less than 40% of the day	567	14,106	4.74%	4.10%	4.02%	Met target	No Slippage
C. Number of children with IEPs aged 5 (kindergarten) through 21 inside separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placements [c1+c2+c3]	881	14,106	5.83%	6.25%	6.25%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

The VT AOE offered four office hour sessions on Child Count reporting in November and December of 2023, to LEAs' personnel who are responsible for submitting child count data to the state. The VT AOE also provides child count reporting instructions which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/document/child-count-reporting-instructions> and child count software instructions, which are posted at <https://education.vermont.gov/document/child-count-software-instructions>

The VT AOE maintains a School-Aged Educational Environment Calculation Example document which explains that an educational environment represents the setting in which a school aged child (5 in kindergarten to 21) with disabilities has been placed for educational services by their Individualized Education Program (IEP) as determined by their IEP team. Child Count data is reported by a student's educational environment, which represents the setting in which a student with disabilities has been placed for educational services by their IEP. Educators use this document as a guide to calculate a student's educational placement for Child Count. This tool can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-school-age-educational-environment-calculation-example>

The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to LRE for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-5>

5 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

5 - OSEP Response

5 - Required Actions

Indicator 6: Preschool Environments

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of children with IEPs aged 3, 4, and aged 5 who are enrolled in a preschool program attending a:

- A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and
- B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.
- C. Receiving special education and related services in the home.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(A))

Data Source

Same data as used for reporting to the Department under section 618 of the IDEA, using the definitions in ED*Facts* file specification FS089.

Measurement

- A. Percent = [(# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program) divided by the (total # of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs)] times 100.
- B. Percent = [(# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs attending a separate special education class, separate school or residential facility) divided by the (total # of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs)] times 100.
- C. Percent = [(# of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs receiving special education and related services in the home) divided by the (total # of children ages 3, 4, and 5 with IEPs)] times 100.

Instructions

Sampling from the State's 618 data is not allowed.

States must report five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in preschool programs in this indicator. Five-year-old children with disabilities who are enrolled in kindergarten are included in Indicator 5.

States may choose to set one target that is inclusive of children ages 3, 4, and 5, or set individual targets for each age.

For Indicator 6C: States are not required to establish a baseline or targets if the number of children receiving special education and related services in the home is less than 10, regardless of whether the State chooses to set one target that is inclusive of children ages 3, 4, and 5, or set individual targets for each age. In a reporting period during which the number of children receiving special education and related services in the home reaches 10 or greater, States are required to develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

For Indicator 6C: States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%).

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under IDEA section 618, explain.

6 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data (Inclusive) – 6A, 6B, 6C

Part	FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
A	Target >=	71.78%	71.78%	71.78%	68.00%	68.00%
A	Data	75.61%	73.12%	71.95%	68.70%	66.48%
B	Target <=	6.19%	6.19%	6.19%	0.81%	0.81%
B	Data	0.70%	0.63%	0.38%	0.81%	1.05%
C	Target <=				8.23%	8.23%
C	Data				8.23%	6.88%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective

of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Targets

Please select if the State wants to set baseline and targets based on individual age ranges (i.e. separate baseline and targets for each age), or inclusive of all children ages 3, 4, and 5.

Inclusive Targets

Please select if the State wants to use target ranges for 6C.

Target Range not used

Baselines for Inclusive Targets option (A, B, C)

Part	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
A	2020	68.70%
B	2020	0.81%
C	2020	8.23%

Inclusive Targets – 6A, 6B

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	69.00%	69.00%	70.00%	70.00%
Target B <=	0.71%	0.61%	0.51%	0.51%

Inclusive Targets – 6C

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target C <=	8.23%	8.23%	8.23%	8.23%

Prepopulated Data

Data Source:

SY 2022-23 Child Count/Educational Environment Data Groups (EDFacts file spec FS089; Data group 613)

Date:

08/30/2023

Description	3	4	5	3 through 5 - Total
Total number of children with IEPs	533	624	208	1,365
a1. Number of children attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	299	450	157	906
b1. Number of children attending separate special education class	1	0	1	2
b2. Number of children attending separate school	4	6	2	12
b3. Number of children attending residential facility	0	0	0	0
c1. Number of children receiving special education and related services in the home	27	31	7	65

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data - Aged 3 through 5

Preschool Environments	Number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5 served	Total number of children with IEPs aged 3 through 5	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A. A regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program	906	1,365	66.48%	69.00%	66.37%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility	14	1,365	1.05%	0.71%	1.03%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
C. Home	65	1,365	6.88%	8.23%	4.76%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Target 6C was met with a decline of students receiving services within the family's home. VT AOE hypothesizes that children continue to return to the preschool environment post-COVID. Though Targets for 6A and 6B were not met, there was no slippage.

The Part B Data Manager and 619 Coordinator continue to collaborate on messaging to the field on Indicator 6 and Child Count. Some LEAs continue to communicate difficulty with staffing and some challenges with serving students outside of the school. Individual TA is administered to LEAs to help improve practices based on data analysis, including root cause analysis.

Posted and live webinars included reviewing the Preschool Environments Toolkit and joint Inclusion document can be found <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/early-childhood-special-education>. Webinar and TA also included review and purpose of Indicator 6, reporting requirements, and additional resources. The November Indicator 6 webinar also included a follow-up office hour on least restrictive environments, inclusion, and resources.

Vermont currently has an Inclusion Coordinator who works closely with the 619 Coordinator. The Inclusion Coordinator is actively involved in the ECTA's Inclusion Community of Practice. The Inclusion Coordinator also attended the Inclusion Conference virtually and the OSEP Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C. The 619 Coordinator regularly attends the ECTA/NASDSE bi-monthly 619 group and IDC Data Quality Peer Group. The 619 Coordinator also attended sessions pertaining to Indicator 6 at the OSEP Leadership Conference this summer and the NASDSE and DEC conferences this fall.

Vermont is an Early MTSS state that supports inclusion and inclusive environments. Currently, Early MTSS expansion in childcare settings is supported

in the Preschool Development Grant that was awarded to the VT AOE in December 2022. A revised document for families focusing transition from early intervention to early childhood special education, with a concentration on inclusive environments was released this spring. (<https://education.vermont.gov/document/family-resource-moving-planning-your-childs-transition-childrens-integrated-services-cis>).

The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to preschool environments and other early childhood special education topics which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-6>

6 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

6 - OSEP Response

6 - Required Actions

Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: FAPE in the LRE

Results indicator: Percent of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs who demonstrate improved:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

Data Source

State selected data source.

Measurement

Outcomes:

- A. Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships);
- B. Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
- C. Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

Progress categories for A, B and C:

- a. Percent of preschool children who did not improve functioning = [(# of preschool children who did not improve functioning) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- b. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- c. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- d. Percent of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.
- e. Percent of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers = [(# of preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers) divided by (# of preschool children with IEPs assessed)] times 100.

Summary Statements for Each of the Three Outcomes:

Summary Statement 1: Of those preschool children who entered the preschool program below age expectations in each Outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.

Measurement for Summary Statement 1: Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in category (d)) divided by (# of preschool children reported in progress category (a) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (b) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (c) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (d))] times 100.

Summary Statement 2: The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in each Outcome by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program.

Measurement for Summary Statement 2: Percent = [(# of preschool children reported in progress category (d) plus # of preschool children reported in progress category (e)) divided by (the total # of preschool children reported in progress categories (a) + (b) + (c) + (d) + (e))] times 100.

Instructions

Sampling of **children for assessment** 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.)

In the measurement include, in the numerator and denominator, only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the targets. States will use the progress categories for each of the three Outcomes to calculate and report the two Summary Statements. States have provided targets for the two Summary Statements for the three Outcomes (six numbers for targets for each FFY).

Report progress data and calculate Summary Statements to compare against the six targets. Provide the actual numbers and percentages for the five reporting categories for each of the three Outcomes.

In presenting results, provide the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers." If a State is using the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS), then the criteria for defining "comparable to same-aged peers" has been defined as a child who has been assigned a score of 6 or 7 on the COS.

In addition, list the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator, including if the State is using the ECO COS.

7 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Part	Baseline	FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
A1	2014	Target >=	86.63%	87.13%	87.13%	83.67%	83.67%
A1	86.63%	Data	81.75%	Not Valid and Reliable	78.34%	83.67%	84.06%

A2	2014	Target >=	40.91%	41.41%	41.41%	48.04%	50.04%
A2	40.91%	Data	48.64%	Not Valid and Reliable	48.04%	56.04%	51.38%
B1	2014	Target >=	87.30%	87.80%	87.80%	87.80%	87.80%
B1	87.30%	Data	84.65%	Not Valid and Reliable	83.20%	87.16%	84.73%
B2	2014	Target >=	32.49%	32.99%	32.99%	32.40%	34.40%
B2	32.49%	Data	36.05%	Not Valid and Reliable	32.40%	36.08%	32.91%
C1	2014	Target >=	86.00%	86.50%	86.50%	86.50%	86.50%
C1	86.00%	Data	85.21%	Not Valid and Reliable	78.28%	81.92%	81.79%
C2	2014	Target >=	54.71%	55.21%	55.21%	55.87%	57.87%
C2	54.71%	Data	57.28%	Not Valid and Reliable	55.87%	65.15%	57.54%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A1 >=	84.67%	85.67%	86.67%	87.67%
Target A2 >=	52.04%	54.04%	56.04%	58.04%
Target B1 >=	87.80%	87.80%	87.80%	87.80%
Target B2 >=	36.40%	38.40%	40.40%	42.40%
Target C1 >=	86.50%	86.50%	86.50%	86.50%
Target C2 >=	59.87%	61.87%	63.87%	65.87%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

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FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Number of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs assessed

543

Outcome A: Positive social-emotional skills (including social relationships)

Outcome A Progress Category	Number of children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	2	0.37%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	69	12.71%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	201	37.02%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	105	19.34%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	166	30.57%

Outcome A	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome A, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)</i>	306	377	84.06%	84.67%	81.17%	Did not meet target	Slippage
A2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)</i>	271	543	51.38%	52.04%	49.91%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication)

Outcome B Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	1	0.18%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	81	14.92%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	288	53.04%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	141	25.97%

Outcome B Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	32	5.89%

Outcome B	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
B1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome B, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)</i>	429	511	84.73%	87.80%	83.95%	Did not meet target	No Slippage
B2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)</i>	173	543	32.91%	36.40%	31.86%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

Outcome C Progress Category	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
a. Preschool children who did not improve functioning	3	0.55%
b. Preschool children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-aged peers	74	13.63%
c. Preschool children who improved functioning to a level nearer to same-aged peers but did not reach it	152	27.99%
d. Preschool children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers	118	21.73%
e. Preschool children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers	196	36.10%

Outcome C	Numerator	Denominator	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
C1. Of those children who entered or exited the program below age expectations in Outcome C, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (c+d)/(a+b+c+d)</i>	270	347	81.79%	86.50%	77.81%	Did not meet target	Slippage
C2. The percent of preschool children who were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program. <i>Calculation: (d+e)/(a+b+c+d+e)</i>	314	543	57.54%	59.87%	57.83%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Part	Reasons for slippage, if applicable
A1	LEAs report difficulty with staff turnover and shortages especially in the area of early special educators and related service providers. According to U.S. Dept of Ed Raise the Bar report (https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/eliminating-educator-shortages-compensation-preparation-leadership) as of July 2023, local government education employment in Vermont remains 9.6% below pre-pandemic levels, the second lowest state. According to VT AOE's Special Education Personnel survey, in SY23, the number of vacancies among special education teachers in Vermont was 2.79 times the pre-pandemic level, resulting in a vacancy rate of 5.50%. In addition, the number of educators pursuing an alternate route for special education certification was 1.43 times the pre-pandemic level, which has resulted in 13.63% positions either vacant or filled with new and inexperienced special education teachers. VT AOE believes this had an impact on teaming and the consistency of rating which are vital under the child outcomes summary process which VT AOE uses under indicator 7.
A2	LEAs report difficulty with staff turnover and shortages especially in the area of Early Special Educators and Related Service Providers. According to U.S. Dept of Ed Raise the Bar report (https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/eliminating-educator-shortages-compensation-preparation-leadership) as of July 2023, local government education employment in Vermont remains 9.6% below pre-pandemic levels, the second lowest state. According to VT AOE's Special Education Personnel survey, in SY23, the number of vacancies among special education teachers in Vermont was 2.79 times the pre-pandemic level, resulting in a vacancy rate of 5.50%. In addition, the number of educators pursuing an alternate route for special education certification was 1.43 times the pre-pandemic level, which has resulted in 13.63% positions either vacant or filled with new and inexperienced special education teachers. This may have had an impact on teaming and the consistency of ratings which are vital under the Child Outcomes Summary Process which Vermont uses under Indicator 7.
B2	The difference between FFY2021 and FFY2022 was a 1.05% decrease. LEAs report difficulty with staff turnover and shortages especially in the area of Early Special Educators and Related Service Providers. According to U.S. Dept of Ed Raise the Bar report (https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/eliminating-educator-shortages-compensation-preparation-leadership) as of July 2023, local government education employment in Vermont remains 9.6% below pre-pandemic levels, the second lowest state. According to VT AOE's Special Education Personnel survey, in SY23, the number of vacancies among special education teachers in Vermont was 2.79 times the pre-pandemic level, resulting in a vacancy rate of 5.50%. In addition, the number of educators pursuing an alternate route for special education certification was 1.43 times the pre-pandemic level, which has resulted in 13.63% positions either vacant or filled with new and inexperienced special education teachers. This may have had an impact on teaming and the consistency of ratings which are vital under the Child Outcomes Summary Process which Vermont uses under Indicator 7.
C1	LEAs report difficulty with staff turnover and shortages especially in the area of Early Special Educators and Related Service Providers. According to U.S. Dept of Ed Raise the Bar report (https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/eliminating-educator-shortages-compensation-preparation-leadership) as of July 2023, local government education employment in Vermont remains 9.6% below pre-pandemic levels, the second lowest state. According to VT AOE's Special Education Personnel survey, in SY23, the number of vacancies among special education teachers in Vermont was 2.79 times the pre-pandemic level, resulting in a vacancy rate of 5.50%. In addition, the number of educators pursuing an alternate route for special education certification was 1.43 times the pre-pandemic level, which has resulted in 13.63% positions either vacant or filled with new and inexperienced special education teachers. This may have had an impact on teaming and the consistency of ratings which are vital under the Child Outcomes Summary Process which Vermont uses under Indicator 7.

Does the State include in the numerator and denominator only children who received special education and related services for at least six months during the age span of three through five years? (yes/no)

YES

Sampling Question	Yes / No
Was sampling used?	NO

Did you use the Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO) Child Outcomes Summary (COS) process? (yes/no)

YES

List the instruments and procedures used to gather data for this indicator.

Early Childhood Outcomes (ECO) entry, exit and progress data is determined and collected by LEA IEP teams through the IEP process. In 2013, VT AOE began to implement the use of the integrated ECO IEP. Instruments used to gather ECO entry, exit, and progress data are a local IEP decision, however, Teaching Strategies Gold (TSGOLD) is the state approved universal PreK progress monitoring assessment that is required two times per year. VT AOE does not use TSGOLD conversion tables. IEP teams are instructed to use TSGOLD as one source among multiple sources come to consensus; and inform entry, exit and progress data. ECO data is collected via the Child Count data collection two times per year and entered into the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) calculator for SPP/APR preparation. VT AOE's ECO Practice and Procedures Manual, along with ECTA resources, provide guidance, tools, and support for IEP teams to make determinations and reporting.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

In FFY2022, one LEA did not submit Early Childhood Outcomes data as part of their Child Count requirements. This resulted in a decreased total count in the number of preschool children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs assessed in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR data above. The VT AOE is providing the LEA additional preparation time for Child Count and is requiring the LEA to complete technical assistance with IDEA Data Center and VT AOE.

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to preschool outcomes for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-7>

7 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

7 - OSEP Response

7 - Required Actions

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 2022 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2022 response rate to the FFY 2021 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

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	79.80%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target >=	38.12%	38.12%	38.12%	79.80%	79.80%
Data	37.03%	34.31%	34.94%	79.80%	78.21%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	79.80%	80.80%	81.80%	82.80%

FFY 2022 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 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
1,086	1,382	78.21%	79.80%	78.58%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

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.

The same set of 18 statements was sent to all parents preschool through age 21 who had a child with an IEP during the 2022-23 school year. The same analysis of surveys happened for all submissions. Surveys to 15,128 parents of preschool through 12th-grade children were mailed. Included with the survey form was a cover letter and a self-addressed, stamped business reply envelope for the return of the completed survey, the log-in ID number needed to complete the survey via the Internet, as well as the web address of the online survey and a QR code link to access the survey via cellular or tablet devices. Some parents also phoned in their responses. All parents who did not respond to the first set of surveys were mailed a second letter.

The number of parents to whom the surveys were distributed.

15,128

Percentage of respondent parents

9.14%

Response Rate

FFY	2021	2022
Response Rate	8.77%	9.14%

Describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).

VT AOE defines representativeness in a category as a difference of 3.00 percentage points or less between the percent of eligible children in that category and the percent of children for whom surveys were returned.

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.

To determine if children whose parents who responded to this survey were representative of all children receiving special education services, race/ethnicity, disability category, gender, and age of the children whose families responded to the survey were compared with the same characteristics of all children eligible. All races and ethnicities were examined for representativeness: Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races. All disability categories are examined for representativeness: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Deaf-Blindness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Loss, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment. VT AOE uses male and female for gender. VT AOE uses 2 to 5, 6 to 11, 12 to 17, and 18 to 21 for age. VT AOE found that all but two demographic categories, disability category and age, demonstrated representative response rates when compared to Vermont's overall population.

The two demographic categories that demonstrated under/over-representation of a group at a rate greater than 3.00% included: age group and primary disability. For age group, the families of 12-17 year olds were underrepresented by 7.11% whereas the age group of 2-5 year olds was overrepresented by 6.51%. For primary disability, families of students with emotional disturbance were underrepresented by 3.25% whereas families of students with developmental delay were overrepresented by 4.44%.

All races and ethnicities as well as genders were within 3.00 percentage points of their respective proportions of children receiving special education services.

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

Messaging efforts are underway to better reach families and encourage them to respond by demonstrating the usefulness and impact of resulting data. VT AOE is continuing outreach to mental health organizations serving children with Emotional Disturbance, as well as within the new VT mentoring program sessions, the regional special education director meetings, the monthly nuggets sent to special education directors, the agency-wide weekly field memo, and the parent training information center's newsletter. In order to address the underrepresentation of families of students with emotional disturbance, VT AOE recognizes that comprehensive messaging to families of these students needs to speak to their specific needs in an IEP setting. VT AOE will continue to coordinate with partnered family centers and stakeholders to address this gap.

