



Special/ Education in Pennsylvania

**A Focus on Data-Driven Programs and Services
2016-2017**

The Bureau of Special Education (BSE) works with local educational agencies, students with disabilities receiving special education services, and their families, teachers, and others, toward one goal:

Supporting
student
achievement
for all learners



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Celebrating Pennsylvania's Success

Honorable Pedro Rivera, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), is pleased to announce that the U.S. Department of Education has determined that Pennsylvania meets the requirements and purposes of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Of the seven largest states in the U.S., Pennsylvania is the only one to meet these requirements. This federal designation was given to PDE for programs that serve school-age (3-21) children, as well as infants and toddlers (birth-2).

In addition, Pennsylvania received universal level monitoring status in all four areas of Differentiated Monitoring and Support. Universal level is the highest status, requiring no further monitoring. Achieving universal status in all areas is not common, and Pennsylvania is proud to have received this monitoring status.

The combination of these two accomplishments is the highest status a state can receive in terms of monitoring. This status reflects the commitment that Pennsylvania's local educational agencies have to providing students with disabilities with quality programs and services.

This booklet highlights the 2016-2017 programs and services provided by the Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education (BSE) for Pennsylvania students with disabilities who received special education services. Included is an in-depth look at how statewide projects support and promote student success, based on the 17 Indicators for the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). With the exception of Indicators 6, 7, and 12, which are specific to early intervention/preschool, each Indicator is represented.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) monitors the progress of individual States in meeting performance standards and compliance with the legal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This assessment is used to help OSEP make decisions about a State's levels of engagement for monitoring and support. There are two strands of monitoring:

Meeting Determinations – This status is based upon data for the 17 State Performance Indicators related to implementation of IDEA.

Differentiated Monitoring and Support – This status is based upon four areas of Results Driven Accountability.

1. Results for students with disabilities
2. Compliance with IDEA
3. State Systemic Improvement Plan results
4. Fiscal processes for special education



In Appreciation

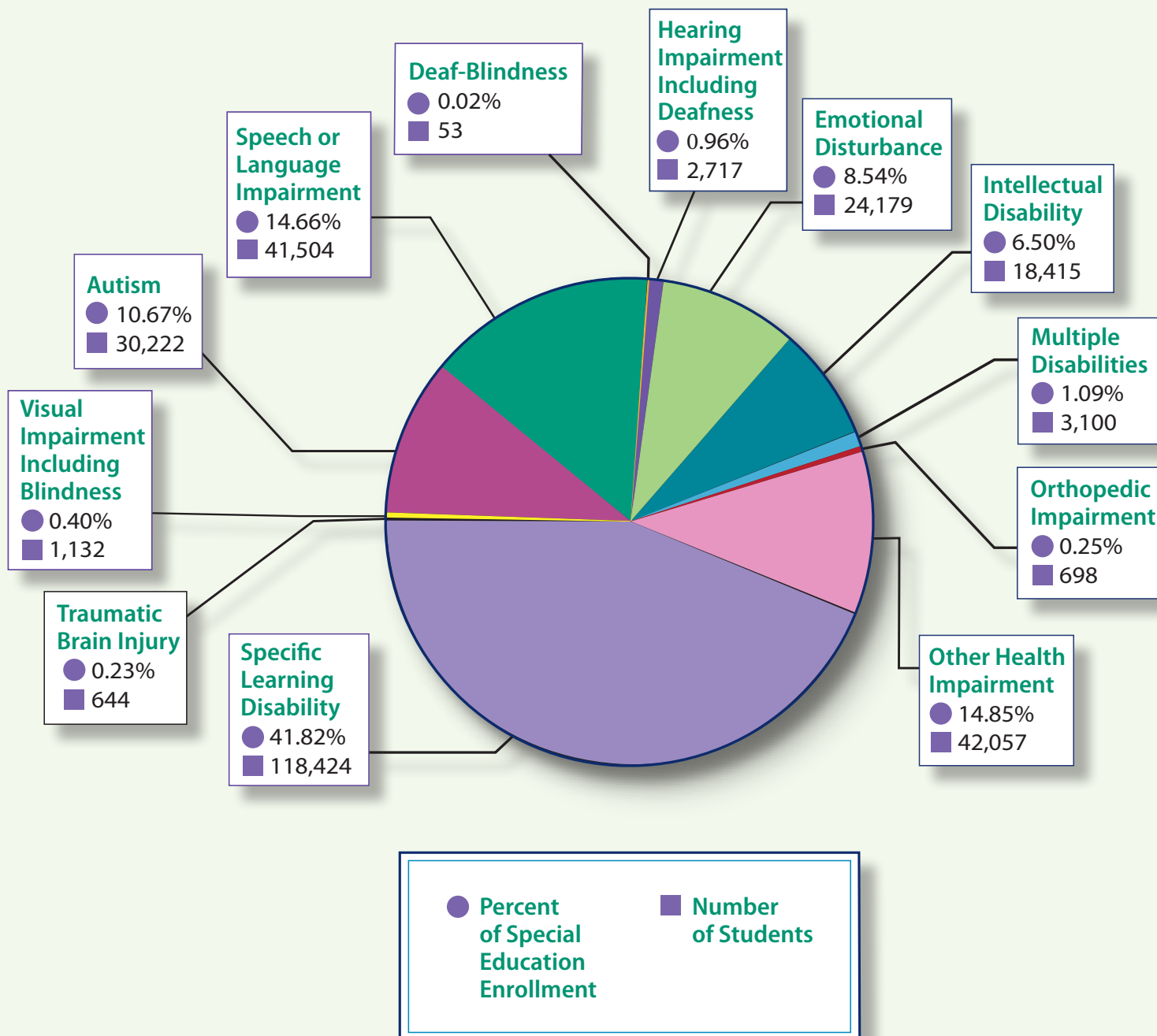
"It is an honor for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be recognized for ten years of dedicated service to some of our most vulnerable populations," Secretary of Education Pedro Rivera expressed. "I am proud of the work we are collectively doing, and I applaud our educators, administrators, and staff for their commitment to excellence in providing a high-quality education to our students."

