

Part B Child Count and Educational Environment

SY 2018-19 Reporting Year

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which states collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

Alabama

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The 20/20 year to year change is really not that significant when comparing to the total child count for early childhood. The cell size for this sample of students is relatively small. The change is <1% of our child count for early childhood.

Arizona

- Beginning with SY 2016-17, Arizona moved to a new student accountability system. As part of this transition, the student information systems utilized by public education agencies (PEAs) in the State of Arizona were mandated to go through one mechanism only to ensure secure and valid data. While most PEAs adopted this mandate quickly, juvenile facilities and jails were met with a variety of challenges to get these systems implemented in each county within Arizona. These specific PEAs are now able to submit student data more accurately and with more validity through a student information system rather than archaic manual processes.

Alaska

- In SY 2018-19, Alaska experienced a significant increase in the number of 3-5 year old children who were reported in the Other Health Impairment (OHI) category. Although we see an increase in several districts across the state, the bulk of this increase was seen in one of our large, urban district and they report identifying an increase of 3-5 year old students who have more severe conditions and who need more services. These students most often fall into the OHI category.

Arkansas

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:
- Autism: In Arkansas, autism appears to be being identified at an earlier age and instead of children be classified as having a developmental delay an actual diagnosis of autism is given. Analysis of the data revealed that there was also a drop in the number of children being classified as having a developmental delay.
 - Separate Class: For more than 20 years Arkansas Department of Education has had a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Arkansas Department of Human services, Division of Developmental Disability Services (DDS). The MOU stated that children who qualified for services under DDS would qualify for IDEA services as well since DDS eligibility was more stringent than IDEA eligibility. In SY 2018-19 the MOU was mutually terminated and would take effect July 1, 2019. Some DDS service providers which are primarily separate schools, opted not to provide IDEA services in SY 2018-19. IDEA services were provided through the school district or educational cooperative if the parents/guardians did not sign a revocation of IDEA services. As we move forward into the 2019-20 school year many children's service location could be reclassified; thus impacting the educational environment trend data.

Connecticut

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Connecticut continues to see an increase in the number of children identified before age 5 with the primary disability category of Autism. Our total population of children served, ages 3-5, continues to grow in the category of Autism at a rate much greater than our other two increasing areas of developmental delay or speech/language impairment. This mirrors increases seen in our Birth to Three population as well. One possible explanation is new training for pediatrician in CT about how to make appropriate referrals for children to both Part C and Part B services.

District of Columbia

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The 20.69% (36 students) increase in Autism as Primary Disability between SY 2017-18 and SY 2018-19 is reflective of our state's population.

Florida

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: During SY 2018-19 school year, there was an increase in the number of students identified as a Prekindergarten Student with a Disability. Our data indicate that a majority of the identification increases were in several of the state's largest districts. To support inclusion in the Prekindergarten classroom, there is an increase in services being provided in the Early Childhood Program setting and a decrease in services being provided in a therapy setting.

Guam

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Due to the small population of Special education students on Guam, any increase or decrease in reporting numbers from one year to the next will result in higher percentages of differences and therefore require a data note to be submitted. The total number of children decreased and this can be seen in almost all Educational Environment settings, however it resulted in a bigger decrease percentage wise in the setting "Inside regular class less than 40% of the day.
- The decrease in students with a Speech or language impairment disability can be contributed to the change in disability as determined by the IEP team throughout the year to adjust for students requiring more services. The decrease in Services in Regular Early Childhood Program is directly related to the increase in children in the Home, and Separate Class setting. The increase of children in the Home setting is due to daycare expenses and a limited availability of openings to head start.

Hawaii

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: For SY 2018- 19, a change in data that triggered the data check is a result of normal fluctuation of students whom received the majority of hours of Special Education and Related Services in a parentally placed in private schools. All students within the section have been verified a second time through HIDOE's Student Information System (SIS), Electronic Comprehensive Student Support System (eCSSS) and school level personnel. Currently, the data is being monitored and expected to normalize within the next few years.

Idaho

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- In Idaho homeschool is differentiated from parentally placed in private schools. Additional guidance and communication to LEAs directly impacted the counts in this category.
- Separate School: Idaho does not have state-funded preschool for all. As a result, local educational agencies (LEAs) frequently provide services in a separate class. As the population of early childhood students increases some LEAs have exceeded available capacity within their existing elementary and moved the early childhood program to a different building, resulting in coding the environment as a separate school.
- Services in Other Location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attend less than 10 hours): The reduced number of students reported under this category is attributed to training and communication to LEAs regarding documentation of service minutes for students ages 3-5. This change is reflected in an increase in the count of students reported under the environment code of "Services in Other Location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attends at least 10 hours)."