To target 12-17 year olds, VT AOE will continue to recommend to all special educators that they include reminders of the survey in their transition planning meetings with parents. VT AOE will reach out to designated agencies and secondary transition organizations asking them to remind parents to be on the lookout for surveys. In an effort to increase all groups' response rates, VT AOE is collaborating with the parent training information center, Vermont Family Network, to create a succinct video about the survey that describes: what to look for, how to fill it in, alternative response options (i.e. QR codes, phone call), why the survey is done, and what is done with the results. VT AOE will continue including the expanded list of response options, as well as work towards increasing the number of equitable access points that will ensure a representative population is aware of and motivated towards responding to the survey used to determine family engagement.

Lastly, the VT AOE will use the open-ended question answers to help drive the way that the underrepresented groups are given more equitable access – through the use of thematic qualitative analysis of responses from families of students aged 12-17 and those with emotional disturbance, the VT AOE's special education team will collaborate with the VT AOE's Family Engagement Coordinator to generate targeted responses to the needs of these specific populations as voiced by their own open-ended responses.

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

The final response rate was determined by comparing the number of surveys that were returned from families to the total number of surveys that were mailed out to families. In total, 15,128 surveys were mailed and 1,382 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 9.14%. VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data. One survey response item that helps the VT AOE understand its response rate is: "I was informed about this survey before it arrived", to which more than 70% of respondents said "NO" in FFY2022. VT AOE continues to work with stakeholders and partner groups to determine the best, non-biased mode of reaching families in order to increase response rates for underrepresented groups and total response rate for parents/families of students with disabilities.

Messaging efforts are underway to better reach families and encourage them to respond by demonstrating the usefulness and impact of resulting data. VT AOE is continuing outreach to mental health organizations serving children with Emotional Disturbance, as well as within the new VT mentoring program sessions, the regional special education director meetings, the monthly nuggets sent to special education directors, the agency-wide weekly field memo, and the parent training information center's newsletter.

To increase the response rate year over year, VT AOE collaborates with the survey vendor to implement modifications to the rollout that ensure equitable opportunity for all families to respond to the survey. VT AOE continues to work with special educators and directors of LEAs, parent/family groups, and mental health centers to encourage families to participate in the survey. One way in which the VT AOE has created more equitable access

to the survey is through inclusion of a QR code, internet link, and call-in option in addition to mail-based submission. Additional improvements to the modality with which VT AOE can collect responses will be iterative in order to ensure that maximum access points are available for all Vermont families. Feasibility of utilizing email to disseminate the survey redundantly to the mailed physical survey is under consideration and discussion with VT AOE's survey vendor. VT AOE is also looking into transitioning survey distribution responsibilities to the LEA/school.

Another improvement that VT AOE made to FFY2022 and will continue for the FFY2023 rollout of the survey is to send a second mailer to only those families who had not already submitted a survey response at that time.

VT AOE will continue to work with Vermont's parent information center and the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel on analyzing underrepresented groups and developing strategies to ensure accurate representation of families. For families of students aged 12-17, VT AOE will update materials related to transition planning to encourage family participation in the survey and collaborate with Vermont's parent information center to increase family awareness around the survey. For children with emotional disturbance, VT AOE recognizes the cross-sectional nature of this disability category and will work collaboratively with multiple stakeholders to generate more equitable access, awareness, and buy-in for the families of students with emotional disturbance.

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.

To determine if the families who responded to this survey were representative of the families of the children receiving special education services, race/ethnicity, disability, gender, and age characteristics of the children whose parents responded to the survey were compared with the same characteristics of all the children whose parents were mailed a survey. VT AOE defines representativeness in a category as a difference by 3.00 percentage points or less between the percent of eligible children in that category and the percent of children for whom surveys were returned.

VT AOE analyzed nonresponse bias by comparing the results for underrepresented groups to the results of all respondents. Both of the underrepresented groups were less likely to report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. Therefore, it is likely that nonresponse bias had a positive effect on Vermont's rate of parent involvement. Of the underrepresented groups, 69.13% of families of students with emotional disturbance, and 74.14% of families of 12-17 year olds on IEPs reported that schools facilitated parent involvement, compared to 78.58% of all respondents.

VT AOE continues to investigate the root causes that may prevent families from responding to the survey. Families had options for responding by paper/mail, a link for an online version, a number to call, and a QR code to use their tablet or cellular device. The combination of increased access points, demonstration of VT AOE's capability of using the data to enact change, and more amplified dissemination of awareness through stakeholders and partners will help Vermont's families to equitably and meaningfully participate in the survey.

The AOE is also engaged in eliminating potential nonresponse bias. We are actively looking to address accessibility by looking for different avenues for parents to access the survey; looking at increasing the timeframe window in which parents have to respond; increase outreach, and through the utilization of a second mailer to remind those families who have not participated.

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)

It is important to note that Vermont had a natural disaster occur during data collection for the survey used to measure meaningful family engagement in IEP teams; a flood occurred in early/mid-July that impacted the majority of the state. The resulting impact of these floods caused extensive damage to the state capital's downtown area as well as widespread impact to transportation systems (dirt roads being washed away), and public service (postal service being interrupted). It is not possible to know if/how many completed surveys were potentially lost during the flooding of postal routes (family mailboxes up through postal offices). It also impacted the intended timing of sending a second mailer to families. Given the impact on mail delivery systems the second mailer was delayed.

Each LEA receives its report along with recommendations and resources about Family Engagement practices and a self-assessment of the LEA's practices. VT AOE continues to look at incorporating parent engagement surveys into general education feedback mechanisms already in place.

The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to parent involvement for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-8>

8 - Prior FFY Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2022 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 demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

VT AOE reported that the FFY 2022 data are not from a response group that is representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services. To address this issue VT AOE will consider adding email dissemination of the initial surveys in addition to the existing mailed survey and transitioning survey distribution responsibilities to the LEA. VT AOE is actively looking to address accessibility by looking for different avenues for parents to access the survey; looking at increasing the timeframe window in which parents have to respond; increase outreach, and through the utilization of a second mailer to remind those families who have not participated.

VT AOE included its analysis of the extent to which the demographics of the parents responding are representative of the demographics of children receiving special education services.

8 - OSEP Response

8 - Required Actions

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.

Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Disproportionality

Compliance indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(C))

Data Source

State's analysis, based on State's Child Count data collected under IDEA section 618, to determine if the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification.

Measurement

Percent = [(# of districts, that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups, with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification) divided by the (# of districts in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups)] times 100.

Include State's definition of "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

Based on its review of the 618 data for the reporting year, describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification as required by 34 CFR §§300.600(d)(3) and 300.602(a), e.g., using monitoring data; reviewing policies, practices and procedures. In determining disproportionate representation, analyze data, for each district, for all racial and ethnic groups in the district, or all racial and ethnic groups in the district that meet a minimum n and/or cell size set by the State. Report on the percent of districts in which disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services is the result of inappropriate identification, even if the determination of inappropriate identification was made after the end of the FFY 2022 reporting period (i.e., after June 30, 2023).

Instructions

Provide racial/ethnic disproportionality data for all children aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and 6 through 21 served under IDEA, aggregated across all disability categories. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

States are not required to report on underrepresentation.

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of districts totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size for any racial/ethnic group.

Consider using multiple methods in calculating disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups to reduce the risk of overlooking potential problems. Describe the method(s) used to calculate disproportionate representation.

Provide the number of districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services and the number of those districts identified with disproportionate representation that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Targets must be 0%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken. If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

9 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	0.00%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Has the state established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.

0

Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education and related services	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n and/or cell size	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
0	0	51	0.00%	0%	0.00%	Met target	No Slippage

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?

YES

Define "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

The VT AOE uses a combination of techniques to measure whether any racial or ethnic group is identified for special education services at a higher rate than other groups. Weighted risk ratios are used when populations are large and diverse enough to support their accuracy; in other cases, alternate risk ratios are used. For both weighted and alternate risk ratios, VT AOE uses a threshold of 3.0. The VT AOE has a minimum cell size of 11 and does not use an n size for indicator 9. The minimum cell size is applied to both the target group (only districts in which the target group meets the minimum cell size are included) and the comparison group (districts in which the comparison group meets the minimum cell size use a weighted risk ratio and districts in which the comparison group does not meet the minimum cell size use an alternate risk ratio). The VT AOE uses 1 year of data for indicator 9.

The VT AOE has a 2-criterion system to identify LEAs with disproportionate representation in special education, used in combination with a minimum cell size for the target group. A challenge for the VT AOE in identifying disproportionate representation is the homogeneity of Vermont's student population. In both regular education and special education settings, more than 90 percent of the total student population has historically been reported as white. In addition, the counts of children receiving special education in each LEA are relatively small, averaging less than 300 students per LEA. Taken together, the homogeneity of the student population and relatively small child counts result in a situation where the addition of just one child into special education can create a large difference in the race/ethnicity composition of children receiving IDEA-B services in a LEA. To address these challenges, the VT AOE created the following method designed to provide meaningful, valid, and reliable identification for LEAs with disproportionate representation:

Minimum cell/n sizes: The VT AOE uses a minimum cell size of 11 to avoid volatility in Weighted Risk Ratios and to ensure compliance with our state's data privacy policy. The VT AOE does not use a minimum n size.

Criterion 1: A difference greater than or equal to 10 between the actual and expected counts of students with disabilities in a race/ethnicity category.

For a district to be identified with disproportionate representation, the VT AOE requires that there be at least 10 more students receiving special education services than would be expected. Expected counts are calculated in two steps. First, the LEA's total student count in a race/ethnic group is divided by the LEA's total student population to find the portion of students in that race/ethnic group. This result is then multiplied by the number of students with disabilities in the LEA.

Criterion 2: LEA-level Weighted Risk Ratio greater than 3.0 or LEA-level Alternate Risk Ratio greater than 3.0.

The VT AOE uses a Weighted Risk Ratio with a threshold of 3.0. If the comparison group cell size is less than 11, an Alternate Risk Ratio calculation is used, also with a threshold of 3.0.

These calculations are described in the IDEA Data Center's Technical Assistance Guide entitled "Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education" and found at <https://www.ideadata.org/resources/resource/140/methods-for-assessing-raciaethnic-disproportionality-in-special-education>

Describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services was the result of inappropriate identification.

The VT AOE used Child Count data and Fall Student Census data to complete the calculations and apply the criteria described above. No LEA in the State is identified with disproportionate representation in any disability category based on these criteria.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to disproportionate representation for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-9>

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

9 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

9 - OSEP Response

9 - Required Actions

Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Disproportionality

Compliance indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(C))

Data Source

State's analysis, based on State's Child Count data collected under IDEA section 618, to determine if the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification.

Measurement

Percent = [(# of districts, that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups, with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification) divided by the (# of districts in the State that meet the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups)] times 100.

Include State's definition of "disproportionate representation." Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

Based on its review of the section 618 data for the reporting year, describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate representation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification as required by 34 CFR §§300.600(d)(3) and 300.602(a), (e.g., using monitoring data; reviewing policies, practices and procedures). In determining disproportionate representation, analyze data, for each district, for all racial and ethnic groups in the district, or all racial and ethnic groups in the district that meet a minimum n and/or cell size set by the State. Report on the percent of districts in which disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories is the result of inappropriate identification, even if the determination of inappropriate identification was made after the end of the FFY 2022 reporting period (i.e., after June 30, 2023).

Instructions

Provide racial/ethnic disproportionality data for all children aged 5 who are enrolled in kindergarten and aged 6 through 21 served under IDEA. Provide these data at a minimum for children in the following six disability categories: intellectual disability, specific learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, speech or language impairments, other health impairments, and autism. If a State has identified disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories other than these six disability categories, the State must include these data and report on whether the State determined that the disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

States are not required to report on underrepresentation.

If the State has established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met that State-established n and/or cell size. If the State used a minimum n and/or cell size requirement, report the number of districts totally excluded from the calculation as a result of this requirement because the district did not meet the minimum n and/or cell size for any racial/ethnic group.

Consider using multiple methods in calculating disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups to reduce the risk of overlooking potential problems. Describe the method(s) used to calculate disproportionate representation.

Provide the number of districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size (if applicable) for one or more racial/ethnic groups identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories and the number of those districts identified with disproportionate representation that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Targets must be 0%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

10 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	0.00%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Data	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	0%	0%	0%	0%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Has the state established a minimum n and/or cell size requirement? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, the State may only include, in both the numerator and the denominator, districts that met the State-established n and/or cell size. Report the number of districts excluded from the calculation as a result of the requirement.

0

Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in specific disability categories	Number of districts with disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification	Number of districts that met the State's minimum n and/or cell size	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
0	0	51	0.00%	0%	0.00%	Met target	No Slippage

Were all races and ethnicities included in the review?

YES

Define “disproportionate representation.” Please specify in your definition: 1) the calculation method(s) being used (i.e., risk ratio, weighted risk ratio, e-formula, etc.); and 2) the threshold at which disproportionate representation is identified. Also include, as appropriate, 3) the number of years of data used in the calculation; and 4) any minimum cell and/or n-sizes (i.e., risk numerator and/or risk denominator).

The VT AOE uses a combination of techniques to measure whether any racial or ethnic group is identified for special education services in certain disability categories at a higher rate than other groups. Six disability categories are examined: autism, specific learning disabilities, other health impairments, emotional disturbance, speech and language impairments, and intellectual disability. Weighted risk ratios are used when populations are large and diverse enough to support their accuracy; in other cases, alternate risk ratios are used. For both weighted and alternate risk ratios, VT AOE uses a threshold of 3.0. The VT AOE has a minimum cell size of 11 and does not use an n size for indicator 10. The minimum cell size is applied to both the target group (only districts in which the target group meets the minimum cell size are included) and the comparison group (districts in which the comparison group meets the minimum cell size use a weighted risk ratio and districts in which the comparison group does not meet the minimum cell size use an alternate risk ratio). The VT AOE uses 1 year of data for indicator 10.

The VT AOE has a 2-criterion system to identify LEAs with disproportionate representation in the 6 selected special education disability categories, used in combination with a minimum cell size for the target group. A challenge for the VT AOE in identifying disproportionate representation is the homogeneity of Vermont’s student population. In both regular education and special education settings, more than 90 percent of the total student population has historically been reported as white. In addition, the counts of children receiving special education in each LEA are relatively small, averaging less than 300 students per LEA. Taken together, the homogeneity of the student population and relatively small child counts result in a situation where the addition of just one child into a disability category can create a large difference in the race/ethnicity composition of children receiving IDEA-B services for that disability in an LEA. To address these challenges, the VT AOE created the following method designed to provide meaningful, valid, and reliable identification for LEAs with disproportionate representation:

Minimum cell/n sizes: the VT AOE uses a minimum cell size of 11 to avoid volatility in Weighted Risk Ratios and to ensure compliance with our state’s data privacy policy. The VT AOE does not use a minimum n size.

Criterion 1: A difference greater than or equal to 10 between the actual and expected counts of students in a race/ethnicity group identified with the target disability category.

For a district to be identified with disproportionate representation, the VT AOE requires that there be at least 10 more students receiving services for any of the 6 disability categories than would be expected. Expected counts are calculated in two steps. First, the LEA’s total student count in a race/ethnic group is divided by the LEA’s total student population to find the portion of students in that race/ethnic group. This result is then multiplied by the number of students with the target disability in the LEA.

Criterion 2: LEA-level Weighted Risk Ratio greater than 3.0 or LEA-level Alternate Risk Ratio greater than 3.0.

The VT AOE uses a Weighted Risk Ratio with a threshold of 3.0. If the comparison group cell size is less than 11, an Alternate Risk Ratio calculation is used, also with a threshold of 3.0.

These calculations are described in the IDEA Data Center’s Technical Assistance Guide entitled “Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education” and found at <https://www.ideadata.org/resources/resource/140/methods-for-assessing-raciaethnic-disproportionality-in-special-education>

Describe how the State made its annual determination as to whether the disproportionate overrepresentation it identified of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories was the result of inappropriate identification.

The VT AOE used Child Count data and Fall Student Census data to complete the calculations and apply the criteria described above. No LEA in the State is identified with disproportionate representation in any disability category based on these criteria.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to LRE for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-10>

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

10 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

10 - OSEP Response

10 - Required Actions

Indicator 11: Child Find

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Child Find

Compliance indicator: Percent of children who were evaluated within 60 days of receiving parental consent for initial evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system and must be based on actual, not an average, number of days. Indicate if the State has established a timeline and, if so, what is the State's timeline for initial evaluations.

Measurement

a. # of children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received.

b. # of children whose evaluations were completed within 60 days (or State-established timeline).

Account for children included in (a), but not included in (b). Indicate the range of days beyond the timeline when the evaluation was completed and any reasons for the delays.

Percent = [(b) divided by (a)] times 100.

Instructions

If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Note that under 34 CFR §300.301(d), the timeframe set for initial evaluation does not apply to a public agency if: (1) the parent of a child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation; or (2) a child enrolls in a school of another public agency after the timeframe for initial evaluations has begun, and prior to a determination by the child's previous public agency as to whether the child is a child with a disability. States should not report these exceptions in either the numerator (b) or denominator (a). If the State-established timeframe provides for exceptions through State regulation or policy, describe cases falling within those exceptions and include in b.

Targets must be 100%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

11 - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	69.74%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	97.58%	97.13%	97.12%	59.28%	79.75%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

(a) Number of children for whom parental consent to evaluate was received	(b) Number of children whose evaluations were completed within 60 days (or State-established timeline)	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
200	191	79.75%	100%	95.50%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Number of children included in (a) but not included in (b)

9

Account for children included in (a) but not included in (b). Indicate the range of days beyond the timeline when the evaluation was completed and any reasons for the delays.

The number of days beyond the state established timeline range from 1 day to 72 days.

Common Reasons for Delay:

Family Engagement: LEAs in this category cited their delays as related to the family not responding to the school's communication, the parent not signing the required documents, and the student was absent for a large portion of the year.

Systems and Structures in need of refinement: LEAs continue to need support with systems for inclusive scheduling. LEAs in this category cited their delays as being related to not having enough time to complete all components of an evaluation and scheduling issues.

Overall Expertise and loss of institutional knowledge and staffing shortages: LEAs in this category cited their delays as being caused by special educators not knowing the required timelines, new staff not knowing what forms to use and when, and not having properly trained evaluators available to complete the required assessments.

Indicate the evaluation timeline used:

The State established a timeline within which the evaluation must be conducted

What is the State's timeline for initial evaluations? If the State-established timeframe provides for exceptions through State regulation or policy, describe cases falling within those exceptions and include in (b).

