

PART B EXITING DATA NOTES

2016–17 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

- Year to Year note: The large increase in numbers and percentages for Basis of Exit as Received a Certificate as well as the decrease in the number for Basis of Exit as Graduated with a Regular High School Diploma can be attributed to guidance issued to local education agencies clarifying who should be counted in the Alabama graduation rate. The guidance clarified that students receiving a regular/standard high school diploma in Alabama is based on the multiple pathways leading to the Alabama High School Diploma (AHSD), which are the General Education Pathway, the Essentials Pathway, and the Alternate Achievement Standards (AAS) Pathway. Students who complete the course requirements for the AHSD, which is fully aligned with the state’s academic standards, will count in the graduation rate (i.e., counted as Graduated with a Regular High School Diploma). Students who took and/or followed the Essentials Pathway, the AAS Pathway and the Alabama Occupational Diploma (AOD) will not count as graduates (i.e., counted as Received a Certificate) because the courses were not “fully” aligned to Alabama’s academic standards.

Alaska

- Alaska experienced a significant decrease in the number of special education students who dropped out of school in the 2016-17 school year. This decrease was seen in many districts across the state. Several districts began renewed efforts to identify students at risk of dropping out and working with them to keep them in school. Several other districts implemented new data cleansing procedures to confirm that all drop outs were in fact drop outs as opposed to students who moved. All these efforts resulted in a reduction in the number of students with disabilities who dropped out.

Arizona

- Year to Year note: The significant increase in the count of students graduating with a regular high school diploma can be attributed to the change in graduation requirements for the State of Arizona. Effective 2014, high school students graduating after December 31, 2016 would no longer be required to pass the Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) test to graduate high school. Students will not be required to pass the Arizona's Measurement of Educational Readiness to Inform Teaching (AzMERIT) End-of-Course tests for graduation, but they must still earn the minimum number of English and

Mathematics credits to graduate. In 2015, the Arizona legislature passed the American Civics Act. This bill requires students, beginning with the graduating class of 2017, to pass a civics test based on the United States Immigration and Naturalization civics questions. Students are required to score 60% or higher to graduate from high school or obtain a high school equivalency certificate. While students with disabilities are required to take the test, they are not required to pass this test to graduate.

Arkansas

- There was an increase in the number of children not eligible for Part B, exiting with no referral. This increase was due to the fact that there was an increase in the number of children exiting along with the families not choosing to exit to other programs

Colorado

- Year to Year note, Reached Maximum Age: The majority of the year-to-year difference was accounted for by 3 school districts. We contacted these school districts for possible explanations to why they showed increases in the number of students who reached maximum age in SY2016-17. All 3 of them claimed that the students they reported as reached maximum age should have been reported with other exit categories (e.g., graduation with a regular diploma).

Because the data have been certified by the school districts as accurate and final at the closing of the data collection, the State cannot re-open the data collection and modify the data. The state reported the data as accurately as possible with the data given by the school districts.

The 3 school districts are having internal trainings with case managers on correct exit reporting.

Connecticut

- Year to year note: The 2016-17 cohort of exiting students with disabilities had fewer students remain enrolled through age 21, this cohort had nearly 10% more students graduate with a standard HS Diploma. Different group of students, therefore different outcomes are to be expected.

Federated States of Micronesia

- Year to year note: Dropped Out: For 2016-2017, FSM's total dropped out data increased from 2015-2016. One of the consistent contributing factors to this increase is a result of families of students with disabilities consistently changing their residency to different islands and not reenrolling their kids in their new community schools. This makes it difficult to track the students. In addition, because the compulsory maximum school age in FSM is 14 years old, some students decided not to continue attending school.

Transferred to Regular Education: The number of students transferred to regular education increased from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017. This is attributed to FSM continuously providing trainings that support the collaboration of general and special education teachers. The variation may be also due to enrollment patterns.

Moved Known to be Continuing: The main contributing factor to the increase in number of students exited from the FSM Special Education Program through this category is due to families migrating to other countries outside the FSM.

Idaho

- Year to year note: The large increase in the number of dropouts is attributed to improved data processes and communication between Idaho's Division of Informational Technology (IT) and the Division of Special Education as well as improved communication with districts regarding dropout data submissions. In reviewing the code used to pull information for the FS 009 report special attention was paid regarding dates of enrollment increasing the overall number of students pulled in the report. It was also discovered that one of the main codes used to document the "Moved Known to Continue" category was calculating instead into the "Transferred to regular education" category. The change in aggregation resulted in a substantial increase in the "Moved Known to Continue" category and a corresponding decrease in the "Transferred to regular education" category.

During the 2016-2017 school year, there was increased communication regarding reporting exit data. Edits to the code used for pulling the report as well as increased awareness and reporting from LEAs are the primary factors contributing to the overall increase in numbers.

Indiana

- Year to year note: Indiana made an effort to improve reporting on the exiting collection for 2016-17 in the belief that LEAs were over reporting students exiting transferring to a regular education program only.

Massachusetts

- Massachusetts has added a third selection within gender (non-binary). Per PSC guidance we exclude these students from data rows that include gender within their criteria, and include these same students when gender is not part of the criteria. Massachusetts had a total of 47 students that used the non-binary selection, but it may cause a slight difference in some subgroups and subtotals.