- Idaho identified an improvement opportunity to increase LEA staff understanding of what qualifies as an inclusive regular early childhood program. In SY 2018-19, Idaho developed online early childhood training modules for educators. Starting in SY 2019-20, training is expanding to include data enterers and staff submitting LEA level data to the state.

Iowa

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Residential placement: approximately one third exited special education, one third had placement codes changed to separate facilities after the State clarified procedures for students awaiting adjudication and one third are attributed to annual fluctuations in the data.
- Iowa attributes the increase in LEP students on an IEP to an overall increase in the number of LEP students in the state.

- Iowa is noncategorical and does not collect disability category data for our students. The reported numbers are derived from an equation that utilizes percentages from a historic incidence study. Iowa has verified accurate reporting of the calculated numbers.

Kansas

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Other Health Impairments: Kansas confirms an increase of 26 students as reported by the LEAs in this disability category.
- Service Provider Location: the increase in this category is reflective of improved reporting guidance and improved data reporting of IEP service location. The increase in this category reflects the proportional decrease in the Separate school category.
- Services in Other Location than Regular Early Childhood Program: the increase in this category is reflective of improved reporting guidance and improved data reporting of Individualized Education Program (IEP) service location. The increase in this category reflects the proportional decrease in the Separate school category.

Kentucky

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Kentucky had a 34.99% increase of students with IEPs placed in a separate class for students with disabilities in the 2018-19 school year. Because of an increased focus on child find, as well as an implementation of programs to

encourage parents to enroll students with disabilities in preschool, many of the smaller districts are finding an increase of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), making it difficult to balance the classes. This has caused an increase in the number of students enrolled in special classes.

Louisiana

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Special School District (LEA 101) saw both a decrease in their overall enrollment for students with disabilities in addition to a change in placement for most of their students from SY 2017-18 to SY 2018-19.

Massachusetts

- Due to Massachusetts accepting non-binary as a gender selection, totals and sub-totals for categories that report gender may be different.

Maine

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Maine has transitioned to a new early childhood student information system, lending to data collection and quality assurance improvements for early childhood environments. Additionally, Maine is continuing to improve training on data quality and fidelity in the designation of early childhood environments. Maine has utilized expertise from the OSEP-funded Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center and continues to provide training regarding early childhood environments. The year-to-year changes are reflections of this continued work.

Maryland

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- There was an increase of 1,899 LEP students, a 24.51% increase. This difference is likely due to the increase in the number of school-age Hispanic/Latino students (from 14,232 in SY 2017-18 to 15,318 in SY 2018-19), as well as a general increase in school-age special education enrollment (from 94,191 in SY 2017-18 to 95,940 in SY 2018-19).
- Students receiving services in a Regular Early Childhood Program (attend less than 10 hours): there was an increase of 180 students, or 22.28%, who received services in this educational environment. This increase is due to an overall decrease in the number and proportion of children ages 3-5 who attend regular early childhood programs and receive services in another location, as well as the increased availability of universal pre-K programs.

Michigan

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Michigan had a decrease in the number of children being served in separate schools and many of those children are attending school in a regular early childhood program receiving their services in another location.

Mississippi

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Districts have seen an increase of students with mental health related disabilities which is commensurate with Nationwide trends.

Missouri

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- The statewide decrease of 54 children in the category of Home is attributed to 18 fewer LEAs that reported children in the category than the prior year.
- The total went for ECSE HI students went up by 16 (11.76%).

Montana

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: As districts become better at providing services to the students with more significant needs, there is less need to serve these students in separate school settings, and those students are being transitioned to their home schools and being served there.

Nebraska

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Due to the population size of Nebraska's Special Education population, shifts occur as a nominal change could be considered a fair percentage change on paper. Some of the shifts were from Residential Facility back to a lesser restrictive environment while others were not. The data compares like aged children, not following the same aged students from year to year and with a gradual increase in Special Education students from year to year, the data is going to shift up and down in various reporting categories.

