SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit
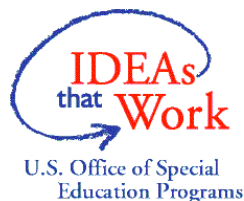# User's Guide

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SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit User's Guide

Introduction

This user's guide accompanies the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit*, a series of Excel workbooks that the IDEA Data Center (IDC) created to help states set targets for their State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Each Excel workbook, or target setting tool, focuses on one or more of the results indicators of the SPP/APR and contains several worksheets, the number of which depends on the indicator(s) included. IDC designed this guide to help users navigate through the various sheets of each target setting tool and enter data to determine targets for each indicator. The guide also provides an overview of the functionality of each target setting tool.

Purpose of the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* and Intended Audience

States work with internal and external stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, to identify the baseline years and determine measurable and rigorous targets for each of the SPP/APR results indicators, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 34 CFR § 300.601(a)(3). The *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* contains eight target setting tools that states can use to facilitate the target setting process. Each of the tools aligns with the specific results indicators of the SPP/APR as follows:

- Indicator 1. Graduation and Indicator 2. Dropout
- Indicator 3. Assessment
- Indicator 4A. Suspension and Expulsion: Percent of LEAs With Significant Discrepancy
- Indicator 5. Educational Environments
- Indicator 6. Preschool Environments
- Indicator 7. Preschool Outcomes
- Indicator 8. Parent Involvement
- Indicator 14. Post-School Outcomes

The intended audience for the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* and this user's guide is state agency staff who have responsibilities for the state's SPP/APR, such as Part B data managers or SPP/APR indicator leads. State staff may also wish to discuss the different methodologies with stakeholders to help build their knowledge about the indicators and targets.

While IDC intends that the toolkit and this user's guide be as user-friendly as possible, the toolkit and guide also assume users have a basic knowledge of Excel. In addition, some of the target setting methodologies and calculations included in the toolkit assume users have at least a beginning level of technical knowledge or expertise in analyzing and interpreting special education data. IDC does not intend for general audiences who do not have that level of technical knowledge or expertise to use these materials without support. Please contact your IDC State Liaison for technical assistance with this resource.

Target Setting Methodologies

Each tool calculates targets for its indicator(s) using the following five methodologies that states may find useful when selecting targets:

- Predicting Trend;
- Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease;
- Average Increase or Average Decrease;
- Start With the End Goal; and
- Accelerated Growth.

A description of each methodology and its application to the toolkit follows.

Predicting Trend

Purpose: The Predicting Trend methodology sets targets by predicting counts of a specific population of interest (e.g., children, local education agencies) who will have an improved outcome. For example, by predicting how many more youth with individualized education programs (IEPs) will graduate with a diploma in future years, the percentage for Indicator 1 will increase.

Toolkit Functionality: The tools calculate projected target percentages for each year based on the anticipated or predicted data users entered for future years.

Considerations: There may be limitations to this methodology if the state does not have high-quality or consistent data to appropriately make predictions.

Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease

Purpose: States can use the Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease methodology when they want to see steady, regular improvement in their data from year to year. This methodology sets targets using a fixed percent of growth that states determine based on their historical data and improvement strategies in place. States use the Fixed Percent Increase methodology for indicators that show improvement with an increase in the data (e.g., Indicator 1), and they use the Fixed Percent Decrease methodology for indicators that show improvement with a decrease in the data (e.g., Indicator 2).

Toolkit Functionality: The tools calculate targets by adding or subtracting the same fixed percent increase or decrease to or from each year's data after the baseline year.

Considerations: The fixed percent increase or decrease should result in targets that are measurable and rigorous.

Average Increase or Average Decrease

Purpose: The Average Increase or Average Decrease methodology analyzes several years of historical data, calculates the average of the year-to-year growth, and uses that average as the percentage of yearly growth to set targets. States use the Average Increase methodology for indicators that show improvement with an increase in the data (e.g., Indicator 1), and they use the Average Decrease methodology for indicators that show improvement with a decrease in the data (e.g., Indicator 2).