Pennsylvania serves 283,145 students (ages 5 to 21) who receive special education services, or 16.48 percent of the total enrollment in Pennsylvania.

During the 2016-2017 school year, Pennsylvania's 500 school districts and approximately 176 charter schools had a total student enrollment of 1,718,530.

Enrollment of School-Age Students (Ages 5 to 21) by Disability Category

The 2016-17 statewide total of students with disabilities = 283,145 or 16.48 percent of the total enrollment in Pennsylvania



The State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) requires every state to develop a State Performance Plan (SPP) to improve services for students with disabilities. In addition, states are required to prepare and submit an Annual Performance Report (APR) on their progress toward meeting the targets set in their SPPs, which includes the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) or Indicator 17. The SPP/APR and SSIP are used by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) as part of its Results Driven Accountability program to evaluate states' performance in implementing IDEA. The three major components of this process are the SPP/APR and SSIP, public reporting of the state's performance and that of each LEA, and the determination of the status of the state's compliance with the IDEA.

The current SPP/APR is built around 17 federally required indicators of compliance and performance. It includes a description of the state's systems for general supervision, technical assistance and professional development; and, for each indicator, baseline performance, annual targets and an explanation of a decline in performance, if any. With stakeholder input, each state sets its own targets for improvement, which must be measurable and rigorous.

Part B Indicators are:

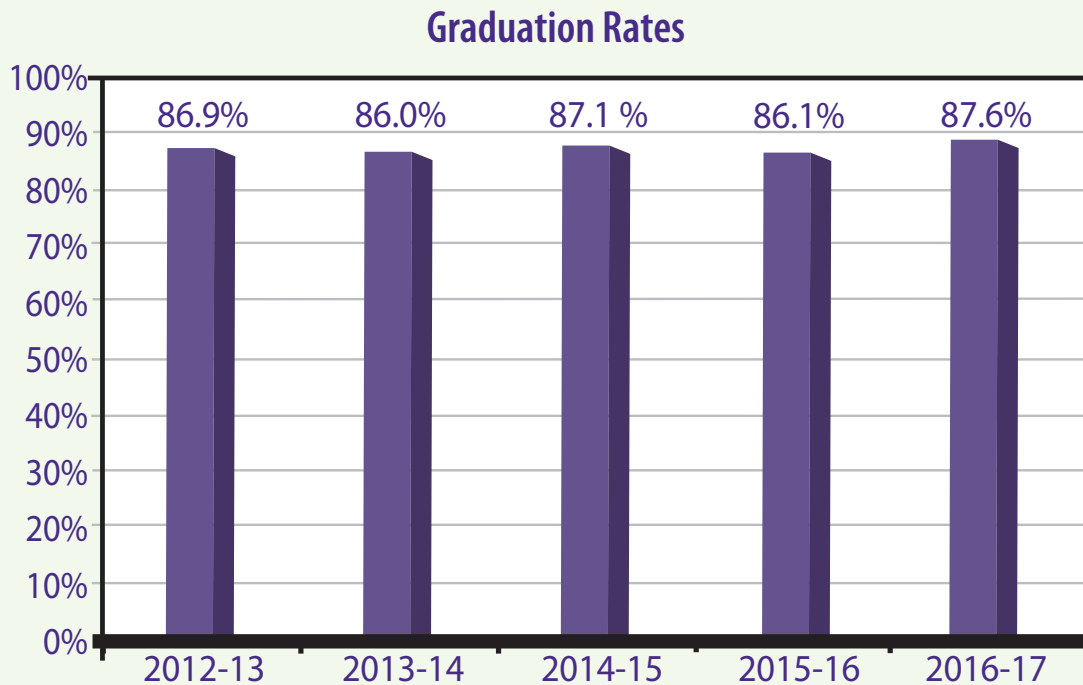
1. Graduation rates for students with disabilities
2. Dropout rates for students with disabilities
3. Participation and performance of students with disabilities in statewide assessments
4. Suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities
5. Provision of services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for school age (6-21) students with disabilities
6. Provision of services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for early intervention (3-5) students with disabilities
7. Preschool outcomes of early intervention (3-5) students with disabilities
8. School facilitated parent involvement
9. Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education
10. Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories in special education
11. Timely initial evaluations
12. Transition from birth (3) to early intervention programs (3-5)
13. Secondary transition services
14. Post-school outcomes
15. Mediation sessions
16. Resolution session outcomes
17. The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)