Nevada

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- The slight increase in homebound/hospital placements (36 students out of 51,497) is related to the individualized needs of students. Placement decisions are made by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, including the parents, and are made in compliance with state and federal law.
- The slight increase in parentally placed private school students (21 students out of 51,497) is the result of parents choosing to enroll their children in private schools.
- The slight decrease in the number of students ages three through five identified as having multiple disabilities (21 students out of 8,443) is the result of individualized decisions made by eligibility teams, including parents, based upon a comprehensive evaluation of the student. Eligibility decisions are individually made in compliance with eligibility criteria established in state and federal law.
- The decrease in students served in "service provider location" is related to the increase in students served in "regular early childhood program (attend less than 10 hours)," and is the result of initiatives in the state to create more inclusive placement options for early childhood students with disabilities.

New Mexico

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- The child count data from SY 2017-18 to SY 2018-19 increase in Autism, Developmental Delay, Multiple Disabilities Other Health Impairment and Specific Learning Disability supports the increase of students in special education from year to year.
- The students attending an early childhood (EC) setting less than 10 hours per week decreased while the students attending an EC setting more than 10 hours per week increased. This change can be considered valuable as more students are receiving longer time in an EC setting.

New York

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The counts are spread out over many LEAs and counts are too small to note anything systematic in the changes. The huge increase was accounted for by NYC; most NYC geographical districts had large increases.

North Carolina

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: Students in Correctional Facilities has decreased slightly. Our state is fully engaged in multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) and providing support and mental health interventions to troubled students which could account for the decrease.

North Dakota

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The SY 2018-19 North Dakota Child Count data shows an increase in the number of 3-5 year old children with disabilities who receive services in Other Location than Regular Early Childhood Program for less than 10 hours per week. The increase represents 35.71% with 25 more children, compared to the SY 2017-18 Child Count data. The increase may have resulted from the overall increase of 144 in the SY 2018-19 total count of the 3-5 year olds, compared to the SY 2017-18 Child Count. Also, as the State observed a significant increase in the number of children with speech or language needs, the effect could be a resulting increase in the number of kids receiving speech or language services for few hours during the week from Other Locations than Regular Early Childhood Program.

Ohio

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The increase in the number of students served in residential facilities is due to the increased need for residential mental health treatment for students in Ohio. The opioid epidemic and other sources of trauma experienced by students has increased placement into residential treatment facilities by local mental health boards for students needing intensive supports and services.

Oregon

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The Homebound/Hospital count increased statewide due to recent changes in Oregon statute pertaining to abbreviated day which increased placements in Homebound settings. Also, budget cuts are thought to have contributed to this increase with fewer options available for placements related to behavioral/mental health needs statewide.

- Starting with SY 2018-19, Oregon allows for three permitted values in the Sex/Gender category. The count of the third permitted value has been removed from all category sets that include Sex/Gender thus sums of category sets that include Sex/Gender will not add up to the Total.

Pennsylvania

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Developmental Delay increased by 31 students in SY 2018-19 due to an increase in the children who remained in 619 services during their Kindergarten eligible year. As result, there was an increase in the count of children with this disability category.
- Separate School decreased by 23.79 % in SY 2018-19 – more students receiving services in Regular Early Childhood Programs.

South Dakota

- South Dakota's state definition of developmental delay is limited to students with a disability age 3 through 5. Due to the transfer of an out-of-state student from a state with a broader age range for developmental delay, South Dakota is reporting one student who exceeded the age range. This student was receiving comparable services over the child count date and the district was in the process of determining eligibility based on South Dakota disability categories.

Tennessee

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Residential facility: This is a category that is relatively small and can be prone to fluctuation from year-to-year. While there was a decrease of 97 students from SY 2017-18 to SY 2018-19, the figure reported for the SY 2018-19 school year is more in keeping with the data reported in the SY 2015-16 and SY 2016-17 school years. Given this, the large increase in the SY 2017-18 school year may have been an aberration based on unique student enrollments and educational placements for that school year.
- Regarding the increase in students identified as English Learners, this is a trend that has been occurring in Tennessee over the last several years. As well, while the English Learner population is continuing to increase the Tennessee Department of Education has also made a push to better capture data on students considered English Learners, requiring LEAs to more thoroughly track information about students' English Learner statuses. Such information is now tied to state and federal reporting, and thus the data are more reliable and consistently reported. Students who previously may have been incorrectly coded or not coded at all as English Learners are now having such information populated, which contributes in part to the increase in the reported number of English Learners.
- Students attending a regular early childhood program for less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of special education services in another location: Over the past two years, the department has made a concerted effort to improve the least restrictive environment data for pre-K students with disabilities. Trainings, instructional resources, guidance documents, updates to the data system where data are entered regarding educational environments, and letters to superintendents requiring LEAs to address exclusionary practices in pre-K special education all likely contributed to more students receiving services in the regular early childhood program and fewer receiving services in another location. While there was a drop of 160 students from the environment category of students receiving the majority of their services in another location outside of the regular early childhood program, there was an increase of 543 students receiving the majority of services in the regular early childhood program. Another contributing factor to the decrease in the counts of students attending a regular early childhood program for less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of special education services in another location is that more and more students with disabilities in pre-K are attending a regular early childhood program. Accordingly, fewer are falling into categories of attending a regular early childhood program for less than 10 hours, since more and more students are attending the regular childhood programs for 10 or more hours.