Toolkit Functionality: The tools calculate targets by determining the average increase or decrease in percentages over time based on the data users entered. The tools then apply this average increase or decrease to each year's data after the baseline year.

Considerations: IDC does not recommend this method when average growth is negative for indicators that should show an increase in percentage (e.g., Indicator 1) or when average growth is positive for indicators that should show a decrease (e.g., Indicator 2). IDC also does not recommend this method when states have only 2 years of historical data available or when the average growth methodology does not yield rigorous targets.

Start With the End Goal

Purpose: The Start With the End Goal methodology helps states determine a future goal or see where their data should be at any point in the future. Based on improvement strategies in place, states determine a target for the end or final year of the SPP/APR package.

Toolkit Functionality: The tools calculate targets that will show steady, even growth each year in order to achieve the end goal.

Considerations: The end goal should be a reasonable target that is measurable and rigorous. The tools will set realistic targets over time. For example, if the baseline for Indicator 1 is a graduation rate of 65 percent and the end goal is 100 percent in 5 years, targets may be incredibly ambitious, unreasonable, and challenging to meet.

Accelerated Growth

Purpose: The Accelerated Growth methodology helps states when they have improvement strategies in place that will yield slow growth initially, but they expect an accelerated rate of growth in subsequent years.

Toolkit Functionality: The tools calculate targets by applying a specific percentage of the baseline year data to the baseline data for the first year's target, and then increasing the percentage growth each year and applying it to each year's target to determine the targets for subsequent years.

Considerations: Much like the goal states set with the Start With the End Goal methodology, the Accelerated Growth goal should be rigorous yet achievable so that states set realistic targets over time. For example, if the baseline for Indicator 1 is a graduation rate of 85 percent and the percentage of baseline for growth is high (e.g., 5 percent), the accelerated growth targets will significantly increase over time and exceed 100 percent, an unreasonable and useless percentage.

Organization of the User's Guide

This user's guide is divided into three parts which are outlined in the table below. Use the links in the table to access each section as needed when engaging with the toolkit:

Section	Summary
Part I. Overview of the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit*	Description of each sheet within the individual tools of the toolkit.
Part II. Entering Data in the Toolkit	Description of indicator data source(s) and data entry instructions for each tool.
Part III. *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit:* A Summary	Review of the objectives and potential uses for the toolkit.

Part I. Overview of the SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit

The *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* contains a series of tools in the form of Excel workbooks. Each workbook contains several sheets, the number of which depends on the indicator(s) included. For example, the tool for Indicators 1 and 2 has 16 sheets: *README, Table of Contents, Indicators 1 & 2 Data Entry, Indicators 1 & 2 Calculations, Indicator 1 Predicting Trend, Indicator 1 Fixed Percent Increase, Indicator 1 Average Increase, Indicator 1 Start With the End Goal, Indicator 1 Accelerated Growth, Indicator 1 Summary, Indicator 2 Predicting Trend, Indicator 2 Fixed Percent Decrease, Indicator 2 Average Decrease, Indicator 2 Start With the End Goal, Indicator 2 Accelerated Growth,* and *Indicator 2 Summary.*

The Data Entry sheet requires significant data entry, but other sheets require very minimal data entry. Part II of this user's guide provides specific instructions for data entry onto each sheet. The following section provides a description of the sheets found in each tool.

Table of Contents

The Table of Contents includes a brief description of the contents of each sheet and allows users to navigate to the various sheets by clicking on the provided hyperlinks.

Data Entry

On the Data Entry sheet, users must enter school years for data entry and projections, set the baseline year, and enter historical data related to the indicator(s) for each year. For example, for Indicators 1 and 2, users enter the same state data they submitted in the ED*Facts* file specifications for students with disabilities exiting special education in previous years (FS009). (See Data Sources for Indicators in Part II of this user's guide for information on the specific data required for each indicator.)

Users also have the option to enter data for the Predicting Trend methodology on the Data Entry sheet. For example, for Indicators 1 and 2, users may enter a predicted number of exiters in each category—received a regular high school diploma, received an alternate high school diploma, reached maximum age, received a certificate, and dropped out. Then, the tool will use that data to calculate graduation and dropout targets with the Predicting Trend methodology.

