IDC | IDEA DATA CENTER | Collect, Report, Analyze, and Use High-Quality Part B Data

SEA Data Processes Toolkit

Overview

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Westat is the lead organization for IDC. For more information about the center's work and its partners, see www.ideadata.org.

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IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special Education Programs

SEA Data Processes Toolkit: Overview

Purpose and Use of the Toolkit

The need for state education agencies (SEAs) to collect and report comprehensive, high-quality data from all divisions across the agency has risen exponentially in the past few years. Decisionmakers, news media, and stakeholders expect to have answers to critical questions and access to comprehensive high-quality data to support broad sweeping decisions affecting all students. It is no longer acceptable to have states report data in silos by programmatic areas, and doing so has a potential negative impact on the important research- and evidence-based programs that educators desire to promote. In addition, SEAs must share knowledge about the legal requirements for the SEA's data within and across the agency. The collection, reporting, and analysis of state-level data involve discussions that must engage all SEA leadership.

Retaining knowledge of the various legal requirements and terminology for data reporting, grant applications, timelines, as well as where to obtain certain data collections, are ongoing challenges for SEAs. When a data manager or division director from any area leaves, often there is a void that can cause incorrect or untimely reporting and, at times, financial loss. The IDEA Data Center (IDC) has addressed this concern by developing the IDEA Part B *SEA Data Processes Toolkit.* Using this toolkit to create protocols for all data collections will establish a well-managed process for data collection, analysis, and reporting. SEAs can use the toolkit to create and maintain a culture of high-quality data, establish and support consistent practices that produce valid and reliable data, and build the capacity of data stewards.[1]

The toolkit contains customizable Data Collection Protocols and a calendar for data stewards that provide a map for documenting data processes for the SEA. One staff member should not complete the protocols in isolation; IDC strongly recommends a team approach to completing the protocols. Additional staff that SEAs might involve include the state director of special education, data governance coordinator or manager, program staff, information technology (IT) steward, other data stewards (e.g., assessment), the ED*Facts* coordinator, and other staff as appropriate.

Establishing a well-managed data process will increase the accuracy and validity of data as well as ensure that required submissions occur on time. Use of this toolkit can assist in the larger agency conversation regarding the importance of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and using high-quality data. Additionally, because IDC intends that a data team complete the toolkit protocols, the work itself assists with enhancing communication and increasing collaboration for data use.

Documentation of state processes requires dedicated effort and a commitment to designate time to complete and regularly update the protocols. IDC has specialized technical assistance (TA) providers available who can facilitate the documentation process in a state. Contact your IDC State Liaison for assistance with this tool or other aspects of IDEA data work.

[1] The term data steward includes anyone who collects, uses, and submits IDEA Section 618 data.

Data Collection Protocols

Using the protocols to document the processes for each data collection supports improved data quality by providing a clear framework for collection, validation, and submission of IDEA data. The protocols are in Word format to be fully customizable for documenting each SEA's step-by-step processes. Your SEA may amend or expand the protocols to incorporate details associated with other state and federal reporting requirements.

When completing the protocols for each collection, add detailed information about the many processes and information associated with that collection. Note that the listed prompts are not comprehensive; they are meant to serve as a guide for thinking about the processes in your state. Indicate which members of the team are responsible for the various tasks and document any communication that is necessary to support ongoing data processes work.

When completing the data collection protocols, consider the following:

- Provide as much detail and documentation as available for each collection; keep in mind the level of detail necessary to support the next person to assume a state position.
- Reflect on what new or existing state staff might need or wish to know about each collection.
- Expand and reformat the protocols in a manner that works best for your state's processes.
- Set aside time each year to revisit and refine the protocols.

Each protocol (except the State Landscape Protocol) allows for documenting *Essential Elements* (e.g., basic collection information such as due date, contact information) and *Processes* (e.g., specific steps for the collection, validation, and submission of IDEA data). In addition to the State Landscape Protocol and a Data Collection Calendar, there are protocols for

- each Section 618 IDEA Part B data collection;
- Section 616 SPP/APR Indicators 1 through 16;
- processes related to annual determinations for LEAs;
- business rules documentation; and
- significant disproportionality.

State Landscape Protocol

This protocol covers background information on the state including description of the data systems, key special education and data staff, and general policies and procedures that apply to IDEA data. It is useful particularly when onboarding new staff members. The information in the State Landscape Protocol serves as an overview of state infrastructure, and you can apply the information to all of the other data collection protocols.

618 Data Collection Protocols

These protocols cover information about data collections as Section 618 of IDEA defines them. States submit the data to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) via ED*Facts* files and the E*MAPS* system.

- Child Count and Educational Environments
- Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reduction and Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)
- Personnel
- Exiting
- Discipline
- Dispute Resolution
- Assessment
- LEA MOE Process

616 SPP/APR Indicator Protocols

These protocols cover information about Indicators 1 through 16 of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) as Section 616 of IDEA defines the indicators. States submit the data to OSEP via the APR Tool for the SPP/APR. Please note that all of the information prefilled in the white and light blue sections of the protocols comes directly from the federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020 Part B SPP/APR Indicator Measurement Table.

- Indicator 1. Graduation
- Indicator 2. Drop Out
- Indicator 3. Assessment
- Indicator 4A. Suspension/Expulsion: Percent of Districts With Significant Discrepancy
- Indicator 4B. Suspension/Expulsion: Percent of Districts With Significant Discrepancy by Race/Ethnicity
- Indicator 5. Education Environments (School Age)
- Indicator 6. Preschool Environments
- Indicator 7. Preschool Outcomes
- Indicator 8. Parent Involvement
- Indicator 9. Disproportionate Representation
- Indicator 10. Disproportionate Representation in Specific Disability Categories
- Indicator 11. Child Find
- Indicator 12. Early Childhood Transition

- Indicator 13. Secondary Transition
- Indicator 14. Post-School Outcomes
- Indicator 15. Resolution Sessions
- Indicator 16. Mediation

Annual Determinations for LEAs

This protocol covers all processes for using data to establish each local education agency's (LEA's) annual determination. The protocol will define which data your state uses for the determination and how your state calculates and shares the annual determination.

Business Rules Documentation Protocol

This protocol is a customizable Excel workbook your state can use for documenting, recording, and communicating existing business rules or data quality validation checks staff perform during the collection and validation of IDEA data.

Significant Disproportionality Protocol

This protocol covers the processes for determining LEAs that your state identifies with significant disproportionality in special education, including the processes for analyzing data and notifying districts. The protocol also contains tables to document your state's definition of significant disproportionality and how the definition varies across different analysis categories.

Suggested Resources

Quick References for IDEA Data: This collection of IDEA Part B data references brings essential information about IDEA data requirements together in one place. This includes essential contacts, ED*Facts* due dates, the 618 data collection and submission timeline, quick links, frequently used acronyms and abbreviations, and SPP/APR indicator data sources. Both new data managers and experienced state staff who work with IDEA data should find the resource useful.

Frequently Used Acronyms—Part B: This is a list of frequently used acronyms pertaining to ED*Facts* and IDEA Part B.

618 Data Collection Calendar: This interactive calendar outlines monthly tasks for IDEA Section 618 data collection reports to help states submit timely, accurate, and complete data. U.S. Department of Education and IDC resources provide additional information about each data collection and tools that states can use to meet their 618 data collection requirements. The calendar serves as a roadmap to develop timelines and data management processes to support new Part B data managers, and it provides a quick reference tool for more experienced Part B data managers.

Due Date List: This list provides ED*Facts* due dates for both ED*Facts* Submission System (ESS) files and E*MAPS* submissions. IDC updates this list annually.