Maryland

- Year to year note: The year-to-year difference increased more than 10 percent for the Reached Maximum Age category from the 2015-16 count to 2016-17 count of students. The percent increase is

61.22%. The increase was reflected in one of the state-operated programs and one of the state's local school systems. The increases were due to SWD who reached maximum age and left a Maryland high school educational program in order to pursue a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Minnesota

- Year to year note: Increases in number of students in the 'reached maximum age' category are due to a slight increase in the overall enrollment of students identified under Autism Spectrum Disorder (Autism) and Developmental Cognitive Delay (Intellectual Disability) as well as more students identified under those two categories exiting school without receiving a high school diploma.

Missouri

- Year to year note: The decrease in Reached Max Age category was due to a smaller number of special education exiters in that category reported by the Department of Corrections.

Nevada

- Year to year note: The increase in students who graduated with a regular high school diploma and the decrease in students who received a certificate are related. In 2016-2017, participation in the end-of-course examination was required to earn a regular high school diploma, but there was no requirement for proficiency. As a result, students were less likely to drop out, which is reflected in the decrease in numbers of students who dropped out.

- Year to year note: The decrease in students who moved but were known to be continuing is related to the gradual improvement of economic conditions in Nevada and the resulting increase in stability of employment, housing, and other factors that cause families to stay in Nevada.

- Year to year note: The decrease in the number of students who reached maximum age is also related to the increase of students who were able to graduate with a regular high school diploma prior to reaching maximum age.

- Year to year note: The decrease in the number of students who transferred to regular education is related to the actual number of students who were found no longer eligible for special education as part of a reevaluation process. Reevaluations are conducted in compliance with federal and state laws.

Puerto Rico

- Data note for inconsistency between SSS IDEA response for Reached maximum age, ages 14- 19, and student counts reported: As you may be aware, Puerto Rico was hit by two significant hurricanes back-to-back (Hurricanes Irma and María) during September 2017. The devastation caused by these hurricanes, particularly Hurricane María which made landfall on Puerto Rico as a high-end Category 4,

nearly Category 5, hurricane was extensive, significantly damaging infrastructure, disabling radar and cell towers, and completely knocking out electricity across the island. Communications within the island were severely impacted. Puerto Rico is still working to restore electricity across the island.

These files were required to be submitted during a period in which Puerto Rico was still working to normalize operations and restore communication systems as part of the recovery from the devastations caused by Hurricanes María and Irma. As a result, PRDE's available resources were limited and this impacted the time and personnel available for reviewing the data submissions at the same level as in prior years. Because of the communication issues during that span, other factors impacted the revisions process. For example, unlike in past years, PRDE was unable to run the file specification checker with the combinations submitted on the SSS IDEA. As a result of the impact on infrastructure and communication systems at the time, the report inadvertently included 0 counts on the SEA files when they weren't required for this combination and should not have been included. It is important to note that data accuracy was not affected by this issue because a data note regarding the 0 count was included.

- Year to year note: The Drop Out category correctly reported a decrease in the year to year analysis. This decrease is attributable to multiple factors including a decrease in overall student population, efforts towards dropout prevention, and orientation efforts PRDE conducted regarding the exiting process. During this fiscal year, PRDE trained personnel regarding the different categories for the exiting process and this helped the personnel to better classify the exiting student in the category that best applied for each student. As a result, we believe less students were mistakenly classified as Drop Out as may have been in prior years. We will continue to provide technical assistance to keep improving the exiting process.

South Carolina

- Received a Certificate: After review of the SSS IDEA data, it was discovered that the survey was entered incorrectly. A student in SC can receive credentials that met the "Received Certificate" category. Professional development had also been given to all districts to ensure students were reported in the correct exiting category.

Tennessee

- There were issues/comments noted in this 2016-17 file relative to the reached maximum age exit category. In the comments it was stated that numbers were reported for students ages 14-20, however, the counts were listed as 0 for students ages 14-19. In checking the file specifications, it appears that such counts should be completely excluded from the file, including those that are 0s. There was one student who was exited as reached maximum age who was 20. This was because the reporting district thought the student could not return given that they turned 21 during the 2016-17 school year and would be 22 early into the 2017-18 school year.

- Year to year note, reached maximum age: Part of this may be due to the overall increase in exiting students as a whole, but the department will be issuing clarification about this particular exit reason to ensure that it is being selected correctly and not in lieu of other exit reasons.

Vermont

- Year to year note: Increase in transfer to regular education is in alignment with our MTSS (Multi-Tiered Systems of Support) efforts. MTSS is a comprehensive, evidence-based, and systemic framework for teaching and learning that unifies general and special education in an intentional, ongoing collaboration. In addition, over the last year, Vermont has had consolidation activity at the LEA level and this could be affecting how LEAs are reporting students as having moved. We are currently examining the uptick in reported drop-outs by working with our stakeholder group VT Council of Special Education Administrators. We believe at face value this may be a result of needed technical assistance at an LEA level. It is currently under investigation.

Wisconsin

- On the SSS IDEA submitted on 3/8/17 the Specific Learning Disability category was inadvertently not checked as a category used by our State.

Wisconsin implemented a new student data collection system that now includes more students due to the alignment of enrollment exit dates with the special education dates for this year.

West Virginia

- Data note for inconsistency between SSS IDEA response for Dropped out and student counts reported: Although WV's drop out age is 17, when a student(s) disappears and does not return to school and contact with the family has not been successful, then a school will use the drop out code since the other categories are not appropriate (died, graduated, moved, reached max age, received cert, transferred to regular education).

- Year to year note: The changes in the year to year comparisons between 2015-16 and 2016-17 may be the result of training regarding the proper use of exit codes and the implementation of statewide edit checks within the WV Education Information System (WVEIS) to assist school personnel during the End-of-Year certified collections for Exiting.