User Tips:

When selecting the age group on the Data Entry sheet for **Indicator 6. Preschool Environments**, users may select "All Children with IEPs, ages 3 through 5" or individual ages, if the state is setting individual targets for ages 3, 4, and 5 (in preschool). If the state is setting individual targets, the user should create and save the Indicator 6 tool for each age group: 3, 4, and 5 (in preschool).

When entering data for **Indicator 7. Preschool Outcomes**, the user must enter data on three separate data entry tabs, one for Indicator 7A, one for Indicator 7B, and one for Indicator 7C.

Calculations

Based on the data users entered on the Data Entry sheet, the Calculations sheet will automatically display a table and a chart showing the state's historical data in percentages. For example, for Indicators 1 and 2, a table and two column charts display the state's graduation data and dropout data. Users may edit all visualizations (e.g., chart type, colors, data labels, font size).

Predicting Trend

On the Predicting Trend sheet, the tool will automatically calculate and display targets based on the data users entered on the Data Entry sheet. For example, for Indicators 1 and 2, the tool determines targets based on the number of youth users anticipate or predict will exit special education for each of the following reasons: received a regular high school diploma, received an alternate diploma, reached maximum age, received a certificate, and dropped out.

Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease

On the Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease sheet, users must enter a fixed, or specific, percent increase or decrease for the tool to apply to the baseline year's data. Then, the tool will apply the fixed percent entered to the target for each subsequent year to establish targets for future years. That is, for indicators that show improvement with an increase in the data, such as Indicator 1, the tool will add the fixed percent to the baseline year data and subsequent years. For indicators that show improvement with a decrease in the data, such as Indicator 2, the tool will subtract the fixed percent from the baseline year data and subsequent years.

Average Increase or Average Decrease

On the Average Increase or Average Decrease sheet, the tool will use the historical data users entered on the Data Entry sheet to calculate the average percent increase or average percent decrease and then apply that percentage to each year's data after the baseline year. That is, for indicators that show improvement with an increase in the data, such as Indicator 1, the tool will calculate the average percent increase and add that percentage to each year's data after the baseline year. For indicators that show improvement with a decrease in the data, such as Indicator 2, the tool will calculate the average percent decrease and subtract that percentage from each year's data after the baseline year.

User Tips:

Do not use the Average Increase method if the average increase is negative for indicators that show improvement with an increase in the data. Likewise, do not use the Average Decrease method if the average decrease is positive for indicators that show improvement with a decrease in the data.

The tools will display an error message and not calculate Average Increase or Average Decrease if users set the baseline year so that there are fewer than three years of historical data available; IDC does not recommend this method if states have only 2 years of historical data.

Start With the End Goal

On the Start With the End Goal sheet, users must enter the desired target for the end year. The tool will then calculate targets for all years that will show improvement evenly over time from the baseline year to the final year.

Accelerated Growth

On the Accelerated Growth sheet, users must enter the percentage of baseline data for growth. The Accelerated Growth methodology will use this percentage to set initial targets with minimal growth over the baseline year and then accelerate that growth over subsequent years. To do this, the tool adds or subtracts the percentage users enter to the baseline year data to produce the target for the first year after the baseline year. The tool then calculates subsequent years' targets by increasing the rate of growth each year.

Summary

On the Summary sheet, users will see the results of all the target setting methodologies. This sheet includes a summary data table and line chart that will provide a comparison of all targets for all years. Users may edit the chart.

Part II. Entering Data in the Toolkit

This section provides users with a step-by-step guide for using the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* to yield targets for the indicators. The section includes a list of data sources to use for each indicator the toolkit covers as well as instructions for data entry and use specific to each methodology.

