IDC Interactive Institutes on High-Quality Part B Data

In collaboration with **CIFR, CIID, & NTACT**

Maintenance of State Financial Support (MFS): Challenges, Tools, and Technical Assistance

What Have We Learned and How Can We Help?

Kansas City, MO – May 10-11, 2016
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Savannah, GA – June 1-2, 2016
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Objectives of This Session

- Share findings on state practices and challenges with reporting data for MFS

- Provide overview of CIFR's MFS toolkit

- Describe CIFR support for states on this requirement

What Is MFS?

A State must not reduce the total amount of State financial support for special education and related services for children with disabilities, or otherwise made available because of the excess costs of educating those children, below the amount of that support for the preceding fiscal year.

- 34 CFR 300.163(a)

How Do States Report MFS?

State aid to local education agencies (LEAs) for special education

- State aid makes no distinction for special education/state reports entire education aid to LEAs for MFS: **3 states**

- State aid for special education integrated into overall education aid/state extracts special education portion for MFS: **16 states**

- State aid for special education is explicit and separate from the overall education aid: **21 states**
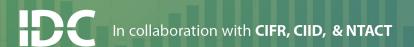
Other State Agencies and MFS

- 10 of 41 states did not include "other agency" support in their MFS calculations

- Common agencies included:

    Department of Corrections (18 states)

    Human Services (10)

    Juvenile Justice (8)

    Rehabilitative Services (7)

- What makes up MFS? 93% state educational agency, 3% state schools, and 3% other state agencies*

* Averages based on 14 states

Other State Agencies and MFS

Data sources for other state agency support varied:

- Legislative appropriations (8 states)

- Expenditure data at end of fiscal year (8 states)

- Agency budgets (5 states)

- Estimated special education portion by applying percentage (2 states)

Key MFS Challenges

- Lack of documented procedures (18 states)

- Staff turnover and lack of transition planning (8 states)

- Perceived lack of authority over other state agencies (6 states)

- Difficulty isolating special education support (4 states)

Practices to Consider

- **Being prepared:** Documented procedures, trained back-up staff

- **Involving the legislature:** Yearly reporting to legislature on MFS, legislative liaison, incorporate MFS into state statute

- **Rounding up other state agencies:** Use of data collection form for all agencies, signed form returned even if no support provided, formalizing relationships with intra-agency agreements

- **Tracking data:** Excel files detail differences in total, and each line item, over time

The MFS Toolkit

- Purpose and intended audience

- What's in the toolkit

- How to use the tools

The MFS Toolkit: Its Purpose and Intended Audience

- Helps address the challenges expressed

- Intended for state MFS data managers and other stakeholders

- Ready to use

- Vetted by Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and pilot tested with states

What's in the Toolkit?

https://youtu.be/rre4EZLKqB0

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Data Collection and Reporting Tool (DCRT)

- Getting Started Worksheet

- Contact Information Worksheet

- Yearly Input Sheets

- Summary Table and Summary Chart

- Attachments

Using the DCRT

CIFR Technical Assistance (TA)

- **Targeted TA:** Facilitate Communities of Practice (CoP), respond to individual state TA requests through the CoP facilitators, follow up with states based on TA referrals from other ED-funded centers and requests through the CIFR website or other sources

- **Intensive TA:** Address more complex fiscal challenges related to MFS, LEA Maintenance of Effort, and Coordinated Early Intervening Services

  - Development of detailed TA Plan with a focus on sustainable, long-term systems change

  - CIFR staff engaged both on-site and virtually to implement the plan over time

15

How Can CIFR Help States Meet MFS Obligations?

Address key challenges encountered by states in accurately calculating and reporting MFS data

- Developing policies and procedures
- Developing training materials about MFS collection and reporting requirements
- Assist in identifying special education support to include in MFS calculations
- Assist in addressing MFS compliance concerns

Questions?

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