Indicator 1

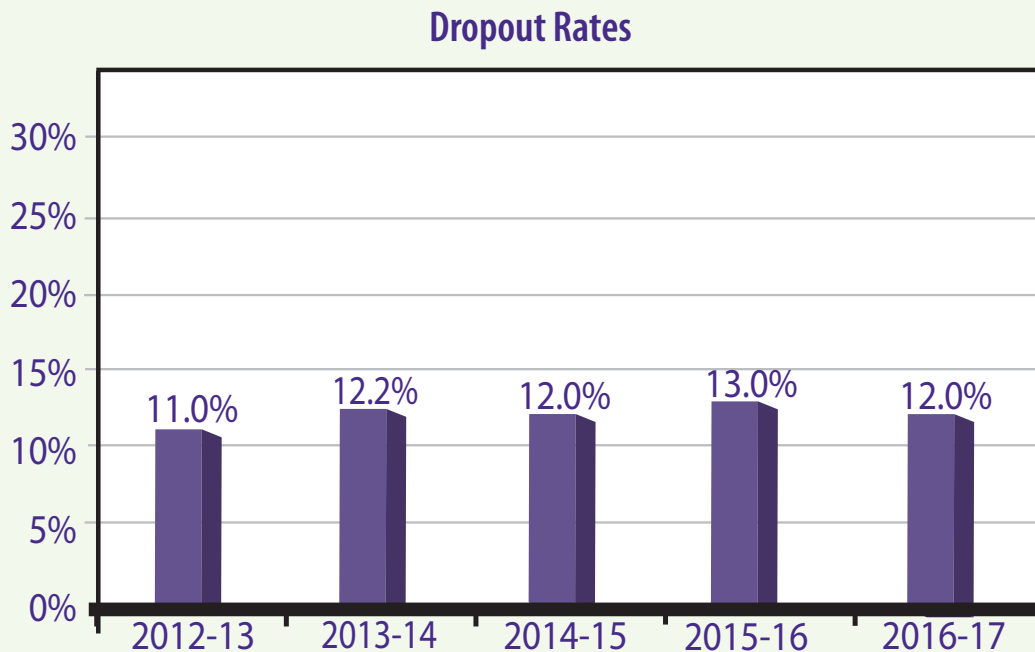
Graduation rates for students with disabilities

Pennsylvania is proud to take the position that all students – regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, or zip code – receive the same diploma upon graduation from high school.



Indicator 2

Dropout rates for students with disabilities



Promising Practice

The Pennsylvania Department of Education is committed to all students becoming college and career ready, including the approximately 24,000 students identified with emotional disturbance in Pennsylvania. To achieve this goal, students must stay in school. Students with emotional disturbance in Pennsylvania are more likely to drop out of school in comparison to their peers identified as having a learning disability or other health impairment.

Local educational agencies (LEA) can effectively address this issue by engaging in comprehensive systems-change efforts. To do this, educators and school leaders need intensive, ongoing professional development and coaching to ensure that

every student graduates from high school, college and career ready. The grant, *Middle School Success: The Path to Graduation (P2G)*, will provide this professional development and coaching. P2G will increase the capacity of Pennsylvania schools to identify and intervene with middle school students with disabilities who are at-risk for dropping out, including students identified with emotional disturbance. This important work will be accomplished by leveraging partnerships between parent training and information centers, institutions of higher education, LEAs, and the existing state-wide training and technical assistance network while focusing on systems change that is based on effective, evidence-based professional development practices.

Indicator 3

Participation and performance of students with disabilities in statewide assessments

In accordance with Indicator 3, the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) strives to improve participation and performance of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. The Pennsylvania state assessment system is composed of assessments and the reporting associated with the results of those assessments. The assessment system includes the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), and the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), among others.