Data Sources for Indicators

Indicator	Data source
Indicator 1. Graduation	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS009
Indicator 2. Dropout	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS009
Indicator 3. Assessment	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS175, FS178, FS185, FS188
Indicator 4A. Suspension and Expulsion: Percent of LEAs With Significant Discrepancy	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS006 and state discipline data for students without disabilities, if comparing rates for students with and without disabilities
Indicator 5. Educational Environments	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS002
Indicator 6. Preschool Environments	Same data that states used for 618 data: ED*Facts* FS089
Indicator 7. Preschool Outcomes	State-selected data
Indicator 8. Parent Involvement	State-selected data
Indicator 14. Post-School Outcomes	State-selected data

FS = File specifications.

Data Entry Sheet

Navigate to the Data Entry sheet by clicking on the Data Entry tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents. Once on the Data Entry sheet, begin by entering the following data into the Historical Data Entry table at the top of the sheet:

- In column A, enter the years for the data you wish to use. You may enter up to five previous school years in the format YYYY–YY.
- In column B and any subsequent columns, enter the data that correspond to the column heading.
  - For example, for Indicators 1 and 2, enter the number of youth with IEPs who exited with a regular diploma, with an alternate high school diploma, by reaching maximum age, etc.
  - For example, for Indicator 3, enter the number of children with IEPs, the number of children in regular assessment without accommodations, the number of children in regular assessment with accommodations, etc.

After you have entered all the historical data for the indicator, set the baseline year for the tool using the dropdown menu at the top of the sheet.

> **Note:** The tool populates the baseline year dropdown menu based on the years entered in Column A of the Historical Data Entry table.

Next, regardless of whether you intend to use the Predicting Trend methodology, enter the next five school years in the format YYYY–YY in column A of the Projected Data Entry table, beginning with the school year immediately following your last year of historical data. For example, if your last year of historical data is 2020–21, then you would enter 2021–22 as the first year in column A of the Projected Data Entry table.

Finally, if you choose to use the Predicting Trend methodology, you must also enter data in column B and any subsequent columns in the Projected Data Entry table. These data should be the projected counts for each column heading descriptor.

Calculations Sheet

Navigate to the Calculations sheet by clicking on the Calculations tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Calculations tab name.

Once on the Calculations sheet, you do not need to enter any data. This sheet calculates your state's historical and current data based on the information you provided in the Data Entry sheet and displays that data in a table and a column chart for use within your agency and with stakeholders.

You may edit and personalize the column chart by changing the color of one or more columns, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also change the chart type (e.g., column chart to line chart). Finally, you can copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

Predicting Trend Sheet

Navigate to the Predicting Trend sheet by clicking on the Predicting Trend tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Predicting Trend tab name.

Once on the Predicting Trend sheet, you will see

- a table presenting all the data you entered on the Data Entry sheet;
- a table displaying historical data and targets, calculated based on the data from the Data Entry sheet; and
- an editable column chart displaying the same historical data and targets from the second table.

When working to determine appropriate targets for each indicator, you may change predicted numbers in the Projected Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet to calculate different targets. For reference, note that the baseline year appears green in the second table.

You may edit and personalize the column chart by changing the color of one or more columns, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

> **Note:** To use the Predicting Trend methodology, you must enter additional data in column B and any subsequent columns in the Projected Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet.

Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease Sheet

Navigate to the Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease sheet by clicking on the Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease tab name.

Once on the Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease sheet, you will see a table that displays the historical data that you entered on the Data Entry sheet with a box below it where you can set a fixed percentage for increase or decrease. To set targets, enter the fixed percentage your state proposes that the data will increase or decrease each year into the box labeled "Increase [Decrease] by a fixed percentage each year."

The tool will then calculate targets and display them in the second table on the sheet by adding or subtracting this fixed percentage from the baseline year's data. It will then add or subtract the same percentage for each subsequent year and display those numbers. When working to determine appropriate targets for each indicator, you may change the fixed percentage by which the data will increase or decrease to calculate different targets. For reference, note that the baseline year appears green in the second table.

The historical data and targets will also display on a column chart, which you may edit and personalize by changing the color of one or more columns, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

Average Increase or Average Decrease Sheet

Navigate to the Average Increase or Average Decrease sheet by clicking on the Average Increase or Average Decrease tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Average Increase or Average Decrease tab name.