Utah

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Our separate class disability category count has decreased and our services in regular early childhood programs disability category count has increased due to the emphasis we have on providing inclusive early childhood educational settings for preschool students with disabilities. We've accomplished this through targeted technical assistance and professional development to LEAs on inclusive practices. Additionally, our state legislature has provided grant funding to some LEAs which has allowed these LEAs to provide preschool services to eligible students who are at-risk. This funding has assisted LEAs in developing inclusive preschool programs. Students with disabilities are attending these programs and receiving services in the regular early childhood education program, rather than in a separate class.
- Our service provider location disability category count has decreased due to the emphasis we've placed on inclusive preschool programs and providing services in the regular early childhood program. Additionally, technical assistance and training has been provided to ensure LEAs are reporting the location of services accurately.
- Our separate school disability category count has increased due to inaccuracy data reporting from a couple LEAs who mistakenly used this category for students receiving services in the separate class category. We will provide technical assistance and training to these LEAs to ensure accurate reporting this next year.

Vermont

- Vermont is currently working through full implementation of our Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS). With so much change happening, the field has struggled to meet their data reporting requirements to us here at the SEA. The SLDS delays Vermont experienced affected some reference data that is used to create the cleanest version of this file. With the updated data available there will be some disputed students added back in or LEAs changed. There will also be an updated English Learner Status for some students. With SLDS Implementation, going forward we anticipate much cleaner, timelier, and accurate data to be reported to us with far lower burden on the field.

Virgin Islands

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- The decrease for children ages 3-5 with speech or language impairment can be attributed to the following: Some of the children exited via the mode of returned to regular education, moved and known to be continuing, and the majority of children turned age six (6) prior to the December 1, 2018 Child Count. For the latter reason, these children were counted included in file specs 002 school-aged children ages six (6) through twenty-one (21).
- The decrease children ages 3-5 who are receiving services in a Regular Early Childhood Program (attend at least 10 hours) can be attributed to the following: Children exited via the mode of returned to regular education, moved and known to be continuing, and that the greater number of children turned age six (6) prior to the December 1, 2018, Child Count. As such many of these children who continued to receive special education and related services were included and counted in files spec 002 school-aged children ages six (6) through twenty-one (21).

Virginia

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The number of children identified with speech language impairment and developmental delay increased in Virginia. Given the needs of the children and the young age, children may be served in the home as part of the continuum of placement options. This is especially true for children exiting Early Intervention with parents who want to continue in home services. The Virginia Department of Education continues to provide comprehensive technical assistance to districts to ensure a continuum of placement opportunities are offered and that the least restrictive environment is provided.

Washington

- The State provided the following response to a large Year to Year change: The overall increase for students ages 3 through 5 was 717 students, and of those 67 more students were identified as Other Health Impairment from the prior year. The increase is not specific to one LEA or geographic area, but spread evenly throughout the state.

- Washington gathers F, M, and X in our student-level data collection - we were provided guidance to exclude X in any Category Sets involving Sex, but to include those student counts in any other Category Sets and Totals.

Wisconsin

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Residential Facility: Wisconsin considers this decrease in numbers a positive.
- Developmental Delay: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction expanded the use of the Developmental Delay disability category up to age 9. Since districts are able to use this category code longer, we would expect to see increasing numbers for this category.

- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction continues to refine business rules with data checks that alert districts to check and correct their data, which leads to better data quality as we migrated to a new system. In addition, the Department meets monthly with the student information system vendors to refine their processes related to data quality. The Department has also added an additional targeted data quality outreach effort by partnering with regional Cooperative Education Service Agency staff throughout the state to provide technical assistance and oversight to districts prior to snap shot to further reduce data discrepancies.