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) includes assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics, which are taken by students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. Students in grades 4 and 8 are administered the Science PSSA. The English Language Arts and Mathematics PSSAs include items that are consistent with the Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The Science PSSA includes items that are aligned to the Assessment

Highlights of PASA Results for Grades 3, 5 8, and 11 in Math, Reading, and Science

Subject	Grade	Number Tested	Percent Advanced	Percent Proficient	Percent Novice	Percent Emerging
Math	3	2,592	21.9%	30.6%	18.3%	23.7%
	5	2,765	26.3%	21.8%	24.1%	22.9%
	8	2,662	14.4%	26.5%	23.4%	29.4%
	11	2,279	7.7%	28.8%	17.9%	37.7%
Reading	3	2,594	41.9%	14.6%	11.4%	26.6%
	5	2,758	24.1%	28.1%	17.2%	27.7%
	8	2,669	33.6%	19.1%	16.9%	24.3%
	11	2,289	29.5%	22.3%	18.7%	21.9%
Science	4	2,682	2.8%	38.0%	30.0%	20.1%
	8	2,574	2.5%	40.8%	33.0%	14.3%
	11	2,162	2.6%	38.4%	29.6%	16.8%

Anchors/Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Science, Technology, Environment and Ecology.

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments in designated content areas. The Keystone Exams serve two purposes: (1) high school accountability assessments for federal and state purposes, and (2) high school graduation requirements for students, beginning with the class of 2017. The Algebra I and Literature Keystone Exams include items written to the Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Core Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts. The Biology Keystone Exam includes items written to the Assessment Anchor/Eligible Content aligned to the enhanced Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Science.

The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is a statewide alternate assessment designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Specifically, it is intended for those who are unable to participate meaningfully in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), even with accommodations. By administering the PASA to students with

significant disabilities, schools achieve compliance with federal laws and the Pennsylvania School Code that require that all students participate in the statewide accountability system.

In 2016-17, the BSE, in collaboration with the Bureau of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment, delivered the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystones Accommodations Guidelines training to 991 participants. This training helps LEAs better understand how to select and apply the most appropriate and allowable accommodations for students with disabilities on general statewide assessments.

In 2016-17, the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) provided training on alternate eligible content for teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed on the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). Eight webinars were provided, resulting in 859 unique views. In addition, special educators developed examples demonstrating how alternate eligible content may be essentialized for greater access in English language arts and mathematics. In total, 45 ELA and 46 math examples were developed and posted to the PaTTAN website.

In Appreciation

Regarding the usefulness of the alternate eligible content examples, the following was reported by teachers:

"It was very beneficial and part of their everyday lives. Something they can and will use during their lives."

"My students said that they really liked the format and the activities that we did for both this and the math example!"

"I really appreciate the time spent helping us educators better use the alternate eligible content."

"Seeing examples helps affirm that what I am doing in my classroom matches what the state expects from us."

Indicator 3, continued

Promising Practice in Reading and Mathematics

Reading and mathematics are not only core academic subjects, but also core life subjects. The ability to read and understand mathematics allows a student to succeed in school, learn about the world, and be college and career ready upon graduation.

Students with specific learning disabilities often have great difficulty learning to read and apply mathematics. However, most students can learn to read and do math given an appropriate systematic curriculum. The coordination of curriculum, instructional materials, assessment, instruction, professional development, and school organization around the development of reading and mathematical proficiency should drive school improvement efforts.

Pennsylvania continues to build the expertise, knowledge, and skills of Pennsylvania educators in exemplary reading and mathematics instruction and intervention,

so that all students, including students with disabilities, reach their potential. PaTTAN works with local educational agencies to provide an array of resources, training, and technical assistance in improving educational practices in order to meet the needs of diverse learners, including learners with disabilities. These include:

- Deepening the understanding of Pennsylvania educators of the essential elements of reading and mathematics instruction
- Identifying and communicating evidence-based practices in the science of reading and mathematics to Pennsylvania educators
- Providing ongoing training, coaching, technical assistance, and implementation support for foundational reading and mathematics skills; as well as reading and mathematics interventions for struggling students.





In Appreciation

"I'm grateful to have been introduced to a comprehensive multisensory program that includes many components of phonemic awareness. The quick pace of the lessons keeps the kids engaged and they look forward to the lessons each day!"

Mrs. Kanter, Blue Mountain School District

Indicator 4

Suspensions and expulsions of students with disabilities

Pennsylvania Goal

- Decrease the number of LEAs that have a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year for children with IEPs.
- Increase the number of LEAs that follow policies, procedures or practices that comply with requirements relating to the development and implementation of IEPs, the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and procedural safeguards.

Promising Practice

Culturally Sustaining Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

PaTTAN and the PaPBS Network offer training and technical assistance on the installation of Culturally Sustaining PBIS, based on the guide, *Achieving Equitable Disciplinary Practices: A Guide for School Administrators towards Culturally Sustaining Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports*.