Once on the Average Increase or Average Decrease sheet, you will see a table presenting the data you entered on the Historical Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet, followed by a second table displaying average increase or decrease calculations. Please note that an error message will appear if users set the baseline year so that there are fewer than three years of historical data available to calculate an average change.

The tool will calculate the average percentage change, either increase or decrease, from year to year for the historical data. Next, the tool will add or subtract this percentage from the baseline year's data for the first year's target. It will then add or subtract the same percentage to each subsequent year to calculate targets and display these targets, along with year-to-year and average change, in the table. For reference, note that the baseline year appears green in the second table.

The historical data and targets will also display on a column chart, which you may edit and personalize by changing the color of one or more columns, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

Start With the End Goal Sheet

Navigate to the Start With the End Goal sheet by clicking on the Start With the End Goal tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Start With the End Goal tab name.

Once on the Start With the End Goal sheet, you will see a table presenting the data you entered in the Historical Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet with a box below it where you can enter the end goal for the school year displayed. The end year displayed corresponds with the final year you entered in column A of the Projected Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet. To change the end year, you also need to change the historical and projected years on the Data Entry sheet.

To set targets, first enter the percentage that represents where your state believes the data will be at the end year in the box labeled "Enter a goal for YYYY–YY." The tool will calculate targets for each year after the baseline to achieve the pre-determined end year goal and display these numbers in the table. When working to determine appropriate targets for each indicator, you may also change the end year goal to calculate different targets. For reference, note that the baseline year appears green in the second table.

The historical data and targets will also display on a column chart, which you may edit and personalize by changing the color of one or more columns, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

Accelerated Growth Sheet

Navigate to the Accelerated Growth sheet by clicking on the Accelerated Growth tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Accelerated Growth tab name.

Once on the Accelerated Growth sheet, you will see a table presenting the data you entered on the Historical Data Entry table on the Data Entry sheet with a box below it where you can enter the initial percentage for baseline growth or decrease.

To set targets, enter a percentage of the baseline year data in the box labeled "Percentage of baseline for growth[decrease]." The tool will add this percentage to the baseline year data to display the subsequent year's target. Then, the tool will calculate each future year's target by increasing the rate of growth each year to calculate targets for subsequent years, which it will display in the table. The targets will show slow growth initially, but that growth will accelerate in subsequent years. When working to determine appropriate targets for each indicator, you may also change the initial percentage of the baseline data to increase or decrease in order to calculate different targets.

The historical data and targets will also display on a line chart, which you may edit and personalize by changing the color of the line, increasing the font size of the axes, adding data labels, or changing the title of the chart. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation.

Summary Sheet

Navigate to the Summary sheet by clicking on the Summary tab or by linking to it from the Table of Contents using the hyperlinked Summary tab name.

Once on the Summary sheet, you cannot enter any data. The summary sheet will display the targets calculated for each methodology in a table and line chart so you may compare the results.

You may personalize the line chart that the tool creates by changing the chart type, the colors, data labels, or fonts. You may also copy and paste the chart and table into a presentation. If there are any methods you did not use or that you do not want to include in the final chart, right-click on the chart and choose "Select Data" and then de-select any methods you want to remove from the chart.

Part III. *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit*: A Summary

Selecting baselines and determining targets are important processes for states because, when used together, they provide an opportunity to determine if improvement strategies are appropriate, provide desired results, and, most importantly, lead to improved outcomes for children with disabilities. States should make a practice of revisiting and reviewing their targets to determine the progress they are making to reach or exceed them. In addition to assisting states to set measurable and rigorous targets, the *SPP/APR Target Setting Toolkit* may help states when they are considering revising their targets. For example, users may change their selection for four of the methodologies that require data entry—Predicting Trend, Fixed Percent Increase or Fixed Percent Decrease, Start With the End Goal, and Accelerated Growth. Adjusting the predicted numbers, the fixed percentage, the end goal percentage, or the percentage of baseline will allow the tool to calculate different targets for a state to discuss and possibly adopt.

The ultimate purpose of this toolkit is to support states as they develop a deep understanding of their historical data and current data so they may be intentional about setting targets that demonstrate the results of improvement activities and special education programming.