2362.2.1 (c) Initial Evaluations (34 CFR §300.301) states that "the initial evaluation shall be completed, and the report issued within sixty days from either: 1. The date parental consent has been received by the LEA. 2. The date on the LEA's Notice, which informs parents that it will be reviewing existing data as the sole basis for the initial evaluation." This differs from 34 CFR §300.301 by adding the language "and the report issued" as opposed to just completed.

What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?

State monitoring

Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.

Vermont state policy provides that data is to be collected on a 3-year cycle through a state developed spreadsheet for LEA self-reporting of completed initial evaluations. This results in three defined cohorts of LEAs, with each cohort mandated to participate in Cyclic Monitoring once every three years. For FFY2022, all LEAs in the FFY2022 Cyclic Monitoring cohort submitted data capturing all completed initial evaluations from July 1, 2022 until January 31, 2023. The State of Vermont Agency of Digital Services provides the VT AOE with a secure online file transfer system, which the AOE facilitates access to and provides related technical support for LEAs. Each LEA receives a written Monitoring Report, which includes description of any identified non-compliance, the statutory and regulatory requirements for which the LEA is in non-compliance, a statement informing the LEA that all findings of non-compliance must be corrected as soon as possible and in no case later than one year from the date of notification, required corrective actions, and a timeline for submission of evidence of correction. Student-level non-compliance is detailed in review sheets which accompany the monitoring reports, providing detailed information regarding each individual finding of non-compliance. Opportunities for differentiated technical assistance are provided in both the monitoring report and review sheets.

Districts who do not meet 100% compliance are placed in mandatory selective monitoring as part of the monitoring activities for this indicator from September 1 through November 30 the following school year, and the results are factored into the LEA's special education determination status. Districts who continue to not meet 100% compliance during selective monitoring are then assigned to mandatory targeted monitoring from March 1 to May 17 during the same school year as the preceding selective monitoring period. This provides LEAs with two distinct monitoring cycles during which they have opportunities to correct findings of non-compliance within one year following initial notification.

At the end of each yearly monitoring cycle, Vermont notifies LEAs of compliance and performance standings in a LEA Special Education Determination (LSED) report that details the non-compliance with citations and a list of action steps necessary to correct noncompliance. Depending on the LEA's LSED status, they may be required to submit a Corrective Action Plan whereby the LEA demonstrates (a) a plan to implement continuous improvement processes in order to identify source(s) of systemic noncompliance and then (b) develop and implement data-driven processes to create systems level change, followed by (c) data demonstrating the effects of the changes implemented during that school year.

After submitting data, LEA Indicator 11 data are collated by the monitoring team using a spreadsheet where, for every initial evaluation completed during the period of interest specified by the monitoring cycle, LEAs list the following: name of school, type of enrollment (public, private, independent school, or home study), student perm number, date of request of evaluation, date of EPT meeting, date in which parent consent was received, date of eligibility determination meeting, date of eligibility report provided to the parents, eligibility decision (eligible/not eligible for special education), type of evaluation for out of state transfer (initial or records review only), referral to IEP team, referral to 504 or EST team, use of Form 4, reason for delay related to student or family (if applicable), reasons for delay, date of denial, and reasons for denial. The entries are confirmed by an attestation signed by the special education director and superintendent as the final step of data submission.

The monitoring team reviews all data, including supporting documentation when applicable (e.g., Special Education Form 4), and maintains a record of the ratio of compliant to requested evaluations to be used in the subsequent results reports to LEAs.

In FFY2022, one LEA did not submit data as part of their requirements in cyclic monitoring. This resulted in a decreased total count in both (a) and (b) in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR data above. The VT AOE provided extensive support in the months leading up to the submission deadline through individual meeting, weekly open office hours attended by the LEA's director of special education, email, etc. The VT AOE continues to work with the LEA to ensure compliance with required actions and is presently reviewing data submitted during selective monitoring.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

In response to data indicating that LEAs needed additional support with this indicator, TA providers met with individual districts during the fall of 2023. These TA sessions were held with special education directors, coordinators, evaluation planning team members, and other administrators to review their indicator 11 data and determine successes and areas of improvement. Twenty-four districts throughout Vermont participated in the individual TA sessions. Many of these meetings illustrated a need for professional development for special educators who interact directly with forms and school-based evaluation teams. In November of 2023, the VT AOE offered a training for special educators in Vermont that focused on indicator 11, paperwork, and other IEP related timelines. The training was offered three times and in total, there were two hundred and seventy-two attendees, representing forty LEAs and independent schools across our state. The professional roles of the attendees included: special education teachers and case managers, directors of special education/student support services, special education coordinators, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, evaluation team members, administrative assistants, general educators, occupational therapists, assistant principals, and principals. In addition to participation from districts and schools, there were attendees representing Vermont Higher Education Collaborative, Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative, and the Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium.

During the live office hour sessions, the needs of the field were assessed, and several resources were created in response to the feedback received from LEAs. These resources included:

- Worksheets to Support Disability Determination for Specific Learning Disability for the basic skill areas of Oral Expression and Listening Comprehension: These checklists are traditionally completed for all elementary, middle, and high school students who have been referred to special education due to a suspected learning disability in the basic skill area of listening comprehension or oral expression. These checklists have also been created for mathematics, reading, and written expression (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/special-education-resources-for-special-educators-and-administrators>).
- Two case studies were written which included narratives and all corresponding paperwork (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/special-education-resources-for-special-educators-and-administrators#:~:text=Multilingual%20Learners-,Case%20Study%20%2D%20Mateo,-Meet%20Mateo>) and (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/special-education-resources-for-special-educators-and-administrators#:~:text=Functional%20Skills-,Case%20Study%20%2D%20Wesley,-Meet%20Wesley>) that aligns with a system of support and the special education rule changes. Office hours were offered in the spring to walk through each narrative and the forms involved in the process. In addition, the special education division partnered with the state's Multilingual Program Director to connect with multilingual teachers across the state and provide professional development specifically related to Mateo's case study and multilingual learners.
- Resources to Support Special Education Rule Changes: The AOE identified sets of resources and themes that are relevant to general educators, building and district leaders, and board member audiences. This document was recommended as a starting point for educational members to review as they acquaint themselves with how their individual roles might be impacted by the changes taking effect. <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/resources-to-support-special-education-rule-changes>.
- Every Students Succeeds Act and Research-Based Practices Guidance: The purpose of this guidance document is to support teams in considering the strength of evidence for particular practices being used in instruction and intervention, and to clarify the expectations related to research-based practices and special education eligibility (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/levels-of-evidence-and-research-based-practices>).

In Fall of 2022, the VT AOE released the K-12 Special Education Evaluation Implementation Guide (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/k12-special-education-evaluation-implementation-guide>). In August of 2023, the Vermont K-12 Special Education Evaluation Implementation Guide Diagnostic Tool (<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/vt-k-12-special-education-evaluation-implementation-guide-diagnostic-tool>) was shared with the field to support the application of the guide. The Vermont K 12 Special Education Evaluation Implementation Guide Diagnostic Tool Webinar (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ1MofnTkgw>) was also shared to support the use of the diagnostic tool. In addition, a live training was offered in October of 2023 to further explore the diagnostic tool and answer questions from the field.

For all the professional development opportunities described above, feedback forms have been used to gather data from the field to inform future professional development offerings. Once participants complete the feedback forms, they can receive credit hours that can be used towards relicensing. This incentive has provided a feedback loop that has been crucial in determining the next steps to best support the field.

In the upcoming year, the VT AOE will continue establishing companion documents to support the use of state created forms. Feedback forms utilized throughout the year have identified a need from the field for more professional development related to forms, paperwork, and special education processes in general. In response, a professional development opportunity is being prepared for the spring to cover IEP processes, timelines, and the required paperwork. Other possibilities for future technical assistance include additional case studies, updated worksheets to support adverse effect, and continued professional development around indicator 11 and compliance requirements.

As part of our continuous improvement of processes, the VT AOE will engage with IDEA Data Center for technical assistance in Child Find during FFY2023.

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
16	11	4	1

FFY 2021 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements

In FFY2021, 16 LEAs did not meet 100% compliance, these LEAs were notified on June 15, 2022 of their noncompliance and subsequent required actions. All 16 LEAs submitted additional data on November 2022 for initial evaluations completed between September 1, 2022 and November 15, 2022. 2 LEAs verified corrections of non-compliance by having 100% of student evaluations completed within the state timeline. The remaining 14 LEAs submitted additional data in June 2023 of initial evaluations completed between March 1, 2023 and May 17, 2023, 9 LEAs verified corrections of noncompliance by having 100% of student evaluations completed within the state timeline. VT AOE verified that these 11 LEAs are correctly

implementing the regulatory requirements of Child Find because these LEAs completed all initial evaluations within the state established timeline. VT AOE also verified that all students in which initial evaluations were beyond the state timeline have a completed evaluation and the evaluation report was sent to the parents. In total, 11 LEAs verified corrections of non-compliance within one year.

The remaining 5 LEAs submitted additional data in a submission on November 2023 for initial evaluations completed between September 1, 2023 and November 15, 2023. 4 LEAs verified corrections of noncompliance by having 100% of student evaluations completed within the state timeline. VT AOE verified that these 4 LEAs are correctly implementing the regulatory requirements of Child Find because these LEAs completed all initial evaluations within the state established timeline. VT AOE also verified that all student in which initial evaluations were beyond the state timeline have a completed evaluations and the evaluation report was sent to parents. In total 4 LEAs verified corrections of non-compliance beyond one year.

Describe how the State verified that each *individual case of noncompliance was corrected*

In FFY2021, 16 LEAs did not meet 100% compliance, these LEAs were notified on June 15, 2022 of their noncompliance and subsequent required actions including a review sheet of student-level non-compliance. VT AOE verified correction of each individual case of noncompliance within these 15 LEAs by communicating directly with LEAs through differentiated technical assistance and confirming date of completed evaluation and the date eligibility report was provided to the parents. VT AOE verified that all students in which initial evaluations were beyond the state established timeline have a completed evaluation and the evaluation report was sent to parents. Each LEA receives a written Monitoring Report after each submission, which includes verified corrections of non-compliance.

FFY 2021 Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Actions taken if noncompliance not corrected

In FFY2021, any LEA with non-compliance not verified as corrected was notified that their subsequent submission of data demonstrated non-compliance in the results report provided in June, 2022. This then placed the LEA in mandatory selective monitoring as part of the monitoring activities for this indicator from September 1 through November 30 2022, and the results were factored into the LEA’s special education determination status. Districts who continued to not meet 100% compliance during selective monitoring were then assigned to mandatory targeted monitoring from March 1 to May 17 2023. This provided LEAs with two distinct monitoring cycles during which they had opportunities to correct findings of non-compliance within one year following initial notification. LEAs who continued to not meet 100% compliance after this time, repeated targeted monitoring from September 1 through November 30, 2023.

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
FFY 2020	16	15	1

FFY 2020

Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the *regulatory requirements*

All LEAs that did not meet 100% compliance in FFY2020, were notified of their noncompliance and subsequent required actions. All LEAs with noncompliance submitted additional data in March 2022 leading to 1 LEA verifying corrections within one year, this is reported in the FFY2021 SPP/APR. Subsequently, all remaining LEAs submitted data in additional monitoring submissions from November 2022 to November 2023. As of November 2023, all but 1 LEA has verified corrections of noncompliance. In this monitoring period, VT AOE verified that these LEAs are correctly implementing the regulatory requirements of Child Find because these LEAs completed all initial evaluations within the state established timeline. VT AOE also verified that all students in which initial evaluations were beyond the state timeline have a completed evaluation and the evaluation report was sent to the parents.

Describe how the State verified that each *individual case of noncompliance was corrected*

All LEAs that did not meet 100% compliance in FFY2020, were notified of their noncompliance and subsequent required actions. All LEAs with noncompliance submitted additional data in March 2022 leading to 1 LEA verifying corrections within one year, this is reported in the FFY2021 SPP/APR. Subsequently, all remaining LEAs submitted data in additional monitoring submissions from November 2022 to November 2023. As of November 2023, all but 1 LEA has verified corrections of noncompliance. In this monitoring period, VT AOE verified that all students in which initial evaluations were beyond the state timeline have a completed evaluation and the evaluation report was sent to the parents. Each LEA receives a written Monitoring Report after each submission, which includes verified corrections of non-compliance.

FFY 2020

Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Actions taken if noncompliance not corrected

As of November 2023, 1 LEA has not yet verified corrections of noncompliance. This LEA is required to submit additional data related to Child Find and receive intensive technical assistance for procedures and process related to initial evaluations timelines. This LEA attended an VT AOE training that focused on indicator 11, paperwork, and other IEP related timelines in November of 2023. This LEA received a written Monitoring Report, which includes notification of non-compliance and a description of required actions.

11 - Prior FFY Required Actions

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2021, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 for this indicator. In addition, the State must demonstrate, in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, that the remaining 16 uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 were corrected.

When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 and each LEA with remaining noncompliance identified in FFY 2020: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction.

If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2021, although its FFY 2021 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2021.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

In the FFY2021 SPP/APR, VT AOE reported that sixteen LEAs with uncorrected findings of noncompliance were identified in FFY2021. Of these sixteen LEAs, 11 are verified as corrected within one year of notification; 4 are verified as corrected subsequent to one year. One LEA remains with findings of noncompliance not yet verified as corrected. VT AOE has verified for the LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 and FFY 2020 are correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements based on a review of updated data and has corrected each individual case of noncompliance. The remaining 2 LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2021 and FFY2020 not yet verified as corrected, the VT AOE has provided the LEAs a written Monitoring Report, which includes notification of non-compliance and a description of required actions.

11 - OSEP Response

11 - Required Actions

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2022, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2022 for this indicator. In addition, the State must demonstrate, in the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, that the remaining one uncorrected finding of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 and the remaining one uncorrected finding of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 were corrected. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2022 and each LEA with remaining noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 and FFY 2020: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP QA 23-01. In the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction. If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2022, although its FFY 2022 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2022.

Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

Compliance indicator: Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system.

Measurement

- a. # of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.
- b. # of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to their third birthdays.
- c. # of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.
- d. # of children for whom parent refusal to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services or to whom exceptions under 34 CFR §300.301(d) applied.
- e. # of children determined to be eligible for early intervention services under Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.
- f. # of children whose parents chose to continue early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday through a State's policy under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.

Account for children included in (a), but not included in b, c, d, e, or f. Indicate the range of days beyond the third birthday when eligibility was determined and the IEP developed, and the reasons for the delays.

Percent = [(c) divided by (a - b - d - e - f)] times 100.

Instructions

If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Targets must be 100%.

Category f is to be used only by States that have an approved policy for providing parents the option of continuing early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

12 - Indicator Data

Not Applicable

Select yes if this indicator is not applicable.

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	86.44%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	99.24%	100.00%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

a. Number of children who have been served in Part C and referred to Part B for Part B eligibility determination.	180
b. Number of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to third birthday.	11

c. Number of those found eligible who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	155
d. Number for whom parent refusals to provide consent caused delays in evaluation or initial services or to whom exceptions under 34 CFR §300.301(d) applied.	14
e. Number of children who were referred to Part C less than 90 days before their third birthdays.	0
f. Number of children whose parents chose to continue early intervention services beyond the child's third birthday through a State's policy under 34 CFR §303.211 or a similar State option.	0

Measure	Numerator (c)	Denominator (a-b-d-e-f)	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3 who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.	155	155	100.00%	100%	100.00%	Met target	No Slippage

Number of children who served in Part C and referred to Part B for eligibility determination that are not included in b, c, d, e, or f

0

Account for children included in (a), but not included in b, c, d, e, or f. Indicate the range of days beyond the third birthday when eligibility was determined and the IEP developed, and the reasons for the delays.

Attach PDF table (optional)

What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?

State monitoring

Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.

VT AOE uses sampling per cyclical monitoring. Notification letters and reminders were sent to seventeen (17) LEAs slated for FFY2022 Compliance Monitoring, which for this indicator involves the LEA completion of a state-developed tracking tool spreadsheet that contains IDEA Part C to Part B transition information. VT AOE requested from each LEA information such as: the child's name, date of birth, name of CIS/EI office notifying the LEA, the person submitting the data to the state from the LEA with the date submitting, the date that referral to Part B was received, date parental rights was provided to family, if the child was determined eligible for Part C less than 90 days before the child's third birthday (providing the range of days before the third birthday), date of the transition meeting, date of eligibility for Part B if determined eligible, as well as the date an IEP was developed, and the date of parental consent for the provision of the IEP services as well as placement into Part B. This tracking tool spreadsheet was submitted to the VT AOE from the LEA at two (2) periods over the course of the school year and was due on January 15 and June 1.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Five children under "b. Number of those referred determined to be NOT eligible and whose eligibility was determined prior to third birthday." were not determined eligible as they moved out of Vermont State prior to completing transition.

Follow-up technical assistance by the state was provided previous to, and after each submission date. The state has also created an Indicator 12 training video with a corresponding PowerPoint, held a live collaborative training webinar (inclusive of Early Interventionists and Early Childhood Special Education Coordinators/ Special Education Directors), and follow up office hours LEAs to answer any additional questions. The tracking tool used in submissions also gives LEAs an at-a-glance color-coded indication as they get closer to the child's third birthday. Recorded webinars on this indicator are posted on the Vermont ECSE webpage (<https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/early-education/early-childhood-special-education>).

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
			0

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected

12 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

12 - OSEP Response

12 - Required Actions

Indicator 13: Secondary Transition

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

Compliance indicator: Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

Data to be taken from State monitoring or State data system.

Measurement

Percent = [(# of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority) divided by the (# of youth with an IEP age 16 and above)] times 100.

If a State's policies and procedures provide that public agencies must meet these requirements at an age younger than 16, the State may, but is not required to, choose to include youth beginning at that younger age in its data for this indicator. If a State chooses to do this, it must state this clearly in its SPP/APR and ensure that its baseline data are based on youth beginning at that younger age.

Instructions

If data are from State monitoring, describe the method used to select LEAs for monitoring. If data are from a State database, include data for the entire reporting year.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target. Describe the method used to collect these data and if data are from the State's monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.

Targets must be 100%.

Provide detailed information about the timely correction of child-specific and regulatory/systemic noncompliance as noted in OSEP's response for the previous SPP/APR. If the State did not ensure timely correction of the previous noncompliance, provide information on the extent to which noncompliance was subsequently corrected (more than one year after identification). In addition, provide information regarding the nature of any continuing noncompliance, improvement activities completed (e.g., review of policies and procedures, technical assistance, training) and any enforcement actions that were taken.

If the State reported less than 100% compliance for the previous reporting period (e.g., for the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the data for FFY 2021), and the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance.