The guide aims to support educational leaders in establishing a Multi-tiered Systems of Support for behavior that is both culturally responsive and culturally sustaining. The field guide is informed by the work of the National PBIS Technical Assistance Center, Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PaPBS) Network, and efforts of a select number of school districts in Pennsylvania that participated in the Culturally Responsive Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Project.

The guide is framed by eight key responsibility areas (KRA), each of which situates recommendations for action, potential barriers and solutions by which to overcome them, experiences from the

field, and additional resources. The eight KRAs, as follows, are generally designed to be addressed in order.

1. Establishing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Behavior
2. Authentic Family Engagement
3. Evaluation of Data Practices and Action Planning Around Data
4. Culture and Climate Surveys
5. Community Resource Mapping
6. Aligning Documentation
7. Professional Development
8. Social Marketing

Functional Behavior Assessments

When a student's behavior is interfering with his/her learning or the learning of others, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is used to identify problem behaviors and develop interventions to improve or eliminate those behaviors. The procedural steps in conducting an FBA require focused teaming, precise behavioral tracking, and targeted interventions to best support the student in all intended educational settings.

Intervention fidelity and progress monitoring are additional key factors that effectively link the socially appropriate replacement behaviors to a supporting student level Positive Behavior Support Plan. PaTTAN offers an annual training series on FBAs designed to teach educators how to conduct an FBA and the requisite behavioral decision making process to successfully connect interventions to a technically adequate Positive Behavior Support Plan. Explicit areas of focus include the process of making data informed decisions and fidelity based progress monitoring at both the targeted and tertiary levels of student support.

Prevent, Teach, Reinforce (PTR): The School Based Model of Individualized Positive Behavior Support

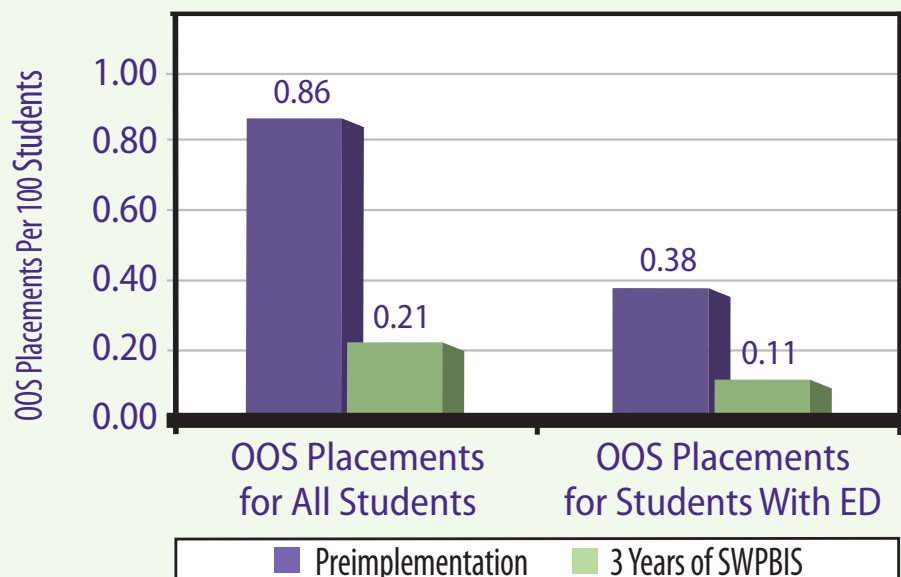
The Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) model of behavior support is a team-based, systematic, structured process for supporting students with challenging behaviors that have not been resolved satisfactorily with classroom and school wide behavior management systems. PTR utilizes scientifically validated practices of functional behavior assessment, reinforcement and teaching new behaviors. PTR is a structured, team-based FBA process that is easily implemented by school-based teams.

All students are evaluated using a standardized assessment process. Interventions for students include at least three components including prevention procedures, teaching and reinforcement. PaTTAN offers training and technical assistance to educators seeking to install the PTR model of individualized behavior support.



Longitudinal Analysis of Out-of-School (OOS) Placements for All Students With Emotional Disturbance (ED) in Sites Implementing PBIS in Pennsylvania

Based upon a pilot project that evaluated out-of-school (OOS) placements before and after the implementation of PBIS, significant reductions in OOS placements were found when PBIS was implemented with fidelity. For more information about PBIS, go to www.papbs.org.