West Virginia

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Home and Services in Other Location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attend less than 10 hours): Even though over half of the students identified as preschool special education are in a Universal Prek classroom, WV experienced an increase in the number of students in the Z category, children attend less than 10 hour per week and special education and related services are in some other location. The category increased by 40 students. Additionally, there was an increase in the number of students receiving services in the home. This number increased by 25. The factors involved for this increase in both categories relate to a variety of reasons being experienced by our educational system. WV is one of the hardest hit states regarding the opioid crisis in the country. Additionally, WV battles high poverty rates and a sluggish economy. WV is second in the nation when it comes to children being raised by their grandparents. There are 10.9% of the children living in homes where householders are grandparents or other relatives. Local boards of education are facing significant challenges in the physical, cognitive and emotional needs in the preschool population. Students often lack basic needs because of these

situations. Research indicates how trauma is changing children's brain. Educators are facing challenging behaviors and persistent aggression in our students too. Local boards of education are addressing the needs of their students with a variety of options. To help address the varied individual needs, including related services of these students, local boards of education are providing an array and a combination for configuration of services including home based services, combination of home and center based services with increasing hours overtime based on the needs of the student. For some students, it requires gradual increases of service time to assist with the social emotional needs so our young students can be successful in the classroom. For SY 2018-19, the number of three year old students increased by 39 students. Students are being identified early and are receiving the needed preschool services.

- Correctional Facilities: The Office of Special Education has been working diligently to improve data quality across the state of West Virginia. As a result of training the local data entry personnel, data is now being recorded more accurately for this LRE in particular. It should be noted that in the "Inside regular class 80% or more of the day" category, the number of students decreased by 230, while the "Residential Placement" setting increased by 200 students; these are essentially the same students. Data entry personnel are no longer documenting students in residential facilities as receiving services "Inside regular class 80% or more of the day," as they understand that they need to document the "setting" and not the "classroom" where the student is receiving special education services. Therefore, while the number of students in residential facilities may appear to have increased, it is actually the LRE being correctly documented and reported via ED Facts during the Child Count collection.

Wyoming

- The State provided the following responses to large Year to Year changes:

- Increase of 24.04% in the disability category of Developmental Delay: In 2016 and 2018, the Wyoming Legislative Services Office conducted a two-phase study on Early Childhood Education in WY. One of the findings from that study was the over-identification of Speech Language (S/L) disabilities for children ages 3-5. After a comprehensive data analysis, it was discovered that there may have been a widespread practice of unilaterally identifying children as S/L due to a general lack of understanding about evaluation and eligibility requirements. For the past two years, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), in collaboration with the Behavioral Health Division (BHD), have been targeting technical assistance and professional development in the areas of comprehensive evaluations and accurate eligibility determination. While there has been a 24.04% increase in children identified as Developmentally Delayed (DD), there has also been a decrease of 14.09% of children with S/L. One may conclude that the change in these two data points make sense and is actually the intended outcome the WDE and BHD were hoping to achieve through their efforts of providing targeted guidance and training. Children are being identified more accurately.
- Decrease of 36.08% in environment code of Separate School in 3-5 year olds: The decrease in the number of children receiving special education and related services in separate schools (SS) can be clarified through a deeper look into the data of two of the 14 Preschool Regions. These two regions are responsible for the majority of children placed in the SS environment, and they account for 67% of all students in the state in the SS environment. The WDE and BHD have provided intensive technical assistance on Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. In fact, the BHD used the oversight mechanisms of a Corrective Action Plan and Compliance Agreement to require improvement of

the SS rates for these two regions. The decrease of 36.08% is positive progress, however we will continue efforts for further improvement.

- Increase of 97.78% of students LEP: In October 2017, Wyoming Department of Education became aware of issues related to the way English Learners (EL) were coded in School Information Systems (SIS). Upon this discovery, a tremendous effort was initiated by the WDE to ensure students were correctly identified in their school and district information systems so that data could be accurately reported at both the state- and federal-levels. We made it a priority to properly identify all EL students, which included the proper identification and serving of EL students with disabilities. We discovered that, in many cases, districts (and schools) were identifying English Learners with disabilities as one or the other (English Learner or a student with a disability), allowing one category to take precedence over the other. Information was provided to districts to clarify that students may be dually-identified (i.e. that students may be identified as both an English Learner and a Special Education student at the same time). This resulted in further collaboration opportunities within different departments at the WDE to communicate information through several platforms. Efforts to assist districts to correctly identify students is an ongoing effort. This correction accounts for the marked increase in the number of students who are English Learners with disabilities.