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Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate:

Indicators 1 and 2 Measurement Changes
From FFY 2019 to FFY 2020–2025

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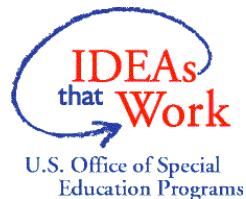
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Graduation Rate and Dropout Rate: Indicators 1 and 2 Measurement Changes From FFY 2019 to FFY 2020–2025

Beginning in February 2022, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is changing how states calculate graduation rate and dropout rate for the Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). This brief provides a summary of the changes in the data sources and measurements of these rates in the SPP/APR. It also provides a side-by-side comparison of the SPP/APR Part B Indicator Measurement Tables¹ from [FFY 2019](#) to [FFY 2020–2025](#)² to highlight relevant differences in SPP/APR reporting of graduation rate and dropout rate.³ It is important to note that to meet the new FFY 2020–2025 requirements, states will need to consider new baselines and set new targets based on broad stakeholder input. Throughout this brief, the terms “children, students, and youth(s)” are used interchangeably for consistency when referring to original language in the measurement tables or elsewhere to capture the specific range of students (i.e., the student body) to whom the relevant Indicator 1 and Indicator 2 Exiting data apply.

Indicator 1: Graduation Rate Changes

The language of Indicator 1 changes from FFY 2019 to FFY 2020–2025. For FFY 2019, Indicator 1 measures graduation rate as the “percent of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) graduating from high school with a regular high school diploma.” For FFY 2020–2025, Indicator 1 measures graduation rate as an “exiting rate.” It measures the “percent of youth with IEPs exiting from high school with a regular high school diploma.”

Table 1 compares the data sources and measurements for Indicator 1 for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025. The data source for FFY 2019 is the same data states reported to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) under Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA). Beginning with the FFY 2020–2025 SPP/APR, the data source for Indicator 1 is the same data states used for reporting to the Department under Section 618 of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA).⁴

¹ The text in the tables in this brief uses the original language as it appears in the measurement tables.

² This brief compares the FFY 2019 APR submission to the new SPP/APR for FFY 2020–2025.

³ The FFY 2019 APR submission was due in February 2021. The FFY 2020 APR submission is due in February 2022. The FFY 2020–2025 SPP/APR Part B Indicator Measurement Table also signals a change in data source for Indicator 2 in FFY 2021, which is indicated in bold within the table.

⁴ The Section 618 IDEA data use the definitions in the ED*Facts* file specification [FS009](#).



Table 1. Comparison of data sources and measurements for Indicator 1 for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025

Indicator 1: Data sources and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p>Data Source: Same data as used for reporting to the Department of Education (Department) under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).</p> <p>Measurement: States may report data for children with disabilities using either the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate required under the ESEA or an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate under the ESEA, if the State has established one.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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 left high school (ages 14–21) in the denominator.</p>

SOURCE: *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_Part_B_SPP_APR_Measurement_Table_2021_final.pdf) and *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_FFY20Part_B_SPPAPR_Measurement_TableFINAL.pdf).

Table 2 compares the instructions for Indicator 1 and its measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025. In FFY 2019, Indicator 1 required states to report either the 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate or extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate, as described in the ESEA. ESEA requires states to report separate graduation rates for all students and students disaggregated by certain subgroups (one of the subgroups is students with disabilities).⁵

In FFY 2019, if states have a “state-defined alternate diploma” that meets federal requirements,⁶ they must include students with significant cognitive disabilities who receive an alternate diploma in the numerator of the adjusted cohort graduation rate. That is, for FFY 2019, states counted students with significant cognitive disabilities who received an alternate diploma as receiving a “regular high school diploma” for the purpose of Indicator 1.⁷

⁵ The ESEA requires states to disaggregate graduation rates by the subgroups in § 1111(c)(2): economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners (§ 1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(II)).

⁶ A “state-defined alternate diploma” must be (1) standards-based, (2) aligned with state requirements for the regular high school diploma, and (3) obtained within the same time period for which the state ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education under § 612(a)(1) of the IDEA (ESEA, § 8101(23) and § 8101(25)).

⁷ See the “Indicator 1: Graduation Rate” discussion in the Department’s 2020 *Part B FFY 2018 SPP/APR Indicator Table Analysis Booklet* (<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/PartB-IndicatorAnalysis-FFY2018.pdf>).



For FFY 2020–2025, however, the calculation of Indicator 1 changes. In the numerator, states include the number of youth with IEPs exiting from high school with a regular high school diploma. In the denominator, states include youth who (1) graduated with a regular high school diploma, (2) graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma, (3) received a certificate, (4) reached maximum age, or (5) dropped out. For the FFY 2020 SPP/APR submission, if states have a “state-defined alternate diploma” that meets federal requirements, they *may not* include students with disabilities who receive an alternate diploma in the numerator of the graduation rate.⁸

Table 2. Comparison of instructions for Indicator 1 and measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025

Instructions for Indicator 1 and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p><i>Sampling is not allowed.</i></p> <p>Describe the results of the State’s examination of the data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2019 SPP/APR, use data from 2018–2019), and compare the results to the target. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.</p>	<p><i>Sampling is not allowed.</i></p> <p>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 2020 SPP/APR, use data from 2019–2020), and compare the results to the target. Provide actual numbers used in the calculation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

See notes at end of table.

⁸ The Section 618 data states are to use for the FFY 2020–2025 submissions have separate exiting categories for receiving a regular high school diploma and receiving an alternate diploma. States will count only students who receive a regular high school diploma in the numerator for Indicator 1. States will not count students receiving an alternate diploma in the numerator for Indicator 1, and, therefore, Indicator 1 does not consider students receiving an alternate diploma as graduates.