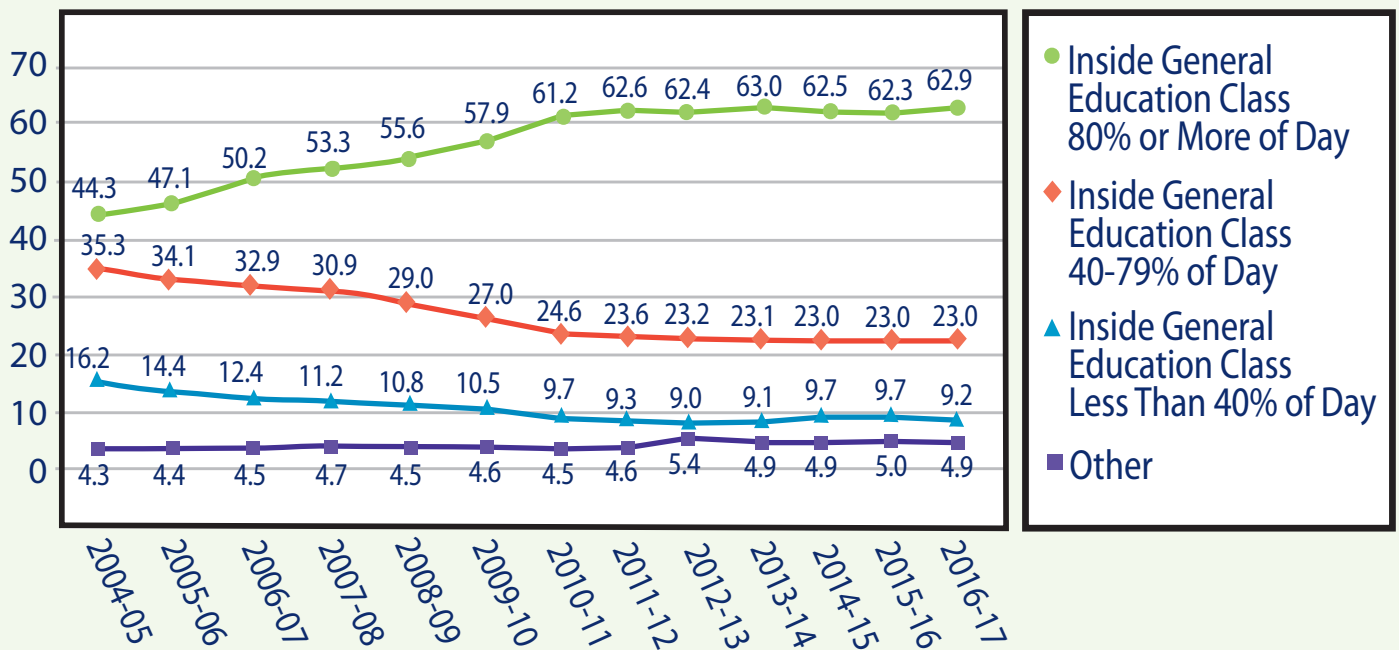


Indicator 5

Provision of services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for school age (6-21) students with disabilities

Pennsylvania continues to improve in educating students with disabilities. Every year more students with individualized education programs (IEPs) are educated for more time inside general education classrooms with nondisabled peers.

Educational Environment of School-Age Students (Ages 5-21)



Promising Practice

The SaS Consideration Toolkit is designed to assist with providing access to a general education classroom. The process provides teams of school-age students with a collaborative way to gather information about what a child can do; examine a general education classroom where a student will be included; and, identify potential barriers specific to the child to accessing the instruction and bridge the barriers with supports with the identified student's strengths.

The identified supports go back to the individualized education program (IEP) team who then determines what will be added as specially designed instruction as part of the student's IEP. The Toolkit, designed for Pennsylvania in partnership with Dr. Gail McGregor, University of Montana, has an online self-paced training for potential facilitators, resulting in a certificate of completion. This can be found on the PaTTAN website, www.pattan.net within the Inclusive Practices initiative tab.

Results

Pennsylvania's educational environment data demonstrates a number of positive trends toward educating more students with disabilities in less restrictive environments.

- Approximately 95 percent of Pennsylvania's students with disabilities were educated in general education classrooms with nondisabled peers. Over half of these students were educated for 80 percent or more of their school day in general education classrooms in the 2016-17 school year.

- Over the past 12 years, the percentage of students with IEPs in the most inclusive category has increased from 44.3 percent to 62.9 percent.
- Pennsylvania data showed a decrease in the number of students with disabilities who spend less than 40 percent of the school day in general education classrooms, from almost 16.2 percent in 2004-05 to 9.2 percent in 2016-17.



In Appreciation

From a school district administrator, following a SaS Consideration Toolkit training:

"I wanted to email you and thank you for working with our team. I appreciate all your input! Thank you for the additional resources. I so appreciated talking with you!"

Indicator 8

School facilitated parent involvement

The Pennsylvania Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

SEAP advises the Secretary of Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Director of the Bureau of Special Education (BSE), the Secretary of the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL), and the Director of the Bureau of Early Intervention Services (BEIS) regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities who are between the ages of 3 and 21. The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that every state have a state advisory panel on special education (34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §300.167 – §300.169).

The membership of SEAP is quite diverse and members are appointed by the Governor. The majority of members are individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities ages birth through 26. The panel also includes teachers; administrators of programs for children with disabilities; representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special educators; representatives of private schools and public charter schools; and commonwealth and local education officials, including officials who carry out activities under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, among others.