13 - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2009	22.60%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	100.00%	71.25%	10.53%	45.63%	61.18%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Number of youth aged 16 and above with IEPs that contain each of the required components for secondary transition	Number of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
75	142	61.18%	100%	52.82%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

Several LEAs had not received targeted and intensive training on Indicator 13 and also did not view the existing recorded trainings the VT AOE put together. The indicator 13 review is of course rigorous and even if only one item is flagged it makes the entire transition plan noncompliant. Each LEA who had an instance of noncompliance has access to intensive high quality technical assistance so they can resolve their findings of noncompliance.

What is the source of the data provided for this indicator?

State monitoring

Describe the method used to collect these data, and if data are from the State’s monitoring, describe the procedures used to collect these data.

A minimum of 10 sample plans are collected from each LEA in the three-year cyclic monitoring cohort, through a secure electronic platform. The plans are then reviewed for compliance, against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist, in 16 single areas, within the 8 elements of indicator 13. Plans found to be less than 100% compliant at an initial scoring and raising questions are then reviewed by multiple VT AOE staff.

As a result of the nature of non-compliance over the past few years, scrutiny of the OSEP 09-02 Memo, and further study of the State Guide on Identifying Non-compliance (February 2021), the VT AOE has modified its system, starting with the FFY2022 monitoring. Submissions are now due by February 15th and immediately reviewed. These results are the sole source of Indicator 13 compliance data for federal reporting. At the same time, the reviews are communicated to the districts, offering an opportunity for the correction of individual non-compliance during a brief window, prior to the issuance of written notification of findings to the districts. This ensures more timely corrections and prevents our state from falling into continued long-standing non-compliance. Both the results of the first submissions and of their corrections, if any, are noted in the reports the VT AOE issues to the districts. Non-compliance that is resolved during the pre-finding window is reported as “non-compliance verified as corrected within one year” in our federal report.

During FFY2022-Cyclic Monitoring, two LEAs did not submit transition plans and were consequently placed into Selective Monitoring (the first stage of escalated monitoring) for the Fall of 2023. One LEA submitted only 2 plans, instead of the prescribed 10, as this is all that was available after other, very recent monitoring activities.

Question	Yes / No
Do the State’s policies and procedures provide that public agencies must meet these requirements at an age younger than 16?	NO

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

The VT AOE uses a precise and comprehensive analysis system that lets VT AOE Technical Assistance staff readily see how each LEA performed across all 8 elements of indicator 13. After each monitoring cycle, all LEAs who need to make corrections to their IEP transition plans have access to the VT AOE post-secondary transition coordinator for further clarifications and guidance on corrections. The VT AOE also released a comprehensive Indicator 13 guide to writing high quality and complaint IEP transition plans. This document can be found here - <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-writing-quality-secondary-transition-ieps-that-include-the-required-elements-of-indicator-13.pdf>

Additionally, the VT AOE special education technical assistance team provided a variety of live trainings for the field which were then archived on the VT AOE website and available for viewing asynchronously. These trainings included:

- Indicator 13 Success Readiness Self Assessment Tool – a training on using the tool. This tool lets LEAs see what areas will help them improve their transition plans by looking at their whole system.
- Live Office hours on Transition Goals, Live Office Hours the 8 Elements of Indicator 13, Live Indicator 13 Training with Guest Presenter from NCSI.

During FFY2022-Cyclic Monitoring, two LEAs did not submit transition plans and were consequently placed into Selective Monitoring (the first stage of escalated monitoring) for the Fall of 2023. One LEA submitted only 2 plans, instead of the prescribed 10, as this is all that was available after other, very recent monitoring activities.

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021

Findings of Noncompliance Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected Within One Year	Findings of Noncompliance Subsequently Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
11	0	7	4

FFY 2021 Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements

The LEAs in this category received findings of noncompliance initially during FFY2021, as part of cyclic monitoring, and were then escalated to selective monitoring. During selective monitoring, LEAs must resubmit, corrected, each non-compliant plan (Prong 1), as well as additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). This is done to demonstrate full individual and systemic compliance. As with cyclic submissions, the documents for selective monitoring are reviewed for compliance in 16 single areas contained within 8 elements of indicator 13, against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. When the corrected transition plans demonstrate 100% compliance, they are closed out and the LEA is notified in writing. Through this process, the VT AOE verified that 7 LEAs findings of noncompliance were subsequently corrected.

In summary, when findings of noncompliance are identified:

1. LEAs must submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (prong 1).
 - 1a. If a student with a non-compliant plan has exited the district’s special education system (graduated, moved, transferred to 504 plan,...), the correspondent plan is supplanted by another student’s plan.
2. Additionally, LEAs must submit 10 additional transition plans (prong 2).
3. All plans are submitted through the state’s established means of collecting data.
4. Submitted transition plans are verified by the VT AOE for correction of non-compliance against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist.
5. When each transition plan submitted by an LEA is reviewed and found to be 100% compliant against the indicator 13 Checklist, the LEA is closed out via written notification.

Based on the findings done by checking the plans against the NTACT Indicator 13 checklist, the VT AOE Postsecondary Transition Coordinator put

together a 4-part training series focused on these two I-13 elements (transition assessments and annual IEP transition goals) in the fall of 2021 and required all LEAs who had noncompliant transition plans to attend. It was called the VT AOE Fall Indicator 13 Training series. The first training was all on transition assessments, the second was on annual transition goals, the third was a peer learning session for all LEAs who scored 90% or above to share what systems are working well for them with noncompliant LEAs. The fourth training was a comprehensive I-13 training covering all 8 elements. These trainings were recorded and are now housed in the VT AOE's secondary transition resource center (training 3 all elements coming soon). The postsecondary transition coordinator also met with each LEA that had plans that were out of compliance and went through each plan and explained why they were out of compliance and made sure the LEA understood what was wrong and how to fix it not just at face value but addressing the underlying systems that need to be in place for effective transition services for all of their students with disabilities. To see VT AOE's resources on postsecondary transition or to see the fall 2021 trainings please visit <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/resources-for-special-educators-and-administrators>

As a result of the nature of non-compliance over the past few years, scrutiny of the OSEP 09-02 Memo, and further study of the State Guide on Identifying Non-compliance (February 2021), the VT AOE has modified its system, starting with the FFY2022 monitoring. Submissions are now due by February 15th and immediately reviewed. These results are the sole source of Indicator 13 compliance data for federal reporting. At the same time, the reviews are communicated to the districts, offering an opportunity for the correction of individual non-compliance during a brief window, prior to the issuance of written notification of findings to the districts. This ensures more timely corrections and prevents our state from falling into continued long-standing non-compliance. Both the results of the first submissions and of their corrections, if any, are noted in the reports the VT AOE issues to the districts. Non-compliance that is resolved during the pre-finding window is reported as "non-compliance verified as corrected within one year" in our federal report.

In addition to the modification to the monitoring system described in the paragraph above, the VT AOE has also modified the monitoring schedule effective FFY2022. Selective monitoring status, the first escalated status after findings are made during cyclic monitoring, now occupies September through the end of November. Submission of corrected data described previously is due no later than November 30, 2022. This allows the VT AOE to report on the close-outs of any findings by OSEP's April 2023 SPP/APR clarification period. Should an LEA not correct previous findings during selective monitoring, it is then placed in targeted monitoring, due in June (data pull: January through March).

As a result of ongoing noncompliance, the VT AOE will continue to impose additional corrective actions on the LEAs that did not correct non-compliance in a timely manner (within one year from identification). The VT AOE continues to collect and review data to verify child-specific and systemic correction of non-compliance through selective and targeted monitoring. If an LEA is not yet correctly implementing the statutory/regulatory requirements for this indicator by June 1, the LEA will then return again to targeted monitoring status, with mandatory technical assistance and increased reporting requirements until the correction of noncompliance is verified. The VT AOE will not issue another finding but will continue to work with the LEA to correct and verify the correction of noncompliance.

0 LEAs corrected within one year. 7 LEAs corrected all noncompliant plans (prong 1) and submitted 10 additional plans (prong 2), all verified by the VT AOE as compliant via methods described earlier, after one year following initial notification in FFY2021.

Describe how the State verified that each individual case of noncompliance was corrected

The VT AOE reviewed all resubmitted transition plans and verified their correction against the NTACTION Indicator 13 Checklist. If the plans demonstrated full compliance, the finding was closed out and the LEA notified.

The VT AOE maintains written documentation of the verification of correction.

FFY 2021 Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Actions taken if noncompliance not corrected

4 LEAs not yet verified as corrected were placed in selective monitoring for the earlier half of FFY2022 with submission due November 30, 2022. The same 4 LEAs where findings were again not verified as corrected were then escalated into targeted monitoring during the latter half of FFY2022 with a submission deadline of June 1, 2023.

The districts identified as non-compliant during FFY2021 were placed in selective monitoring for the fall of FFY2022. This required the resubmission of non-compliant plans, corrected (Prong 1), and the submission of 10 additional plans (Prong 2) – as per OSEP Memo 09-02 - via the secure portal, by November 30, 2022.

Of these LEAs, those found with continued noncompliance in their selective monitoring submission were then escalated into targeted monitoring and repeated the same process during the earlier half of 2023. The VT AOE continued to verify the LEAs' compliance rate using the NTACTION indicator 13 Checklist. These submissions were due by June 1, 2023.

Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified Prior to FFY 2021

Year Findings of Noncompliance Were Identified	Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected as of FFY 2021 APR	Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected	Findings Not Yet Verified as Corrected
FFY 2020	11	6	5
FFY 2019	7	5	2

FFY 2020

Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the regulatory requirements

VT AOE verified that 6 of the LEAs that were found noncompliant during FFY2020, correctly implement the regulatory requirements related to indicator 13. To verify compliance, all LEAs that were found noncompliant during FFY2020 were placed into selective monitoring and were required to submit an additional 10 transition plans which VT AOE examined for compliance using the NTACTION Indicator 13 checklist.

During selective monitoring, All LEAs resubmitted, corrected, each non-compliant plan (Prong 1), as well as additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). This is done to demonstrate full individual and systemic compliance. As with cyclic submissions, the documents for selective monitoring are reviewed for compliance in 16 single areas contained within 8 elements of indicator 13, against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. When the corrected transition plans demonstrate 100% compliance, they are closed out and the LEA is notified in writing.

In summary, when findings of noncompliance are identified:

1. LEAs must submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (prong 1).
 - 1a. If a student has graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, their transition plan is supplanted by another student's transition plan.
2. Additionally, LEAs must submit a minimum of 10 additional transition plans (prong 2).
3. All plans are submitted through the state's established means of collecting data.
4. Submitted transition plans are verified by the VT AOE for correction of noncompliance by confirming that each plan demonstrates 100% compliance with the NTACT Indicator 13 checklist.
5. When each transition plan submitted by an LEA is reviewed and found to be 100% compliant against the indicator 13 checklist, the LEA is closed out via written notification.

During FFY2020, the VT AOE made initial findings based on one submission window, with submissions due on March 15, 2021. The VT AOE verified the correction of each instance of child-specific non-compliance and reviewed updated program data demonstrating 100% compliance with each statutory or regulatory requirement with which noncompliance was identified.

Describe how the State verified that each *individual case of noncompliance was corrected*

VT AOE verified that 6 of the LEAs that were found noncompliant during FFY2020, corrected each individual case of non-compliance. To verify compliance, all LEAs that were found noncompliant in FFY2020 were placed into selective monitoring and were required to re-submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (prong 1). Any student that had graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, their transition plan was supplanted by another student's transition plan. The VT AOE reviewed the transition plans and verified their compliance using the NTACT indicator 13 Checklist. For the 6 LEAs whose corrected transition plans demonstrated 100% compliance, the VT AOE closed out the finding and notified the LEA.

FFY 2020

Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Actions taken if noncompliance not corrected

VT AOE verified that 5 of the LEAs that were found noncompliant during FFY2020, are not yet verified as corrected. The 5 LEAs received findings of noncompliance initially during FFY2020 as part of cyclic monitoring. All LEAs that were found noncompliant in FFY2020 were placed into selective monitoring. During selective monitoring, LEAs were required to re-submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (prong 1). The transition plan of any student that has graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, is supplanted by another student's transition plan.

Additionally, the LEAs were required to submit additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). The transition plans were reviewed for compliance against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. For the transition plans that did not demonstrate full compliance, specific results were communicated to the LEA, with instructions for Technical Assistance, correction, and resubmission. These 5 LEAs are receiving intensive technical assistance for procedures and processes related to post-secondary transition planning and documentation.

As a result of ongoing non-compliance, the VT AOE continues to impose additional corrective actions on the LEAs that did not correct non-compliance. The VT AOE continues to collect and review data through targeted monitoring to resolve their noncompliance.

FFY 2019

Findings of Noncompliance Verified as Corrected

Describe how the State verified that the source of noncompliance is correctly implementing the *regulatory requirements*

The 7 LEAs that received findings of noncompliance initially during FFY2019 and not yet corrected as of FFY2021 were escalated to targeted monitoring. During targeted monitoring, these 7 LEAs resubmitted corrections to each non-compliant plan (Prong 1), as well as additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). This is done to demonstrate full individual and systemic compliance. As with cyclic submissions, the documents for selective monitoring are reviewed for compliance in 16 single areas contained within 8 elements of indicator 13, against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. 5 LEAs demonstrated 100% compliance, these LEAs received a written Monitoring Report, which included verified corrections of non-compliance.

In summary, when findings of noncompliance are identified:

1. LEAs must submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (Prong 1).
 - 1a. If a student has graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, their transition plan is supplanted by another student's transition plan.
2. Additionally, LEAs must submit a minimum of 10 additional transition plans (Prong 2).
3. All plans are submitted through the state's established means of collecting data.
4. Submitted transition plans are reviewed by the VT AOE against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist.
5. When each transition plan submitted by an LEA is reviewed and found to be 100% compliant against the indicator 13 checklist, the LEA is closed out via written notification.

Describe how the State verified that each *individual case of noncompliance was corrected*

The 7 LEAs that received findings of noncompliance initially during FFY2019 and not yet corrected as of FFY2021 were escalated to targeted monitoring. During targeted monitoring, these 7 LEAs resubmitted corrections to each non-compliant plan (Prong 1), as well as additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). This is done to demonstrate full individual and systemic compliance. As with cyclic submissions, the documents for selective monitoring are reviewed for compliance in 16 single areas contained within 8 elements of indicator 13, against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. 5 LEAs demonstrated 100% compliance, these LEAs received a written Monitoring Report, which included verified corrections of non-compliance.

In summary, when findings of noncompliance are identified:

1. LEAs must submit previously noncompliant transition plans with corrections (Prong 1).
 - 1a. If a student has graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, their transition plan is supplanted by another student's transition plan.
2. Additionally, LEAs must submit a minimum of 10 additional transition plans (Prong 2).
3. All plans are submitted through the state's established means of collecting data.
4. Submitted transition plans are reviewed by the VT AOE against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist.
5. When each transition plan submitted by an LEA is reviewed and found to be 100% compliant against the indicator 13 checklist, the LEA is closed out via written notification.

FFY 2019

Findings of Noncompliance Not Yet Verified as Corrected

Actions taken if noncompliance not corrected

VT AOE verified that 2 of the LEAs that were found noncompliant during FFY2019, are not yet verified as corrected. The 2 LEAs received findings of noncompliance initially during FFY2019 as part of cyclic monitoring. All LEAs that were found noncompliant in FFY2019 were placed into selective monitoring. During selective monitoring, all LEAs were required to re-submit previously noncompliant transition plans with revisions (prong 1). The transition plan of any student that has graduated, moved, or otherwise is no longer a student, is supplanted by another student's transition plan.

Additionally, the 2 LEAs were required to submit additional plans, previously not reviewed by the VT AOE (Prong 2). The transition plans were reviewed for compliance against the NTACT Indicator 13 Checklist. For the transition plans that did not demonstrate full compliance, specific results were communicated to the LEA, with instructions for Technical Assistance, correction, and resubmission. These 2 LEAs are receiving intensive technical assistance for procedures and processes related to post-secondary transition planning and documentation.

As a result of ongoing non-compliance, the VT AOE continues to impose additional corrective actions on the 2 LEAs that did not correct non-compliance. The VT AOE continues to collect and review data through targeted monitoring to resolve their noncompliance.

13 - Prior FFY Required Actions

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2021, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 for this indicator. In addition, the State must demonstrate, in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, that the remaining 11 uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 and seven remaining uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2019 were corrected. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021 and each LEA with remaining noncompliance identified in FFY 2020 and in FFY 2019: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP Memo 09-02. In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction.

If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2021, although its FFY 2021 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2021.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

In the FFY2021 SPP/APR, VT AOE reported that 11 LEAs were identified with findings of noncompliance. Of those 11 LEAs, 0 LEAs corrected findings of noncompliance within one year. 7 LEAs subsequently corrected findings of noncompliance and 4 LEAs are not yet verified as corrected. VT AOE has verified for the LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2021 are correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements based on review of updated data and has corrected each individual case of noncompliance. The remaining 4 LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2021 not yet verified as corrected, the VT AOE provided the LEAs a written Monitoring Report, which includes notification of noncompliance and description of required action.

For findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2020, 11 LEAs were not yet verified as corrected as of FFY2021 APR. Of those 11 LEAs, 6 LEAs were verified as corrected and 5 LEAs are not yet verified as corrected. VT AOE has verified for the LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2020 are correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements based on review of updated data and has corrected each individual case of noncompliance. The remaining 5 LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2020 not yet verified as corrected, the VT AOE provided the LEAs a written Monitoring Report, which includes notification of noncompliance and description of required actions.

For findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2019, 7 LEAs were not yet verified as corrected as of FFY2021 APR. Of those 7 LEAs, 5 LEAs were verified as corrected and 2 LEAs are not yet verified as corrected. VT AOE has verified for the LEAs with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2019 are correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements based on a review of updated data and has corrected each individual case of noncompliance. The remaining 2 LEAs within findings of noncompliance identified in FFY2019 not yet verified as corrected have been provided with a Monitoring, which includes notification of noncompliance and a description of required actions.

13 - OSEP Response

13 - Required Actions

Because the State reported less than 100% compliance for FFY 2022, the State must report on the status of correction of noncompliance identified in FFY 2022 for this indicator. In addition, the State must demonstrate, in the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, that the remaining four uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2021, five uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2020, and two uncorrected findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2019 were corrected. When reporting on the correction of noncompliance, the State must report, in the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, that it has verified that each LEA with findings of noncompliance identified in FFY 2022 and each LEA with remaining noncompliance identified in FFY 2021, FFY 2020, and FFY 2019: (1) is correctly implementing the specific regulatory requirements (i.e., achieved 100% compliance) based on a review of updated data such as data subsequently collected through on-site monitoring or a State data system; and (2) has corrected each individual case of noncompliance, unless the child is no longer within the jurisdiction of the LEA, consistent with OSEP QA 23-01. In the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, the State must describe the specific actions that were taken to verify the correction. If the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2022, although its FFY 2022 data reflect less than 100% compliance, provide an explanation of why the State did not identify any findings of noncompliance in FFY 2022.

Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / Effective Transition

Results indicator: Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:

- A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
- B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
- C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

State selected data source.

Measurement

- A. Percent enrolled in higher education = $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$.
- B. Percent enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school = $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$.
- C. Percent enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment = $[(\# \text{ of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment}) \div (\# \text{ of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school})] \times 100$.

Instructions

Sampling of youth who had IEPs and are no longer in secondary school is allowed. When sampling is used, submit a description of the sampling methodology outlining how the design will yield valid and reliable estimates of the target population. (See [General Instructions](#) on page 3 for additional instructions on sampling.)

Collect data by September 2023 on students who left school during 2021-2022, timing the data collection so that at least one year has passed since the students left school. Include students who dropped out during 2021-2022 or who were expected to return but did not return for the current school year. This includes all youth who had an IEP in effect at the time they left school, including those who graduated with a regular diploma or some other credential, dropped out, or aged out.

I. Definitions

Enrolled in higher education as used in measures A, B, and C means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis in a community college (two-year program) or college/university (four or more year program) for at least one complete term, at any time in the year since leaving high school.

Competitive employment as used in measures B and C: States have two options to report data under “competitive employment”:

Option 1: Use the same definition as used to report in the FFY 2015 SPP/APR, i.e., competitive employment means that youth have worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes military employment.

Option 2: States report in alignment with the term “competitive integrated employment” and its definition, in section 7(5) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). For the purpose of defining the rate of compensation for students working on a “part-time basis” under this category, OSEP maintains the standard of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This definition applies to military employment.

Enrolled in other postsecondary education or training as used in measure C, means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis for at least 1 complete term at any time in the year since leaving high school in an education or training program (e.g., Job Corps, adult education, workforce development program, vocational technical school which is less than a two-year program).

Some other employment as used in measure C means youth have worked for pay or been self-employed for a period of at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes working in a family business (e.g., farm, store, fishing, ranching, catering services).

II. Data Reporting

States must describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).

Provide the total number of targeted youth in the sample or census.

Provide the actual numbers for each of the following mutually exclusive categories. The actual number of “leavers” who are:

1. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school;
2. Competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education);
3. Enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education or competitively employed);
4. In some other employment within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed).

“Leavers” should only be counted in one of the above categories, and the categories are organized hierarchically. So, for example, “leavers” who are enrolled in full- or part-time higher education within one year of leaving high school should only be reported in category 1, even if they also

happen to be employed. Likewise, “leavers” who are not enrolled in either part- or full-time higher education, but who are competitively employed, should only be reported under category 2, even if they happen to be enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program.

States must compare the response rate for the reporting year to the response rate for the previous year (e.g., in the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, compare the FFY 2022 response rate to the FFY 2021 response rate), and describe strategies that will be implemented which are expected to increase the response rate year over year, 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 youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

III. Reporting on the Measures/Indicators

Targets must be established for measures A, B, and C.

Measure A: For purposes of reporting on the measures/indicators, please note that any youth enrolled in an institution of higher education (that meets any definition of this term in the Higher Education Act (HEA)) within one year of leaving high school *must* be reported under measure A. This could include youth who also happen to be competitively employed, or in some other training program; however, the key outcome we are interested in here is enrollment in higher education.

Measure B: All youth reported under measure A should also be reported under measure B, in addition to all youth that obtain competitive employment within one year of leaving high school.

Measure C: All youth reported under measures A and B should also be reported under measure C, in addition to youth that are enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program, or in some other employment.

Include the State’s analysis of the extent to which the response data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. States must include race/ethnicity in their analysis. In addition, the State’s analysis must include at least one of the following demographics: disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process.

If the analysis shows that the response data are not representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, 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 collected the data.

14 - Indicator Data

Historical Data

Measure	Baseline	FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
A	2009	Target >=	24.25%	24.25%	24.25%	17.00%	17.00%
A	24.22%	Data	21.94%	22.92%	23.31%	17.00%	14.57%
B	2009	Target >=	56.50%	56.50%	56.50%	64.37%	64.37%
B	56.40%	Data	62.58%	72.92%	77.91%	64.37%	70.86%
C	2009	Target >=	72.00%	72.00%	72.00%	75.30%	75.30%
C	71.97%	Data	78.71%	88.89%	86.50%	75.30%	78.81%

FFY 2021 Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	18.00%	20.10%	22.20%	24.30%
Target B >=	66.37%	68.37%	70.37%	72.37%
Target C >=	78.30%	81.30%	84.30%	87.30%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont’s FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont’s Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State’s targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Total number of targeted youth in the sample or census	895
Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	196
Response Rate	21.90%
1. Number of respondent youth who enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school	37
2. Number of respondent youth who competitively employed within one year of leaving high school	118
3. Number of respondent youth enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education or competitively employed)	10
4. Number of respondent youth who are in some other employment within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed).	5

Measure	Number of respondent youth	Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
A. Enrolled in higher education (1)	37	196	14.57%	18.00%	18.88%	Met target	No Slippage

Measure	Number of respondent youth	Number of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (1 +2)	155	196	70.86%	66.37%	79.08%	Met target	No Slippage
C. Enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment (1+2+3+4)	170	196	78.81%	78.30%	86.73%	Met target	No Slippage

Please select the reporting option your State is using:

Option 1: Use the same definition as used to report in the FFY 2015 SPP/APR, i.e., competitive employment means that youth have worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes military employment.

Response Rate

FFY	2021	2022
Response Rate	17.46%	21.90%

Describe the metric used to determine representativeness (e.g., +/- 3% discrepancy in the proportion of responders compared to target group).

The VT AOE defined representativeness in a category as a difference of 3.00 percentage points or less between the percent of eligible youth in that category and the percent of youth for whom surveys were returned.

Include the State's analyses of the extent to which the response data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. States must include race/ethnicity in its analysis. In addition, the State's analysis must include at least one of the following demographics: disability category, gender, geographic location, and/or another demographic category approved through the stakeholder input process.

To determine if youth who responded to this survey were representative of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, race/ethnicity, disability category, gender, age, and exit reason of the youth who responded to the survey were compared with the same characteristics of all youth eligible. All races and ethnicities were examined for representativeness: Hispanic or Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races. The survey disability categories are defined as: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Emotional Disturbance, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability and All Other Disabilities which includes Hearing Loss, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment. VT AOE uses male and female for gender. VT AOE uses 14 to 18 and 19 to 22 for age at exit. VT AOE uses dropped out and all other reasons, which includes graduated with high school diploma, received certificate, and reached maximum age, for exit reason.

VT AOE defines representativeness in a category as a difference by 3.00 percentage points or less between the percent of eligible youth in that category and the percent of respondent youth.

VT AOE found that in 4 categories Vermont did not meet this bar for representativeness; disability category, gender, age and exit reason. Youth who dropped out were underrepresented among survey respondents by 7.88 percentage points. Gender was also not representative with males underrepresented by 4.09 percentage points. The disability category of Emotional Disturbance was underrepresented by 3.72 percentage points. Youth aged 19 to 22 at exit were underrepresented by 3.01 percentage points.

All Race/Ethnicity categories were within 3.00 percentage points of their respective proportions of eligible youth and were determined to be representative. All disability categories other than Emotional Disturbance were representative of eligible youth.

The response data is representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school. (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.

The VT AOE will be continuing and refining strategies initiated in FFY2021 to improve representativeness by reaching underrepresented youth in the categories of Emotional Disturbance, dropouts, males, and youth aged 19 to 22 at exit. VT AOE is reviewing the results of the two strategies implemented FFY2021: a letter with a QR code to instantly begin filling out the online post school outcomes survey, and a representativeness check at the halfway point in the data collection to further target as-yet underrepresented groups. In FFY2022 a mid-survey collection representativeness check led to slight increases in responsiveness of the most underrepresented groups; VT AOE will seek to enhance the strategy to improve its effectiveness and further target underrepresented groups.

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

The VT AOE uses a highly experienced Indicator 14 contractor in SUNY Potsdam Institute for Applied Research for collecting survey responses. Beginning FFY2021, a letter was sent to the former students with a QR code that they can scan with their phone and instantly begin filling out the online post school outcomes survey. Any targeted youth that does not fill the survey out online automatically goes into a queue to receive a phone survey. The VT AOE believes this practice will reach more youth for Indicator 14 and will increase the response rate overall. Additionally, this strategy allows youth a choice to complete the survey using written instead of spoken communication, which may appeal to individuals who decline a phone survey, and thereby increase the response rate of underrepresented groups.

In addition, VT AOE was awarded the Disability Innovation Fund Pathways to Partnerships grant and will be leveraging the funding to improve the Post School Outcomes Survey responsiveness. Feedback from stakeholder groups indicate that some youth, particularly those in underrepresented groups, decline to take the survey because they don't understand or trust the process. As part of the grant administration, a pilot group of three LEAs will work with Vermont's parent training information center, Vermont Family Network, to increase accuracy of contact information and inform former students and their parents of the upcoming survey. If response rates improve for pilot group LEAs, VT AOE will scale the approach for all Vermont LEAs. By including this work in the grant, VT AOE believes we will improve our response rate across all former high school youth who were on IEPs at the time of exit, particularly underrepresented groups. This grant is in its first year, which is a planning year, so the benefit of the grant won't be seen for another year.

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 youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

Vermont's FFY2022 post-school outcomes survey had 196 respondents. Among the respondents, 4 categories were underrepresented: the exiting category dropped out (-7.88 percentage points), males (-4.09 percentage points), the disability category Emotional Disturbance (-3.72 percentage points), and the age-at-exit group 19-22 (-3.01 percentage points). No demographic category was overrepresented by 3.00 percentage points or more.

VT AOE analyzed nonresponse bias by comparing the results for underrepresented groups to the results of all respondents. Youth who dropped out were much less likely to be in higher education within one year after leaving high school, but more likely to be competitively employed, enrolled in other education or training, or not engaged in education or work; therefore, the lower response rates of these youth likely had a positive effect on Vermont's data for measure A, B, and C. Male youth were more likely to be competitively employed or in some other employment within one year after leaving high school, but less likely to be enrolled in higher education; therefore, the lower response rates of male youth likely had a positive effect on Vermont's data for measure A and a minimal effect on measures B and C. Youth with emotional disturbance were more likely to be competitively employed but less likely to be enrolled in higher education within one year after leaving high school; therefore, the lower response rates of these youth likely had a small positive effect on Vermont's data for measures A and C and a minimal effect on measure B. Youth aged 19-22 at exit were less likely to be enrolled in higher education or competitively employed but more likely to be enrolled in other education or training within one year after leaving high school; therefore, the lower response rates of these youth likely had a positive effect on Vermont's data for measures A and B. The effect of nonresponse among youth aged 19-22 at exit on measure C was minimal.

To minimize bias, VT uses a neutral and objective entity for Indicator 14 survey administration and results calculation, the SUNY Potsdam Institute for Applied Research. Strategies to promote response from a broad cross-section of youth include sending a letter to former students with a QR code that they can scan with their phone and instantly begin filling out the online post school outcomes survey, performing a representativeness check halfway through survey administration and targeting underrepresented groups.

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

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to post-school outcomes for special education administrators and educators which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/special-education-resources-for-special-educators-and-administrators#secondary-transition>

VT AOE plans to remind all LEAs to update contact information prior to student's exiting. This way, the contracted vendor has the most up to date contact info which should help increase the response rate.

14 - Prior FFY Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2022 data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, 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 youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

Response to actions required in FFY 2021 SPP/APR

Vermont reported that 4 categories were underrepresented in Post School Outcomes Survey responses compared to the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school: the exiting category dropped out (-7.88 percentage points), males (-4.09 percentage points), the disability category Emotional Disturbance (-3.72 percentage points), and the age group 19-22 (-3.01 percentage points). No demographic category was overrepresented by 3.00 percentage points or more.

Vermont reported that VT AOE utilized strategies in FFY2022 to promote a response rate that is representative of all youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school: (1) sending a letter to former students with a QR code that they can scan with their phone and instantly begin filling out the online post school outcomes survey, and (2) performing a representativeness check halfway through survey administration and targeting underrepresented groups. Vermont also reported plans for specific work around this indicator as part of the DIF Pathways to Partnerships grant that Vermont was awarded. Each pilot high school will be working with Vermont's parent training information center around increased accuracy of contact information as well as informing former students and their parents of the upcoming survey. If this strategy proves to be successful, VT AOE will scale it for all of Vermont's high schools.

14 - OSEP Response

14 - Required Actions

In the FFY 2023 SPP/APR, the State must report whether the FFY 2023 data are representative of the demographics of youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, 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 youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school.

Indicator 15: Resolution Sessions

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Results Indicator: Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

Data collected under section 618 of the IDEA (IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey in the ED Facts Metadata and Process System (EMAPS)).

Measurement

Percent = (3.1(a) divided by 3.1) times 100.

Instructions

Sampling is not allowed.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

States are not required to establish baseline or targets if the number of resolution sessions is less than 10. In a reporting period when the number of resolution sessions reaches 10 or greater, develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%).

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data under IDEA section 618, explain.

States are not required to report data at the LEA level.

15 - Indicator Data

Select yes to use target ranges

Target Range not used

Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2022-23 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/15/2023	3.1 Number of resolution sessions	0
SY 2022-23 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section C: Due Process Complaints	11/15/2023	3.1(a) Number resolution sessions resolved through settlement agreements	0

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators, Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	55.00%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target >=	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%
Data	11.11%	16.67%	100.00%	100.00%	80.00%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%	60.00%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

3.1(a) Number resolutions sessions resolved through settlement agreements	3.1 Number of resolutions sessions	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
0	0	80.00%	60.00%		N/A	N/A

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

Fewer than 10 resolution sessions were held.

VT AOE posts due process decisions on the dispute resolution webpage (<https://education.vermont.gov/mediation-due-process-and-administrative-complaints>) and updated the administrative complaint form, including expanding the library of languages that the form is offered in online (<https://www.cognitiforms.com/VermontAgencyOfEducation/AdministrativeComplaintForm>).

The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to resolution sessions for special education administrators and educators which can be found at: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-15> . The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to resolution sessions for parents, which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/resources-for-families/dispute-resolution>

15 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

15 - OSEP Response

The State reported fewer than ten resolution sessions held in FFY 2022. The State is not required to provide targets until any fiscal year in which ten or more resolution sessions were held.

15 - Required Actions

Indicator 16: Mediation

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: Effective General Supervision Part B / General Supervision

Results indicator: Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.

(20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Data Source

Data collected under section 618 of the IDEA (IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey in the ED Facts Metadata and Process System (EMAPS)).

Measurement

Percent = $(2.1(a)(i) + 2.1(b)(i))$ divided by 2.1 times 100.

Instructions

Sampling is not allowed.

Describe the results of the calculations and compare the results to the target.

States are not required to establish baseline or targets if the number of mediations is less than 10. In a reporting period when the number of mediations reaches 10 or greater, develop baseline and targets and report on them in the corresponding SPP/APR.

States may express their targets in a range (e.g., 75-85%).

If the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data under IDEA section 618, explain.

States are not required to report data at the LEA level.

16 - Indicator Data

Select yes to use target ranges

Target Range not used

Prepopulated Data

Source	Date	Description	Data
SY 2022-23 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/15/2023	2.1 Mediations held	36
SY 2022-23 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/15/2023	2.1.a.i Mediations agreements related to due process complaints	2
SY 2022-23 EMAPS IDEA Part B Dispute Resolution Survey; Section B: Mediation Requests	11/15/2023	2.1.b.i Mediations agreements not related to due process complaints	26

Select yes if the data reported in this indicator are not the same as the State's data reported under section 618 of the IDEA.

NO

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the

effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2005	63.00%

FFY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Target >=	82.00%	82.00%	82.00%	65.00%	65.00%
Data	70.83%	64.29%	67.86%	52.00%	80.65%

Targets

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	65.00%	65.00%	65.00%	66.00%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

2.1.a.i Mediation agreements related to due process complaints	2.1.b.i Mediation agreements not related to due process complaints	2.1 Number of mediations held	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
2	26	36	80.65%	65.00%	77.78%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)

VT AOE posts due process decisions on the dispute resolution webpage (<https://education.vermont.gov/mediation-due-process-and-administrative-complaints>) and updated the administrative complaint form, including expanding the library of languages that the form is offered in online (<https://www.cognitofrms.com/VermontAgencyOfEducation/AdministrativeComplaintForm>).

The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to mediation for special education administrators and educators which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/technical-assistance-requests-and-professional-development/state-performance-plan-resources-by-indicator#indicator-16>. The VT AOE maintains and updates a webpage for resources related to mediation for parents, which can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/resources-for-families/dispute-resolution>

16 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

16 - OSEP Response

16 - Required Actions

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Measurement

The State's SPP/APR includes an SSIP that is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for children with disabilities. The SSIP includes each of the components described below.

Instructions

Baseline Data: The State must provide baseline data that must be expressed as a percentage and which is aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) (SiMR) for Children with Disabilities.

Targets: In its FFY 2020 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2022, the State must provide measurable and rigorous targets (expressed as percentages) for each of the six years from FFY 2020 through FFY 2025. The State's FFY 2025 target must demonstrate improvement over the State's baseline data.

Updated Data: In its FFYs 2020 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, due February 2022 through February 2027, the State must provide updated data for that specific FFY (expressed as percentages) and that data must be aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) Children with Disabilities. In its FFYs 2020 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, the State must report on whether it met its target.

Overview of the Three Phases of the SSIP

It is of the utmost importance to improve results for children with disabilities by improving educational services, including special education and related services. Stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, local educational agencies, the State Advisory Panel, and others, are critical participants in improving results for children with disabilities and should be included in developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the SSIP and included in establishing the State's targets under Indicator 17. The SSIP should include information about stakeholder involvement in all three phases.

Phase I: Analysis:

- Data Analysis;
- Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity;
- State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities;
- Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies; and
- Theory of Action.

Phase II: Plan (which, in addition to the Phase I content (including any updates)) outlined above):

- Infrastructure Development;
- Support for local educational agency (LEA) Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices; and
- Evaluation.

Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation (which, in addition to the Phase I and Phase II content (including any updates)) outlined above):

- Results of Ongoing Evaluation and Revisions to the SSIP.

Specific Content of Each Phase of the SSIP

Refer to FFY 2013-2015 Measurement Table for detailed requirements of Phase I and Phase II SSIP submissions.