Table 2. Comparison of instructions for Indicator 1 and measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025—Continued

Instructions for Indicator 1 and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p>Provide a narrative that describes the conditions youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma, and, if different, the conditions that youth with IEPs must meet in order to graduate with a regular high school diploma. If there is a difference, explain.</p> <p>Targets should be the same as the annual graduation rate targets for children with disabilities under Title I of the ESEA.</p> <p>States must continue to report the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students and disaggregated by student subgroups, including the children with disabilities subgroup, as required under section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(II) of the ESEA, on State report cards under Title I of the ESEA even if they only report an extended-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the purpose of the SPP/APR reporting.</p>	<p>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.</p>

SOURCE: *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_Part_B_SPP_APR_Measurement_Table_2021_final.pdf) and *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_FFY20Part_B_SPPAPR_Measurement_TableFINAL.pdf).

Indicator 2: Dropout Rate Changes

Indicator 2 measures “the percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.” Table 3 compares the data sources and measurements of Indicator 2 for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025. States have two options for measuring dropout rates (i.e., Option 1 and Option 2).

There is no change in the data source from FFY 2019 to FFY 2020–2025 for either Option 1 or Option 2. For Option 1, both FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025 use IDEA Section 618 data to report dropout rates. For Option 2, both FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025 use the data source states used in their FFY 2010 submission.



Table 3. Comparison of data sources and measurements for Indicator 2 for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025

Indicator 2 data sources and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p>Option 1:</p> <p>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 C009.</p> <p>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 left high school (ages 14–21) in the denominator.</p> <p>Option 2: Use same data source and measurement that the State used to report in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR that was submitted on February 1, 2012.</p>	<p>Option 1:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 left high school (ages 14–21) in the denominator.</p> <p>Option 2 (for FFY 2020 ONLY): Use same data source and measurement that the State used to report in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR that was submitted on February 1, 2012.</p>

NOTE: EDFacts files specifications now begin with “FS” instead of “C.” For example, EDFacts file specification C009 is now FS009.

SOURCE: *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_Part_B_SPP_APR_Measurement_Table_2021_final.pdf) and *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_FFY20Part_B_SPPAPR_Measurement_TableFINAL.pdf).

Table 4 compares the instructions for Indicator 2 and measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025. There are measurement changes from FFY 2019 to FFY 2020–2025 in terms of how the Exiting category of “alternate diploma” is included. Section 618 data include a separate Exiting category for students receiving a “state-defined alternate diploma.” For FFY 2019, the measurement does not explicitly require states to count students with significant cognitive disabilities who receive an alternate diploma in the denominator. For FFY 2020–2025, the measurement explicitly counts students with significant cognitive disabilities who receive an alternate diploma in the denominator.⁹

⁹ EDFacts updated the special education Exiting codes for file specification FS009 to account for students with significant cognitive disabilities who receive an alternate diploma.



For Option 2, there is no change in the measurement of Indicator 2. Beginning with the FFY 2021 SPP/APR submission, however, states must report the same data they used for reporting to the Department under Section 618 of the IDEA. That is, states must report dropout rate using Option 1.

Table 4. Comparison of instructions for Indicator 2 and measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025

Instructions for Indicator 2 and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p><i>Sampling is not allowed.</i></p> <p>OPTION 1: Use 618 exiting data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2019 SPP/APR, use data from 2018–2019). Include in the denominator the following exiting categories: (a) graduated with a regular high school diploma; (b) received a certificate; (c) reached maximum age; (d) dropped out; or (e) died.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p><i>Sampling is not allowed.</i></p> <p>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 2020 SPP/APR, use data from 2019–2020), and compare the results to the target. Provide the actual numbers used in the calculation.</p> <p>With the FFY 2020 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2022, States may use either option 1 or 2.</p> <p>OPTION 1: Use 618 exiting data for the year before the reporting year (e.g., for the FFY 2020 SPP/APR, use data from 2019–2020). 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

See notes at end of table.



Table 4. Comparison of instructions for Indicator 2 and measurements for FFY 2019 and FFY 2020–2025—Continued

Instructions for Indicator 2 and measurements	
FFY 2019	FFY 2020–2025
<p>OPTION 2:</p> <p>Use the annual event school dropout rate for students leaving a school in a single year determined in accordance with the National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data.</p> <p>If the State has made or proposes to make changes to the data source or measurement under Option 2, when compared to the information reported in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR submitted on February 1, 2012, the State should include a justification as to why such changes are warranted.</p> <p>Options 1 and 2:</p> <p>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 2019 SPP/APR, use data from 2018–2019), and compare the results to the target.</p> <p>Provide a narrative that describes what counts as dropping out for all youth and, if different, what counts as dropping out for youth with IEPs. If there is a difference, explain.</p>	<p>OPTION 2:</p> <p>Use the annual event school dropout rate for students leaving a school in a single year determined in accordance with the National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data.</p> <p>If the State has made or proposes to make changes to the data source or measurement under Option 2, when compared to the information reported in its FFY 2010 SPP/APR submitted on February 1, 2012, the State should include a justification as to why such changes are warranted.</p> <p>Options 1 and 2:</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Beginning with the FFY 2021 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2023, States must report data using the same data as used for reporting to the Department under Section 618 of the IDEA.</p>

SOURCE: *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2019 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_Part_B_SPP_APR_Measurement_Table_2021_final.pdf) and *Part B State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) Part B Indicator Measurement Table: For Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2020 Submission* (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/1820-0624_FFY20Part_B_SPPAPR_Measurement_TableFINAL.pdf).