In general, SEAP advises on issues as deemed necessary by the Secretary of the Department of Education, the Director of the BSE, and the Director of the BEIS, or their respective designees. SEAP advises on unmet educational needs of students with disabilities, on state evaluations and data reports, corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports, the development and implementation of policies related to the coordination of services for children with disabilities, and publicly comments on proposed

special education rules and regulations. In addition, SEAP advises PDE on the education of eligible students with disabilities living in congregate care (i.e., residential treatment facilities, adult prisons, youth detention facilities, psychiatric hospitals, medical facilities).

Each year SEAP establishes committees on current priorities. During 2016-2017, SEAP committees included:

- Preschool Inclusion/School age Least Restrictive Environment
- Systemic Transition Issues
- Mental Health – Transitioning In/Out of Residential Treatment Facilities and Partial Hospitalization Settings
- Crisis Intervention/Restraint Reduction

The Statewide Parent Network

The Statewide Parent Network was an integral component of the State Personnel Development Grant, Project MAX. The effort to create a single statewide parent network of family members, supporting students who receive special education services, was a collaboration between PEAL, HUNE, PaTTAN, and the BSE. During the 2016-2017 school year, the network moved from the status of being built to a group with active and engaged parent members. Members were convened for two face-to-face meetings and established both a mission and vision statement for the network. The mission of the Statewide Parent Network is to lead change for children with diverse needs by maximizing opportunities in the home, classroom, and community. Their vision is to empower students, families, and communities to believe that all children can reach their maximum potential. Many of the network members are now actively participating on committee work to move the network forward.

The network currently has 393 members with 49 active committee members. This is an increase of 101 percent since July of 2016 (196 members). Members participated in the following activities:

- Fifty-two trainings were held across the commonwealth. These trainings encompassed presuming competence, access to general education curriculum, maximizing communication, collaborating on school teams, and leading change. Trainings were held in both English and Spanish.
- Network events or sessions were held at eight statewide conferences.
- Ten publications have been produced to promote the network and share information. The majority of these publications were also produced in Spanish.

In Appreciation

"I was okay thinking that my son could be happy, that he could have a good life. Now that I see him growing and progressing and I realize that Project MAX is not just a bonus, it is a game changer that is helping our family dream bigger with Mika."

Heather, a Project MAX Team parent

Promising Practice

Pennsylvania uses a survey tool developed with funding from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs for states' use to address the parent involvement indicator. Annually, the survey is sent to a representative sample of families of students receiving special education services.

In addition, PaTTAN offers professional development opportunities to local education agencies (LEAs) in an effort to increase parent and family involvement in support of student success. Two such professional development opportunities made available during the 2016-2017 school year included:

- LEA to LEA webinar series - The 2016-2017 webinar series was designed for school administrators, teachers, and others interested in learning how Pennsylvania educators are engaging families in an effort to effect student learning. Successes, creative ideas, challenges, and results were shared. Topics for the series included: Engaging Families in Rural and Urban Communities, Collaborating with Community, Linking Families to School: Technology Tips, and Working with Families to Prevent the "Summer Slide." All webinars, along with past years dating back to 2012-2013, have been recorded and are available on the Family Engagement subpage of the PaTTAN website.
- National Network of Partnership Schools: Establishment Grants - Eight LEAs from across the commonwealth participated in a year-long study of ways to build effective school, family, and community partnership programs. Through the development and implementation of family and community involvement activities linked to school goals for student success, with an emphasis on students with disabilities, the LEAs reported gains such as increases in family attendance at school events, increased usage of parent portal, and increased student achievement on end of year assessments.

In Appreciation

Riverview Intermediate Unit 6 (RIU6), a NNPS grant recipient, experienced much success in their efforts to engage families, community members, and school staff. Their action team for partnership, led by Hope Warner, Kelly Opatt, Kirsten Wolfe, Nicole DeArmitt, and Denise Ross selected English Language Arts (ELA) as one of the academic areas for which they wanted to focus their efforts across the intermediate unit. The team reached out to Sarah Johnson, a life skills teacher at RIU6, and supported her in the development of a school to home literacy project. The goal of the project was to increase student writing and involve families and the community in a service project. Sarah shared the following regarding the “Foster Care Bags Project”:

“My students completed a service project where they wrote letters outlining a project to collect items to be donated to children in the foster care system. The students passed out the letters to family, friends and the community and placed drop off boxes within the community. The students collected blankets, stuffed animals, coloring books, crayons, snacks and a book for each bag. Once all of the items were collected we held a packing day where families were invited to come into our classroom to help pack the bags. The students collected and packed 55 foster care bags that were donated to Children and Youth Services of Venango County.”