Phase III should only include information from Phase I or Phase II if changes or revisions are being made by the State and/or if information previously required in Phase I or Phase II was not reported.

Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation

In Phase III, the State must, consistent with its evaluation plan described in Phase II, assess and report on its progress implementing the SSIP. This includes: (A) data and analysis on the extent to which the State has made progress toward and/or met the State-established short-term and long-term outcomes or objectives for implementation of the SSIP and its progress toward achieving the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities (SiMR); (B) the rationale for any revisions that were made, or that the State intends to make, to the SSIP as the result of implementation, analysis, and evaluation; and (C) a description of the meaningful stakeholder engagement. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

A. Data Analysis

As required in the Instructions for the Indicator/Measurement, in its FFYs 2020 through 2025 SPPs/APRs, the State must report data for that specific FFY (expressed as actual numbers and percentages) that are aligned with the SiMR. The State must report on whether the State met its target. In addition, the State may report on any additional data (e.g., progress monitoring data) that were collected and analyzed that would suggest progress toward the SiMR. States using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model) should describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR if that was not described in Phase I or Phase II of the SSIP.

B. Phase III Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

The State must provide a narrative or graphic representation, (e.g., a logic model) of the principal activities, measures and outcomes that were implemented since the State's last SSIP submission (i.e., February 1, 2023). The evaluation should align with the theory of action described in Phase I and the evaluation plan described in Phase II. The State must describe any changes to the activities, strategies, or timelines described in Phase II and include a rationale or justification for the changes. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

The State must summarize the infrastructure improvement strategies that were implemented, and the short-term outcomes achieved, including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up. The State must describe the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2022 APR, report on anticipated outcomes to be obtained during FFY 2023, i.e., July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024).

The State must summarize the specific evidence-based practices that were implemented and the strategies or activities that supported their selection and ensured their use with fidelity. Describe how the evidence-based practices, and activities or strategies that support their use, are intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes,

and/or child outcomes. Describe any additional data (e.g., progress monitoring data) that was collected to support the on-going use of the evidence-based practices and inform decision-making for the next year of SSIP implementation.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

The State must describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts and how the State addressed concerns, if any, raised by stakeholders through its engagement activities.

Additional Implementation Activities

The State should identify any activities not already described that it intends to implement in the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2022 APR, report on activities it intends to implement in FFY 2023, i.e., July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) including a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes that are related to the SiMR. The State should describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.

17 - Indicator Data

Section A: Data Analysis

What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?

To improve the proficiency of mathematics performance for students with disabilities in grades 3, 4, and 5.

Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission? (yes/no)

NO

Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model)? (yes/no)

YES

Provide a description of the subset of the population from the indicator.

Participation is open to all LEAs. In SY2022-2023, 10 LEAs were required to participate in SSIP resulting from Local Special Education Determinations.

Is the State’s theory of action new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

NO

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-vt-ssip-theory-of-action>

Progress toward the SiMR

Please provide the data for the specific FFY listed below (expressed as actual number and percentages).

Select yes if the State uses two targets for measurement. (yes/no)

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2018	12.50%

Targets

FFY	Current Relationship	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	Data must be greater than or equal to the target	13.50%	14.00%	14.50%	15.00%

FFY 2022 SPP/APR Data

Number of Students in grade 3 through 5 in participating LEAs proficient in Mathematics State Assessments	Number of Students in grade 3 through 5 in participating LEAs taking Mathematics State Assessments	FFY 2021 Data	FFY 2022 Target	FFY 2022 Data	Status	Slippage
58	589	3.09%	13.50%	9.85%	Did not meet target	No Slippage

Provide the data source for the FFY 2022 data.

Please describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR.

The reporting period for this SSIP: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023 (SY2022-23) Mathematics proficiency data from the VTCAP and alternate assessment are collected and analyzed by the staff in the VT AOE Data Management and Analysis Division (DMAD). The VT AOE Special Education Team also analyzed these data points to explore correlations with other SPP/APR indicators. Aggregate data for all 10 LEAs participating in SSIP are provided by the VT AOE DMAD. Reports are provided by grade and by disability status with comparisons for non-SSIP participating LEA sites. The aggregate results are then provided to the VT SSIP Evaluation Team to allow for further data interpretation and SiMR reporting.

VT AOE contracted with a new state assessment vendor for both the general and alternate assessment in FFY2022. Due to the changes in the assessments, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SSIP report.

Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR? (yes/no)

YES

Describe any additional data collected by the State to assess progress toward the SiMR.

The VT AOE SSIP has collected additional data to assess the degree of progress toward the SiMR. This included Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data (Indicators 5, specifically 5a and 5b), parent involvement data (Indicator 8), and data to assess professional learning outcomes. The term "professional learning" is used to refer to multiple methods used to increase the knowledge and skills of SSIP participants to implement VTmtss and evidence-based mathematics practices. The multiple methods include: systems and instructional coaching, training, opportunities for collaboration with other implementing schools and LEAs, and resource provision.

In SY2022-23, a professional development series for instructional staff was offered to all SSIP sites, staff from 9 out of 10 SSIP Supervisory Unions/School Districts (SU/SDs) participated in this series. A total of 75 participants attended the training sessions. Participants included general and special educators, administrators, academic coaches, and systems coaches. Across the trainings, the average pre-test score measuring knowledge of the training content was 67%, increasing to 76% at post-test. Participants also reported the trainings were high quality, relevant, useful, and employed adult learning practices.

Research has demonstrated the importance of students receiving their primary instruction in general education settings. Students in general education settings are more likely to score proficient on content assessments. Reviewing LRE data from the last five years provided information on the type of educational settings in which students are receiving mathematics instruction.

During SY2022-2023, 92% of students from participating SSIP SU/SDs in grades 3-5 received 80% or more of their instruction in general education settings, comparable to the state average of 93%. The percentage of students in SSIP sites receiving 80% or more of their instruction in general education settings increased by 3% from the previous year, while the state average increased by 1%. Based on these data alone, it is difficult to explain the differences between LRE rates statewide and in SSIP SU/SDs. As the SSIP sample is so much smaller, there is expected to be more year-to-year variance than in the state-level data. The small sample size can impact LRE rates positively or negatively.

The SY2022-23 Parent Engagement survey showed that 79.4% of parents with children with disabilities in participating SSIP sites reported involvement as a means of improving services and results, compared to 78.4% of parents of children with disabilities statewide reporting involvement.

Participating SU/SDs were supported in using data to review and use in writing Continuous Improvement Plans.

Did the State identify any general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period? (yes/no)

YES

Describe any data quality issues, unrelated to COVID-19, specific to the SiMR data and include actions taken to address data quality concerns.

Two ongoing data quality concerns have provided challenges to a more comprehensive evaluation of the SiMR and implementation of VT SSIP. These include the measurement of the fidelity of implementation of VT SSIP systems and instructional coaching and the collection of student achievement data.

Fidelity of Implementation

To assess the degree to which the VT SSIP systems coaching was implemented with fidelity the VT SSIP Systems Process, Planning, and Outcome Tool (SPPOT) was created. During the summer 2022, the SSIP Evaluation Team and SSIP systems coaches reviewed the SPPOT for potential improvements.

During SY2022-23 the SPPOT was revised by the Transformation team. The goal of the revisions focused on ensuring alignment between the form and the state's Continuous Improvement protocols and templates. Systems coaches began utilizing the revised form in January of 2023. The SPPOT was used with ten LEAs in SY2022-23. A review of completed SPPOTs highlighted a need to clarify the purpose of systems coaching to align to the SSIP and SiMR, as many districts expressed a desire to focus on other topics (e.g. secondary transition, social, emotional, and behavioral well-being) through the SSIP systems coaching. Feedback from both systems coaches and district leaders indicated that the changes to SSIP recruitment (e.g. identifying participating districts based on LSED monitoring results) contributed to district leaders associating SSIP with general compliance rather than the SiMR specifically. Systems coaches and district leaders also provided feedback in June 2023 that the revised SPPOT was overly complicated and felt more like required paperwork than a meaningful adaptive leadership process designed to support systems change at the district level. Based on this feedback, the transformation team committed to revising the SPPOT again for the 2023-24 school year.

To assess the degree to which the SSIP instructional coaching was implemented with fidelity, the VT Mathematics Scale for Instructional Growth tool, aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Practice Standards, was established. As described in previous SSIP reports, this tool was originally designed for use as an observational rubric but was modified to allow for self-reflection in response to data collection challenges. Teachers participating in the professional development series were asked to complete this self-reflection tool at two points during the year. Unfortunately, following staff turnover at the VT AOE, the spring data was unavailable for review. Results of the fall data (n=41) indicate that the majority of instructional staff rated their skills below proficient (e.g. either "emergent" or "developing" for: the use of goal setting (63%) and differentiation (72%). Instructional staff responses indicated somewhat higher levels of proficiency on the use of data to drive instruction (50% proficient) and student engagement (62% proficient).

Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Section B: Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

Please provide a link to the State's current evaluation plan.

<https://education.vermont.gov/documents/edu-vt-ssip-evaluation-plan>

Is the State's evaluation plan new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

NO

Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period:

Infrastructure improvement strategies used by the VT SSIP include (1) multi-level teaming infrastructure, (2) VTmtss Implementation/Systems Coaching, (3) Mathematics Professional Learning (Training and Coaching), (4) stakeholder engagement.

Teaming Infrastructure

The SSIP Transformation Team includes key personnel from the VT AOE Monitoring and TA teams and the VTmtss team. External members included the NCSI TA provider and the SSIP external evaluator, and the SSIP systems coaches. The Transformation Team is a key component in facilitating SSIP feedback loops, providing regular opportunities for team members to learn from SSIP coaches on how to better support implementation. This team met every three weeks during this reporting period.

VTmtss Implementation/Systems Coaching

The primary focus of SSIP systems coaching was to support LEA implementation of VTmtss strategies, with an emphasis on using data gathered through the Local Special Education Determinations (LSEDs) and the VTmtss process to improve mathematics instructional and intervention practices, leading to improved student outcomes. During SY2022-23, there were 115 systems coach contacts with participating LEAs. Coaching sessions most frequently addressed alignment to inter-division work (VTmtss and Education Quality; n=72), SPPOT (n=45), and CIP alignment (n=39). The SSIP Transformation Team continually reviewed the systems coaching tools and processes used to support LEAs and schools, based on feedback from the systems coaches and SSIP participants. As discussed previously, the SPPOT was modified based on feedback received.

Mathematics Professional Learning (Training and Coaching)

SSIP professional development series designed for instructional staff was provided during SY2022-23, involving 73 participants total, including at least one from each SSIP participating site. The purpose of the series was to build collective efficacy across a system in which leaders support teachers (general education, special education, interventionist) to meet the needs of all students while increasing understanding and use of math EBPs in core and intervention classrooms. The series consisted of six 1.5-hour sessions designed to introduce evidence-based practices identified in the IES Practice Guide on Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades. Each session was offered twice a month in order to allow participants to select the date and time that worked best with their schedule and support regular participation across all SSIP participating sites. Instructional Coaching was offered to participants who attended this series in April and May, following delays in identifying and finalizing contracts with a provider. Both district level staff who were asked to identify building level staff to attend this series and instructional staff were the focus of this additional coaching.

Stakeholder Engagement

During SY2022-23 there were two SSIP site stakeholder meetings among SSIP Participants. The orientation meeting (October 19, 2022 and October 21, 2022) was held virtually with 22 individuals participating in SSIP. The purpose of the meeting was to share data from the previous school year, to provide an overview of professional learning to be provided in SY2022-23, and to seek input from participants on how to improve professional learning.

End-of-year meetings to review the SSIP goals and objectives, to share data from SY2022-23, and to gather feedback on how to improve SSIP programming were held for both systems coaching participants (June 20th, 2023) as well as instructional staff (June 1st, 2023). These meetings provided opportunities to collect both qualitative and quantitative data (via polls, etc.) to inform the Transformation Team's planning for SSIP programming during the 2023-24 school year.

VT AOE SSIP staff met with the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) in February 2023 to share the results from the SY2021-22 and to seek their input on the implementation and scale-up activities of the SSIP. During this meeting, the VT-SEAP members provided feedback on proposed SIMR target changes. Again, their feedback was mostly in the form of questions about why the SIMR was only for grades 3-5 when the greatest impact might be in early grades. Concern was also expressed about removing the targeted ED disability category (done 3 years ago because of the difficulty accessing the low n-size).

Describe the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved for each infrastructure improvement strategy during the reporting period including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Please relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SIMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up.

Teaming

The SSIP Transformation Team met as scheduled during SY2022-23. The Transformation Team is responsible for monitoring and providing support to the SSIP systems and instructional coaches to facilitate their work with LEAs and schools. The SSIP Impact Survey was administered during a focus group session of district level administrators on June 20, 2023. Eight of 10 SSIP participating SU/SDs completed the survey. 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that VT AOE Staff and SSIP consultants have the capacity to support and sustain effective mathematics instruction, while 50% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that VT AOE Staff and SSIP consultants have the necessary capacity to support SU/SD's use of an intervention system within VTmtss framework. The immediate outcome from Teaming allows LEAs to be more effective in systems change, progress toward the SIMR and sustainability of systems improvement efforts.

VTmtss Implementation/Systems Coaching

The primary focus of SSIP systems coaching was to support LEA implementation of VTmtss strategies, with an emphasis on using data gathered through the Local Special Education Determinations (LSEDs) and the VTmtss process to improve mathematics instructional and intervention practices, leading to improved student outcomes. Beginning in SY22-23, LEAs with longstanding LSED compliance issues were required to participate in SSIP.

Responses on the June 2023 impact survey indicated mixed opinions on the impact of SSIP systems coaching on the districts' ability to: (a) develop district plans and goals, (b) develop plans and goals specifically related to instructional improvement, (c) develop plans and goals specifically related to compliance with LSED monitoring, (d) implement the VTmtss framework, (e) use data to inform district structures and systems, (f) use data to inform classroom instruction, and (7) knowledge related to high quality instructional practices. For example, with regard to SSIP systems coaching impacted SU/SDs ability to implement the VTmtss framework, half of the respondents indicated they felt there was "no impact" while the other half indicated that there was "moderate" or "high" impact. Perhaps the most agreement indicated on the impact survey was the fact that 5 of 8 respondents (63%) indicated "no" or "minimal" impact of SSIP systems coaching on their ability to develop plans and goals specifically related to compliance with LSED monitoring.

Mathematics Professional Learning (Training and Coaching)

SSIP professional development series designed for instructional staff was provided during SY2022-23, involving 73 participants total, including at least one from each SSIP participating site. A total of 57 (78%) participants attended 2 or more sessions in the series, while 34 (47%) attended 4 or more sessions, and 8 (11%) attended all sessions. Although participation varied across SSIP participating sites, 4 of 10 participating SSIP sites had teams of between 3 and 17 staff attend 4 or more sessions in the series. All participants were asked to provide feedback on each session throughout the year. Feedback survey results indicate that the majority of participants felt sessions were relevant (83%), useful (73%), and high quality (84%).

To understand changes in knowledge observed throughout the series, participants were asked to rate their knowledge related to each specific learning objective both before the training and after training on a four option Likert scale. Results indicated that across all learning objectives and sessions, participants ratings increased as a result of the training, with an average pre-rating of 2.68, compared to an average post-rating of 3.04. Additionally, a survey of teachers' knowledge and use of evidence-based mathematics practices was administered once in the fall (n=66) and again in the spring (n=26) to understand changes throughout the series. Results indicated a high level of agreement with each item at both time points. The largest change between fall and spring results was a 14-percentage point increase in participants indicating that they specifically teach mathematics vocabulary (from 79% to 92%). In the fall, only 32% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that many of their students had a deep understanding of mathematics, as compared to only 19% of respondents in the spring.

Despite some implementation delays and challenges, participant feedback on each PD session was overwhelmingly positive, and additional data highlights additional need for professional development and feedback aligned to the SiMR. Despite minimal evidence from teacher surveys about changing instructional practices, the transformation team frequently discussed opportunities for systems coaches to leverage feedback and data from instructional staff with district and school administrators. In this way, the transformation team was able to better integrate systems and instructional level supports this year, when compared to previous years.

Instructional Coaching was offered to participants who attended this series in April and May, following delays in identifying and finalizing contracts with a provider.

A total of 4 participants expressed interest in instructional coaching. Three in-person instructional coaching sessions were held across 3 SSIP participating SU/SDs. Both district level staff who were asked to identify building level staff to attend this series and instructional staff who actively participated in this series provided feedback on the perceived value of this series. Despite feedback that participation was challenging due to staffing and/or coverage concerns, the majority of participants indicated that each session was relevant (83%), useful (73%), and high quality (84%).

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement was assessed through evaluation surveys implemented after each math professional development session. This included quantitative satisfaction and impact feedback, but more importantly, rich qualitative data were also collected to inform the following session. During this reporting period, there were three stakeholder meetings.

A meeting was held with the VT SEAP during SY2022-23 to gather feedback on VT AOE SSIP activities, gain input on future plans, and assist in reviewing the targets for the SSIP SiMR to ensure sustainability of systems improvement efforts.

Transformation team members met with instructional staff who participated in the Professional Development series to review and collect feedback (both quantitative and qualitative) on SSIP implementation. Participants described challenges related to attending PD sessions during the school day, and most (62%) indicated a preference for in-person learning experiences. Still, many participants expressed an interest in learning more about specific intervention programs for students who struggle in mathematics, as opposed to overarching best practices. A few participants also highlighted the importance of systems (e.g. distributed leadership) at the school level to disseminate best practices and information from the PD series for sustained improvement.

Did the State implement any new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

The Transformation team met during the summer (July 13th, 2023) to reflect on SSIP implementation, progress, and next steps.

Teaming

The current teaming structure will continue in SY2023-24. The SSIP Transformation team discussed the importance of having representation from both the systems and the instructional coaches. Historically, challenges identifying and/or finalizing contracts with vendors have posed limitations to this teaming element. Moving forward, the transformation team will continue to meet regularly. Additionally, VT AOE staff are engaged in internal conversations around teaming opportunities for further aligning the state's SPDG and SSIP work.

VTmtss Implementation/Systems Coaching

The team structure will continue to support the same LEA Implementation Teams, during SY23-24. The Transformation team plans to continue on with the same set of participating SU/SDs, while additional planning around future recruitment and participation requirements is clarified.

As described previously, in response to feedback from LEAs, the Transformation team committed to revising the SPPOT again for SY2023-24. Revisions will focus on clarifying the purpose of SSIP supports and the SiMR, and ensuring that the completion of the tool is meaningful for both systems coaches and district teams. Specifically, the tool will be revised to support the development of mutually beneficial goals, norms, and process/outcome measures.

Mathematics Professional Learning (Training and Coaching)

During SY2023-24, the VT AOE re-released the instructional coaching RFP to be implemented in the Spring of 2024. Additionally, VT AOE staff will

meet with systems coaches and LEA teams to better understand existing PD structures and ensure that SSIP instructional supports are aligned with existing infrastructure to the greatest extent possible.

The use of the mathematics fidelity of implementation tool (renamed the VT SSIP Math Practices Scale for Instructional Growth) will provide an accurate measure of how well teachers are implementing the desired mathematical practice areas with fidelity. This will also help mitigate data quality issues described previously.

Stakeholder Engagement

Existing stakeholder engagement strategies will continue. This includes ongoing meetings and communication (through coaches) with SSIP LEA and school participants, teacher feedback, regular meetings with the VT-SEAP state-wide stakeholder group meetings, and cross-SEA division conversations. We will continue to explore other methods of stakeholder engagement to augment the current activities. Additionally, the VT AOE will explore further opportunities to align SPDG and SSIP initiatives. Due to the changes in statewide assessments, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official ED Facts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

List the selected evidence-based practices implement in the reporting period:

1. Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
2. Professional learning opportunities and resources that are aligned with the CCSS /NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices, and "Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades" from the ies.ed.gov .
3. Data analysis and use of data to drive systems planning and mathematics instruction (progress monitoring modules- NCII)
4. Systems and instructional coaching

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (VTmtss):

During SY2022-23, the VTmtss team has a dedicated team member to serve on the SSIP Transformation team. The VTmtss Framework is based on the most recent research and evidence related to implementing MTSS equitably so that all students have access to rigorous content and high-quality supports and interventions. The VTmtss representative to the SSIP Transformation team supports the alignment of SSIP supports with other existing tools, frameworks, and guidance.

Professional Learning:

In SY2022-23, a professional development series for instructional staff was offered to all SSIP sites, the purpose of the professional development series was to increase participants' knowledge and ability to implement Evidence Based Practices in mathematics instruction, based upon the IES Practice Guide: Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades. The series included six virtual 1.5-hour sessions.

Professional learning opportunities and resources that are aligned with the CCSS Mathematics Practices/NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices and "Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades" from the ies.ed.gov.

During SY2022-23, SSIP Instructional Supports included a professional development series for instructional staff from SSIP participating sites aligned with the CCSS /NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices, and "Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades" from the ies.ed.gov . The job-embedded PD series, which included optional instructional coaching support, was designed to provide on-going supports throughout the year to drive improved instructional practice in SSIP participating schools.

Data analysis and use of data to drive systems planning and mathematics instruction:

The VT AOE SSIP Supports reflect best practices in the use of data to drive systems. At the state level, the VT AOE and SSIP Transformation team use data to inform the design of SSIP supports. This includes the use of a formal logic model and evaluation plan, and the regular review of process (e.g. PD Feedback) and outcome (e.g. student achievement in math) indicators. Similarly, systems coaches collaborate with LEA teams to support the use of data (e.g. school and classroom level benchmarking and progress monitoring) to inform LEA level systems and infrastructure. SSIP instructional supports emphasized instructional practices to support the effective use of data in the classroom. As challenges are identified, the SSIP Transformation team works collaboratively to address any root causes and align supports to the SiMR.

Systems and Instructional Coaching:

VT AOE SSIP has focused on improving the capacity of SSIP and LEA/school coaches to support ongoing VTmtss implementation and improved instructional practices. As stated previously, there were 115 systems coaching activities during SY2022-23. In addition, Instructional coaching was offered to all staff who participated in the professional development series. The VT SSIP Core Team and other VT AOE staff provided support and guidance to the SSIP systems and instructional coaches, as needed.

Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its use, is intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g. behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child outcomes.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (VTmtss)/Systems coaching

The VTmtss Framework's five components include A Systemic and Comprehensive Approach, Effective Collaboration, High-Quality Instruction and Intervention, Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment, and Professional Expertise. Research has shown that schools implementing a well-designed MTSS framework are in a better position to support high-quality instruction, increased data literacy practices by teachers and leaders, provide appropriate support for all students, and reduce false negatives to special education evaluations. Act 173 requires all LEAs to have MTSS as part of a Response to Intervention (RTI) model for Specific Learning Disability Determinations by July 1, 2023. The SSIP model includes MTSS and Systems Coaching to improve SU/district policies, procedures and practices related to grade 3-5 mathematics instruction for students with disabilities.

Professional learning opportunities and resources that are aligned with the CCSS/NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices, as well as the EBPs within the IES practice guides. The PD for teachers provided support to teachers to change instruction to meet student needs and seek to close achievement gaps.

Data analysis and use of data to drive systems planning and mathematics instruction.

Instructional Coaching

The three evidence-based practices listed above are addressed together in this paragraph. The VT AOE offered SSIP sites mathematics professional

learning opportunities and resources that are aligned with the CCSS Mathematics Practices and NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices and this last SY focused more heavily on the math EBPs to support more student needs. These include the use of math precise language, systemic instruction, multiple representations, number lines, word problems and timed activities. This includes training sessions, and instructional coaching with an emphasis on data analysis and the use of the data to inform and drive instruction. It is through these learnings, coaching, and changes in practice that we hope to improve teacher practices and ultimately, impact mathematics proficiency levels for all students with disabilities.

Describe the data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change.

The SPPOT provides a structure to guide and collect data to measure the progress of LEAs' implementation of the essential components of VTmtss. The development and review of the SPPOT are facilitated by the systems coaches to support each LEA's Leadership Team. The review of the SPPOT is an ongoing continuous improvement process to guide implementation and assess the attainment of the identified process and outcome measures.

The VT Mathematics Scale for Instructional Growth tool and process is designed to align with the CCSS Practice Standards and the NCTM eight effective practices and was created to identify instructional practices that required additional professional learning support, either in additional training and/or sustained coaching. During the 2022-2023 SY the tool was not used during a coaching observation to measure fidelity directly, but rather as a self-reflection tool. As described previously, available data (Fall only; n=41) indicate that the majority of instructional staff rated their skills below proficient (e.g. either "emergent" or "developing" for: the use of goal setting (63%) and differentiation (72%). Instructional staff responses indicated somewhat higher levels of proficiency on the use of data to drive instruction (50% proficient) and student engagement (62% proficient).

Describe any additional data (e.g. progress monitoring) that was collected that supports the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.

Not applicable. All data collected have already been discussed.

Provide a summary of the next steps for each evidence-based practices and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (VTmtss)/Systems Coaching

We plan on continuing the use of systems coaches and the SPPOT to support LEA Leadership Teams to implement targeted components of the VTmtss framework. Systems coaches will be provided greater support by the VT SSIP Transformation Team in the development and review of the SPPOT. This will include recommendations that district level teams that participate in SSIP systems level supports consistently include building administrators (in addition to district administrators) to provide additional insight into MTSS infrastructure and needs.

Professional learning opportunities and resources that are aligned with the CCSS Mathematics Practices/NCTM's eight effective mathematics teaching practices and the IES Practice Guide: Assisting Students Struggling with Mathematics: Intervention in the Elementary Grades.

Data analysis and use of data to drive systems planning and mathematics instruction.

Instructional Coaching

The focus on varied professional learning opportunities supporting the implementation of the three evidence-based practices listed above includes continued access to job-embedded professional development and coaching supports that align to existing district PD plans and infrastructure. Professional development will be designed for instructional staff in participating SUs and will continue to focus on data analysis and the use of data to guide mathematics instruction, best practices in intervention, and the NCTM best practices.

Does the State intend to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications? (yes/no)

YES

If yes, describe how evaluation data support the decision to implement without any modifications to the SSIP.

The coaching and implementation data from the impact survey, the slow growth curve of improving mathematics instruction and interventions, and student outcomes, along with feedback from participating LEA,s in the year-end impact survey informed our decision to continue what we are doing with more targeted support than we have been able to provide. Based on that feedback support is still needed to improve the system of support, as well as specific teaching practices.

The SSIP Transformation team met during the summer of 2023 to reflect on SSIP implementation and plan for SSIP implementation moving forward. The team reviewed coaching and implementation data, including both qualitative and quantitative feedback from SSIP participating sites. In addition, the team reviewed available state level student performance information in mathematics. Together, this data highlighted the value of a two-pronged approach to supports for both the systems (e.g. district and school administrators) and instructional (e.g. classroom teachers, coaches, and interventionists) levels. Feedback from sites indicated that by addressing key implementation challenges (e.g. delays in sharing training dates, confusion about the role of systems coaching), the SSIP team could contribute to a greater impact towards the SiMR. VT AOE was awarded the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) last year which leverages a similar two-pronged approach, and we are seeking to align SSIP and SPDG in the future.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

VT AOE solicited broad stakeholder input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR from January 2021 until December 2021, which are described in Vermont's FFY2020 SPP/APR. The VT AOE Special Education team began meeting with the Special Education Advisory Panel in January 2021 to discuss the changes to the SPP/APR FFY2020-25 package, changes to data sources and indicator calculation, indicator targets and improvement activities. Along with collaboration with the Special Education Advisory Panel, VT AOE Special Education team solicited input from the Vermont's Parent Support Center (Vermont Family Network) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive. Beyond target input from these groups, the VT AOE Special education team also created a public webpage in which community partners and interested parties can access resources regarding the SPP/APR, information on the target setting process and electronic and mail-in forms to provide input on the State's targets in the SPP/APR. The public webpage regarding the SPP/APR Target Setting can be found at <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/vermont-special-education/recent-guidance-news-and-events/target-setting-for-the-spp-apr>

VT AOE continues to make progress towards our goal of improved outcomes in utilizing feedback and input, which will lead to better products reflective of representative stakeholder input, and an increased understanding of how the SPP/APR grounds the work of the State. During 2021, key community partner input was obtained through engaging the Vermont Special Education Advisory Panel (VT-SEAP) and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators Executive Board (VCSEA); as well as through check-in sessions hosted by the State Director of Special Education designed for dialogue and technical assistance with Special Education Administrators throughout the state. Since they were approved in May of 2021, the State has been developing and executing an implementation and training plan for changes to the Special Education Rules scheduled to take effect July 1, 2022 and some July 1, 2023. The initial training plan, and subsequent amendments, were based on ongoing feedback from our community partners, VCSEA and the Vermont Family Network (VFN). The State convened two round table meetings with representation from the Vermont Family Network, the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Vermont Association of School Psychologists, and the Vermont Council of Special Education Administrators. Representatives from these organizations provide direct and ongoing feedback on each resource released in response to the rule changes. Additionally, LEA level school leadership were invited to provide feedback and recommended next steps through a formal survey. Since October of 2022, special education leaders have been providing additional feedback on guidance and resources released through month Director's Meetings hosting by the Interim State Director of Special Education.

The groups named above along with staff from institutes of higher education, an external evaluator, special education directors and leadership from all participating SSIP LEAs have consistent opportunities to provide input, suggestions, and insight on the implementation of the SSIP. For example, during the fall of 2023 Each participating LEA met with VT AOE SSIP staff to review the implementation of math targeted technical assistance and provide input on how those supports could most effectively be provided in the future. Based on this data VT-AOE staff are developing new strategies to improve the effectiveness of these supports.

Additional targeted engagement includes sharing and engaging in discussion about the annual SSIP report, comment, and suggestions on direction of SSIP implementation, evaluation and tool development, data analysis, root cause analysis; sharing problems of practice, challenges and successes of implementation efforts; target setting, State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) setting and scale-up opportunities. VT AOE staff serving as individual indicator stewards worked with community partners to examine trends, make comparison to targets, and engage in root causes analyses to promote the benefits of using the SPP/APR as a tool for understanding compliance needs and prioritizing continuous improvement. This primarily occurred through the Local Special Education Determinations process – while providing technical assistance, indicator stewards were able to receive feedback on the target set for the indicator in comparison to individual LEA performance. VT AOE staff also worked with the VT-SEAP to review indicator performance after the February 1, 2022, SPP/APR submission.

VT AOE continues to engage with stakeholders, including collaboration with VT-SEAP, VCSEA, and VFN. Part of this work includes but not limited to:

- Meeting with VFN quarterly to review concerns and are partnering with them to coordinate a response to rule changes targeted at parents
- Collaboration with VCSEA in reviewing and providing annual feedback on changes to eligibility and evaluation forms. These changes will also specifically impact indicator 11
- Monthly meetings with Special Education directors and administrators on needs related to ongoing needs and feedback. This included general needs as well as a specifically input related to resources for the implementation of the new special education rules implemented in July of 2023
- Presenting SPP/APR results and to the VT-SEAP to seek perspective and input related to evaluating progress toward goals and potential improvement activities
- VT AOE engages with partners and stakeholders to create and complete strategies that are expected to increase the response rate year over year, particularly for groups that are underrepresented historically or within existing data related to indicator 8 and 14

Describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts.

As discussed earlier in the report, there were two stakeholder meetings during this reporting period.

Kick-Off Meeting Feedback

On October 19, and 21 2022, the SSIP 2021-22 Orientation Meeting was held virtually, with 22 SSIP participants. The meeting objectives were to share SSIP data from 2021-22, to provide an overview of professional learning to be provided, and to provide opportunities for participants to interact and give feedback on how the SSIP professional learning could be improved.

End of Year Meetings (including Impact Surveys)

As described previously in this report, the Transformation team held two End of Year Meetings with (1) all instructional staff who participated in the PD series (June 1st, 2023), and (2) district SSIP contacts who participated in systems level coaching (June 20th, 2023). These end of year meetings provided an opportunity to share data from SY2022-23 and gather feedback from both groups on how to improve SSIP supports. Both sessions provided opportunities to gather quantitative (e.g. Impact Surveys) and qualitative feedback. To support honest feedback, sessions were facilitated by "neutral" Transformation team members (e.g. External Evaluator), and Transformation team members who directly provided systems or instructional level supports did not participate.

Information provided throughout these sessions highlighted both strengths and challenges associated with SSIP supports. Constructive feedback included:

- Revising the SPPOT to feel more meaningful to districts engaged in planning and multiple initiatives to address longstanding LSED challenges, and more closely aligned to the SiMR
- Consider in-person professional learning opportunities for instructional staff
- Clarify recruitment strategies and participation requirements for future cohorts/participating sites.

VT SEAP Stakeholder Feedback

In February 2023, staff from the SSIP team met with the VT-SEAP to share the results from SY2021-22, and to share the report. Clarification questions were raised, no suggestions were made to the team beyond expanding the SiMR to other grades.

Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities? (yes/no)

YES

Describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

Exit Interview Results

Data from the May 2022 exit interviews were analyzed by the SSIP external evaluator and shared with the Core Team. Feedback was incorporated into RFPs for systems and instructional coaching and training for SY2022-23. Consideration has also been given to the need to better oversee the systems and instructional coaching process and documentation. Strategies have also been discussed on how to reach out to additional LEAs and to work more directly with school administrators and staff. Given that the Special Education Monitoring team and the Technical Assistance Team have closely aligned LSED status to the supports of SSIP, the pool of expertise is greater.

SSIP Impact Surveys

The SSIP Core Team reviewed quantitative and qualitative data collected through the June 2023 Impact Survey June 20th. Based on participant feedback, we are actively clarifying the purpose of SSIP supports and the SiMR, and supporting existing district staff and systems coaches to ensure that SSIP supports are aligned to existing district priorities, and mutually beneficial towards impacting the SiMR. This includes considering alternative recruitment strategies and/or SSIP participation requirements because some participants needed additional clarification as participation in the SSIP was a requirement of Local Special Education Determinations. Further clarification includes opportunities to better align SSIP with other VT AOE initiatives (e.g. SPDG) for future cohorts/years.

VT SEAP Stakeholder Feedback

From FFY2021 SSIP, messaging was increased to other LEAs during the summer to increase general awareness of the SSIP and increase participation.

Additional Implementation Activities

List any activities not already described that the State intends to implement in the next fiscal year that are related to the SiMR.

Not applicable. All planned activities have already been discussed.

Provide a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes for these activities that are related to the SiMR.

Not applicable

Describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.

The State experienced challenges in finding local qualified instructional coaches willing to contract with the SSIP work, thus coaching was not offered until the spring of 2023 by an outside contractor. Rather than provide in-person professional development, all sessions were virtual based on the needs of the schools (e.g., lack of substitutes, inability to hold at a location for multiple site). Additionally, rather than continue to focus on only the mathematics practice standards, the IES Mathematics Practice Guide was used as an anchor for the professional development.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

Due to the changes in statewide assessments, the VT AOE will be re-setting targets and baselines when official EDFacts reporting on assessment outcomes, which was due mid-January 2024, can be reviewed with stakeholders. VT AOE will be engaging stakeholders and content experts to reset baselines and targets to be reported on the FFY2023 SPP/APR.

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

17 - Required Actions

Certification

Instructions

Choose the appropriate selection and complete all the certification information fields. Then click the "Submit" button to submit your APR.

Certify

I certify that I am the Chief State School Officer of the State, or his or her designee, and that the State's submission of its IDEA Part B State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report is accurate.

Select the certifier's role:

Designated by the Chief State School Officer to certify

Name and title of the individual certifying the accuracy of the State's submission of its IDEA Part B State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report.

Name:

Dr. Heather Willis-Doxsee

Title:

State Director of Special Education

Email:

heather.willis-doxsee@vermont.gov

Phone:

802-917-3686

Submitted on:

04/25/24 10:43:05 AM

Determination Enclosures

RDA Matrix

Vermont 2024 Part B Results-Driven Accountability Matrix

Results-Driven Accountability Percentage and Determination (1)

Percentage (%)	Determination
65.00%	Needs Assistance

Results and Compliance Overall Scoring

Section	Total Points Available	Points Earned	Score (%)
Results	20	11	55.00%
Compliance	20	15	75.00%

(1) For a detailed explanation of how the Compliance Score, Results Score, and the Results-Driven Accountability Percentage and Determination were calculated, review "How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2024: Part B."

2024 Part B Results Matrix

Reading Assessment Elements

Reading Assessment Elements	Grade	Performance (%)	Score
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Participating in Statewide Assessment (2)	Grade 4	97%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Participating in Statewide Assessment	Grade 8	95%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Scoring at Basic or Above on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 4	14%	0
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Included in Testing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 4	94%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Scoring at Basic or Above on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 8	28%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Included in Testing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 8	93%	1

Math Assessment Elements

Math Assessment Elements	Grade	Performance (%)	Score
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Participating in Statewide Assessment	Grade 4	97%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Participating in Statewide Assessment	Grade 8	94%	0
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Scoring at Basic or Above on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 4	28%	0
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Included in Testing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 4	93%	1
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Scoring at Basic or Above on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 8	24%	2
Percentage of Children with Disabilities Included in Testing on the National Assessment of Educational Progress	Grade 8	92%	1

(2) Statewide assessments include the regular assessment and the alternate assessment.

Exiting Data Elements

Exiting Data Elements	Performance (%)	Score
Percentage of Children with Disabilities who Dropped Out	27	0
Percentage of Children with Disabilities who Graduated with a Regular High School Diploma**	71	1

**When providing exiting data under section 618 of the IDEA, States are required to report on the number of students with disabilities who exited an educational program through receipt of a regular high school diploma. These students meet the same standards for graduation as those for students without disabilities. As explained in 34 C.F.R. §300.102(a)(3)(iv), in effect June 30, 2017, “the term regular high school diploma means the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in the State that is fully aligned with State standards, or a higher diploma, except that a regular high school diploma shall not be aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1)(E) of the ESEA. A regular high school diploma does not include a recognized equivalent of a diploma, such as a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or similar lesser credential.”

2024 Part B Compliance Matrix

Part B Compliance Indicator (3)	Performance (%)	Full Correction of Findings of Noncompliance Identified in FFY 2021 (4)	Score
Indicator 4B: Significant discrepancy, by race and ethnicity, in the rate of suspension and expulsion, and policies, procedures or practices that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with specified requirements.	0.00%	N/A	2
Indicator 9: Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services due to inappropriate identification.	0.00%	N/A	2
Indicator 10: Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories due to inappropriate identification.	0.00%	N/A	2
Indicator 11: Timely initial evaluation	95.50%	NO	2
Indicator 12: IEP developed and implemented by third birthday	100.00%	N/A	2
Indicator 13: Secondary transition	52.82%	NO	0
Timely and Accurate State-Reported Data	100.00%		2
Timely State Complaint Decisions	68.42%		0
Timely Due Process Hearing Decisions	100.00%		2
Longstanding Noncompliance			1
Programmatic Specific Conditions	None		
Uncorrected identified noncompliance	Yes, 2 to 4 years		

(3) The complete language for each indicator is located in the Part B SPP/APR Indicator Measurement Table at: https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/2024_Part-B_SPP-APR_Measurement_Table.pdf

(4) This column reflects full correction, which is factored into the scoring only when the compliance data are >=5% and <10% for Indicators 4B, 9, and 10, and >=90% and <95% for Indicators 11, 12, and 13.

Data Rubric

Vermont

FFY 2022 APR (1)

Part B Timely and Accurate Data -- SPP/APR Data

APR Indicator	Valid and Reliable	Total
1	1	1
2	1	1
3A	1	1
3B	1	1
3C	1	1
3D	1	1
4A	1	1
4B	1	1
5	1	1
6	1	1
7	1	1
8	1	1
9	1	1
10	1	1
11	1	1
12	1	1
13	1	1
14	1	1
15	1	1
16	1	1
17	1	1

APR Score Calculation

Subtotal	21
Timely Submission Points - If the FFY 2022 APR was submitted on-time, place the number 5 in the cell on the right.	5
Grand Total - (Sum of Subtotal and Timely Submission Points) =	26

(1) In the SPP/APR Data table, where there is an N/A in the Valid and Reliable column, the Total column will display a 0. This is a change from prior years in display only; all calculation methods are unchanged. An N/A does not negatively affect a State's score; this is because 1 point is subtracted from the Denominator in the Indicator Calculation table for each cell marked as N/A in the SPP/APR Data table.

618 Data (2)

Table	Timely	Complete Data	Passed Edit Check	Total
Child Count/ Ed Envs Due Date: 8/30/23	1	1	1	3
Personnel Due Date: 2/21/24	1	1	1	3
Exiting Due Date: 2/21/24	1	1	1	3
Discipline Due Date: 2/21/24	1	1	1	3
State Assessment Due Date: 1/10/24	1	1	1	3
Dispute Resolution Due Date: 11/15/23	1	1	1	3
MOE/CEIS Due Date: 5/3/23	1	1	1	3

618 Score Calculation

Subtotal	21
Grand Total (Subtotal X 1.23809524) =	26.00

(2) In the 618 Data table, when calculating the value in the Total column, any N/As in the Timely, Complete Data, or Passed Edit Checks columns are treated as a '0'. An N/A does not negatively affect a State's score; this is because 1.23809524 points is subtracted from the Denominator in the Indicator Calculation table for each cell marked as N/A in the 618 Data table.

Indicator Calculation

A. APR Grand Total	26
B. 618 Grand Total	26.00
C. APR Grand Total (A) + 618 Grand Total (B) =	52.00
Total N/A Points in APR Data Table Subtracted from Denominator	0
Total N/A Points in 618 Data Table Subtracted from Denominator	0.00
Denominator	52.00
D. Subtotal (C divided by Denominator) (3) =	1.0000
E. Indicator Score (Subtotal D x 100) =	100.00

(3) Note that any cell marked as N/A in the APR Data Table will decrease the denominator by 1, and any cell marked as N/A in the 618 Data Table will decrease the denominator by 1.23809524.

APR and 618 -Timely and Accurate State Reported Data

DATE: February 2024 Submission

SPP/APR Data

1) Valid and Reliable Data - Data provided are from the correct time period, are consistent with 618 (when appropriate) and the measurement, and are consistent with previous indicator data (unless explained).

Part B 618 Data

1) Timely – A State will receive one point if it submits all *EDFacts* files or the entire *EMAPS* survey associated with the IDEA Section 618 data collection to ED by the initial due date for that collection (as described the table below).

618 Data Collection	EDFacts Files/ EMAPS Survey	Due Date
Part B Child Count and Educational Environments	C002 & C089	8/30/2023
Part B Personnel	C070, C099, C112	2/21/2024
Part B Exiting	C009	2/21/2024
Part B Discipline	C005, C006, C007, C088, C143, C144	2/21/2024
Part B Assessment	C175, C178, C185, C188	1/10/2024
Part B Dispute Resolution	Part B Dispute Resolution Survey in <i>EMAPS</i>	11/15/2023
Part B LEA Maintenance of Effort Reduction and Coordinated Early Intervening Services	Part B MOE Reduction and CEIS Survey in <i>EMAPS</i>	5/3/2023

2) Complete Data – A State will receive one point if it submits data for all files, permitted values, category sets, subtotals, and totals associated with a specific data collection by the initial due date. No data is reported as missing. No placeholder data is submitted. The data submitted to *EDFacts* aligns with the metadata survey responses provided by the state in the State Supplemental Survey IDEA (SSS IDEA) and Assessment Metadata survey in *EMAPS*. State-level data include data from all districts or agencies.

3) Passed Edit Check – A State will receive one point if it submits data that meets all the edit checks related to the specific data collection by the initial due date. The counts included in 618 data submissions are internally consistent within a data collection

Dispute Resolution

IDEA Part B

Vermont

School Year: 2022-23

A zero count should be used when there were no events or occurrences to report in the specific category for the given reporting period. Check "Missing" if the state did not collect or could not report a count for the specific category. Please provide an explanation for the missing data in the comment box at the top of the page.

Section A: Written, Signed Complaints

(1) Total number of written signed complaints filed.	35
(1.1) Complaints with reports issued.	19
(1.1) (a) Reports with findings of noncompliance	13
(1.1) (b) Reports within timelines	10
(1.1) (c) Reports within extended timelines	3
(1.2) Complaints pending.	1
(1.2) (a) Complaints pending a due process hearing.	1
(1.3) Complaints withdrawn or dismissed.	15

Section B: Mediation Requests

(2) Total number of mediation requests received through all dispute resolution processes.	46
(2.1) Mediations held.	36
(2.1) (a) Mediations held related to due process complaints.	6
(2.1) (a) (i) Mediation agreements related to due process complaints.	2
(2.1) (b) Mediations held not related to due process complaints.	30
(2.1) (b) (i) Mediation agreements not related to due process complaints.	26
(2.2) Mediations pending.	2
(2.3) Mediations withdrawn or not held.	8

Section C: Due Process Complaints

(3) Total number of due process complaints filed.	12
(3.1) Resolution meetings.	0
(3.1) (a) Written settlement agreements reached through resolution meetings.	0
(3.2) Hearings fully adjudicated.	1
(3.2) (a) Decisions within timeline (include expedited).	1
(3.2) (b) Decisions within extended timeline.	0
(3.3) Due process complaints pending.	2
(3.4) Due process complaints withdrawn or dismissed (including resolved without a hearing).	9

Section D: Expedited Due Process Complaints (Related to Disciplinary Decision)

(4) Total number of expedited due process complaints filed.	0
(4.1) Expedited resolution meetings.	0
(4.1) (a) Expedited written settlement agreements.	0
(4.2) Expedited hearings fully adjudicated.	0
(4.2) (a) Change of placement ordered	0
(4.3) Expedited due process complaints pending.	0
(4.4) Expedited due process complaints withdrawn or dismissed.	0

State Comments:

Errors:

Please note that the data entered result in the following relationships which violate edit checks:

State error comments:

This report shows the most recent data that was entered by:

Vermont

These data were extracted on the close date:

11/15/2023

How the Department Made Determinations

Below is the location of How the Department Made Determinations (HTDMD) on OSEP's IDEA Website. How the Department Made Determinations in 2024 will be posted in June 2024. Copy and paste the link below into a browser to view.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/how-the-department-made-determinations/>



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

Final Determination Letter

June 21, 2024

Honorable Heather Bouchey
Interim Secretary
Vermont Agency of Education
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5
Montpelier, VT 05620

Dear Interim Secretary Bouchey:

I am writing to advise you of the U.S. Department of Education's (Department) 2024 determination under Section 616 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The Department has determined that Vermont needs assistance in implementing the requirements of Part B of the IDEA. This determination is based on the totality of Vermont's data and information, including the Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2022 State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR), other State-reported data, and other publicly available information.

Vermont's 2024 determination is based on the data reflected in its "2024 Part B Results-Driven Accountability Matrix" (RDA Matrix). The RDA Matrix is individualized for each State and Entity and consists of:

- (1) a Compliance Matrix that includes scoring on Compliance Indicators and other compliance factors;
- (2) a Results Matrix that includes scoring on Results Elements;
- (3) a Compliance Score and a Results Score;
- (4) an RDA Percentage based on both the Compliance Score and the Results Score; and
- (5) the State's or Entity's Determination.

The RDA Matrix is further explained in a document, entitled "[How the Department Made Determinations under Section 616\(d\) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2024: Part B](#)" (HTDMD).

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is continuing to use both results data and compliance data in making determinations in 2024, as it did for Part B determinations in 2014-2023. (The specifics of the determination procedures and criteria are set forth in the HTDMD document and reflected in the RDA Matrix for Vermont).

In making Part B determinations in 2024, OSEP continued to use results data related to:

- (1) the participation and performance of CWD on the most recently administered (school year 2021-2022) National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), as applicable (For the 2024 determinations, OSEP using results data on the participation and performance of children with disabilities on the NAEP for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. OSEP used the available NAEP data for Puerto Rico in making Puerto Rico's 2024 determination as it did for Puerto Rico's 2023 determination. OSEP did not use NAEP data in making the BIE's 2024 determination because the NAEP data available for the BIE were not comparable to the NAEP data available for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; specifically, the most recently administered NAEP for the BIE is 2019, whereas the most recently administered NAEP for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico is 2022.)
- (2) the percentage of CWD who graduated with a regular high school diploma; and
- (3) the percentage of CWD who dropped out.

For the 2024 IDEA Part B determinations, OSEP also considered participation of CWD on Statewide assessments (which include the regular assessment and the alternate assessment). While the participation rates of CWD on Statewide assessments were a factor in each State or Entity's 2024 Part B Results Matrix, no State or Entity received a Needs Intervention determination in 2024 due solely to this criterion. However, this criterion will be fully incorporated beginning with the 2025 determinations.

You may access the results of OSEP's review of Vermont's SPP/APR and other relevant data by accessing the EMAPS SPP/APR reporting tool using your Vermont-specific log-on information at <https://emaps.ed.gov/suite/>. When you access Vermont's SPP/APR on the site, you will find, in applicable Indicators 1 through 17, the OSEP Response to the indicator and any actions that Vermont is required to take. The actions that Vermont is required to take are in the "Required Actions" section of the indicator.

It is important for you to review the Introduction to the SPP/APR, which may also include language in the "OSEP Response" and/or "Required Actions" sections.

You will also find the following important documents in the Determinations Enclosures section:

- (1) Vermont's RDA Matrix;
- (2) the HTDMD [link](#);

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- (3) "2024 Data Rubric Part B," which shows how OSEP calculated Vermont's "Timely and Accurate State-Reported Data" score in the Compliance Matrix; and
- (4) "Dispute Resolution 2022-2023," which includes the IDEA Section 618 data that OSEP used to calculate the Vermont's "Timely State Complaint Decisions" and "Timely Due Process Hearing Decisions" scores in the Compliance Matrix.

As noted above, Vermont's 2024 determination is Needs Assistance. A State's or Entity's 2024 RDA Determination is Needs Assistance if the RDA Percentage is at least 60% but less than 80%. A State or Entity's determination would also be Needs Assistance if its RDA Determination percentage is 80% or above but the Department has imposed Specific Conditions on the State's or Entity's last three IDEA Part B grant awards (for FFYs 2021, 2022, and 2023), and those Specific Conditions are in effect at the time of the 2024 determination.

Vermont's determination for 2023 was also Needs Assistance. In accordance with Section 616(e)(1) of the IDEA and 34 C.F.R. §300.604(a), if a State or Entity is determined to need assistance for two consecutive years, the Secretary must take one or more of the following actions:

- (1) advise the State or Entity of available sources of technical assistance that may help the State or Entity address the areas in which the State or Entity needs assistance and require the State or Entity to work with appropriate entities;
- (2) direct the use of State-level funds on the area or areas in which the State or Entity needs assistance; or
- (3) identify the State or Entity as a high-risk grantee and impose Specific Conditions on the State's or Entity's IDEA Part B grant award.

Pursuant to these requirements, the Secretary is advising Vermont of available sources of technical assistance, including OSEP-funded technical assistance centers and resources at the following websites: [Monitoring and State Improvement Planning \(MSIP\) | OSEP Ideas That Work, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Topic Areas](#), and requiring Vermont to work with appropriate entities. In addition, Vermont should consider accessing technical assistance from other Department-funded centers such as the Comprehensive Centers with resources at the following link: <https://compcenternetwork.org/states>. The Secretary directs Vermont to determine the results elements and/or compliance indicators, and improvement strategies, on which it will focus its use of available technical assistance, in order to improve its performance. We strongly encourage Vermont to access technical assistance related to those results elements and compliance indicators for which it received a score of zero. Vermont must report with its FFY 2023 SPP/APR submission, due February 1, 2025, on:

- (1) the technical assistance sources from which Vermont received assistance; and
- (2) the actions Vermont took as a result of that technical assistance.

As required by IDEA Section 616(e)(7) and 34 C.F.R. §300.606, Vermont must notify the public that the Secretary of Education has taken the above enforcement actions, including, at a minimum, by posting a public notice on its website and distributing the notice to the media and through public agencies.

IDEA determinations provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to examine State data as that data relate to improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. The Department encourages stakeholders to review State SPP/APR data and other available data as part of the focus on improving equitable outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. Key areas the Department encourages State and local personnel to review are access to high-quality intervention and instruction; effective implementation of individualized family service plans (IFSPs) and individualized education programs (IEPs), using data to drive decision-making, supporting strong relationship building with families, and actively addressing educator and other personnel shortages.

For 2025 and beyond, the Department is considering three criteria related to IDEA Part B determinations as part of the Department's continued efforts to incorporate equity and improve results for CWD. First, the Department is considering as a factor OSEP-identified longstanding noncompliance (i.e., unresolved findings issued by OSEP at least three or more years ago). This factor would be reflected in the determination for each State and Entity through the "longstanding noncompliance" section of the Compliance Matrix beginning with the 2025 determinations. In implementing this factor, the Department is also considering beginning in 2025 whether a State or Entity that would otherwise receive a score of Meets Requirements would not be able to receive a determination of Meets Requirements if the State or Entity had OSEP-identified longstanding noncompliance (i.e., unresolved findings issued by OSEP at least three or more years ago). Second, the Department is considering as potential additional factors the improvement in proficiency rates of CWD on Statewide assessments. Third, the Department is considering whether and how to continue including in its determinations criteria the participation and proficiency of CWD on the NAEP.

For the FFY 2023 SPP/APR submission due on February 1, 2025, OSEP is providing the following information about the IDEA Section 618 data. The 2023-24 IDEA Section 618 Part B data submitted as of the due date will be used for the FFY 2023 SPP/APR and the 2025 IDEA Part B Results Matrix and States and Entities will not be able to resubmit their IDEA Section 618 data after the due date. The 2023-24 IDEA Section 618 Part B data will automatically be prepopulated in the SPP/APR reporting platform for Part B SPP/APR Indicators 3, 5, and 6 (as they have in the past). Under EDFacts Modernization, States and Entities are expected to submit high-quality IDEA Section 618 Part B data that can be published and used by the Department as of the due date. States and Entities are expected to conduct data quality reviews prior to the applicable due date. OSEP expects States and Entities to take one of the following actions for all business rules that are triggered in the EDPass or EMAPS system prior to the applicable due date: 1) revise the uploaded data to address the edit; or 2) provide a data note addressing why the data submission triggered the business rule. States and Entities will be unable to submit the IDEA Section 618 Part B data without taking one of these two actions. There will not be a resubmission period for the IDEA Section 618 Part B data.

As a reminder, Vermont must report annually to the public, by posting on the State educational agency's (SEA's) website, the performance of each local educational agency (LEA) located in Vermont on the targets in the SPP/APR as soon as practicable, but no later than 120 days after Vermont's submission of its FFY 2022 SPP/APR. In addition, Vermont must:

- (1) review LEA performance against targets in the State's SPP/APR;

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- (2) determine if each LEA “meets the requirements” of Part B, or “needs assistance,” “needs intervention,” or “needs substantial intervention” in implementing Part B of the IDEA;
- (3) take appropriate enforcement action; and
- (4) inform each LEA of its determination.

Further, Vermont must make its SPP/APR available to the public by posting it on the SEA’s website. Within the upcoming weeks, OSEP will be finalizing a State Profile that:

- (1) includes Vermont’s determination letter and SPP/APR, OSEP attachments, and all State or Entity attachments that are accessible in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and
- (2) will be accessible to the public via the ed.gov website.

OSEP appreciates Vermont’s efforts to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and looks forward to working with Vermont over the next year as we continue our important work of improving the lives of children with disabilities and their families. Please contact your OSEP State Lead if you have any questions, would like to discuss this further, or want to request technical assistance.

Sincerely,

Valerie C. Williams
Director
Office of Special Education Programs

cc: Vermont Director of Special Education

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