“This was a great project for Marie to complete because she is adopted and it is helping her think about giving back to kids like her. Marie really liked helping collect and pack the bags. This was a great project to promote a connection between home and school.”

Jenine Goodwill, parent

“I thought this was a great project for my son to complete because it is important for him to realize that there is a bigger world around him. It is important for him to learn to give back to his community. It was really great that we could help him collect the items and then come into the school to help the kids pack the bags and see the look of accomplishment on their faces. They worked hard and in the end helped out 55 children who are in the foster care system.”

Teresa Butterfuss, parent

In Appreciation

In addition, the RIU6 team hosted a Bingo for Books Night as a means to positively impact the English Language Arts (ELA) skills of students and their families. The event consisted of families playing bingo together to win books. Home literacy strategies were practiced throughout the night. Handouts and fridge magnets with reading tips were provided to all families in attendance.

“Last year when the RIU6 hosted a Bingo for Books night my daughter really enjoyed the activity. It was a great way to allow us to be involved with school. Also it helped encourage my daughter to read more because she received some books that she really liked. I hope that Mrs. Johnson’s class continues to have family nights again this year.”

Jeanine Holes, parent



Indicator 9

Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education

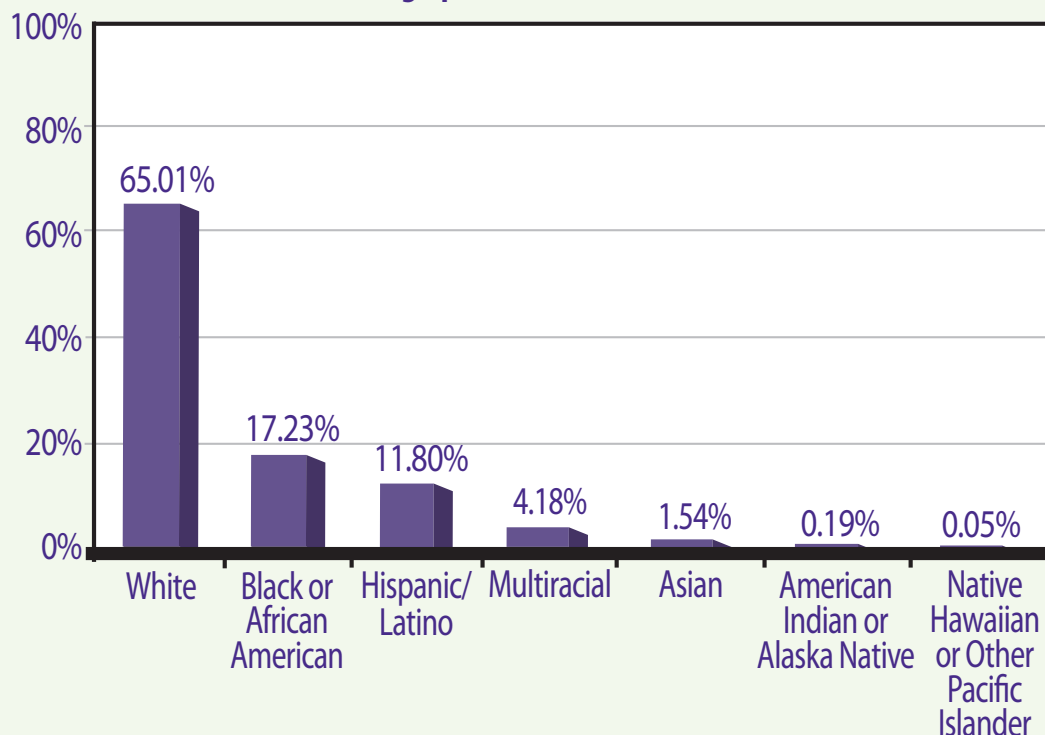
Compliance indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification

Indicator 10

Disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories in special education

Compliance indicator: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification

**Race/Ethnicity of School-Age Students
Receiving Special Education Services**



Indicator 11

Timely initial evaluations

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) regulations require that each local education agency conduct a full and individual evaluation to determine a child's eligibility for special education, and this evaluation must be conducted within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent. Pennsylvania Chapters 14 and 711 expand this provision to require that the evaluation be completed, and a copy of the evaluation report presented to parents, no later than 60 calendar days from receipt of parental consent, not including summer days.

Promising Practice

PaTTAN has resources that specifically address special education timelines. Figure 1 is the Special Education Evaluation/IEP Process. This flowchart shows the steps to be followed and the decisions to be made by LEAs to meet the requirements for evaluation and development of IEPs for students with disabilities. Figure 2 is the Special Education Reevaluation/IEP Process. This flowchart shows the steps to be followed and the decisions to be made by LEAs to meet the requirements for reevaluation and development of IEPs for students with disabilities. For additional resources, visit www.pattan.net.



Figure 1. The Special Education Evaluation/IEP Process

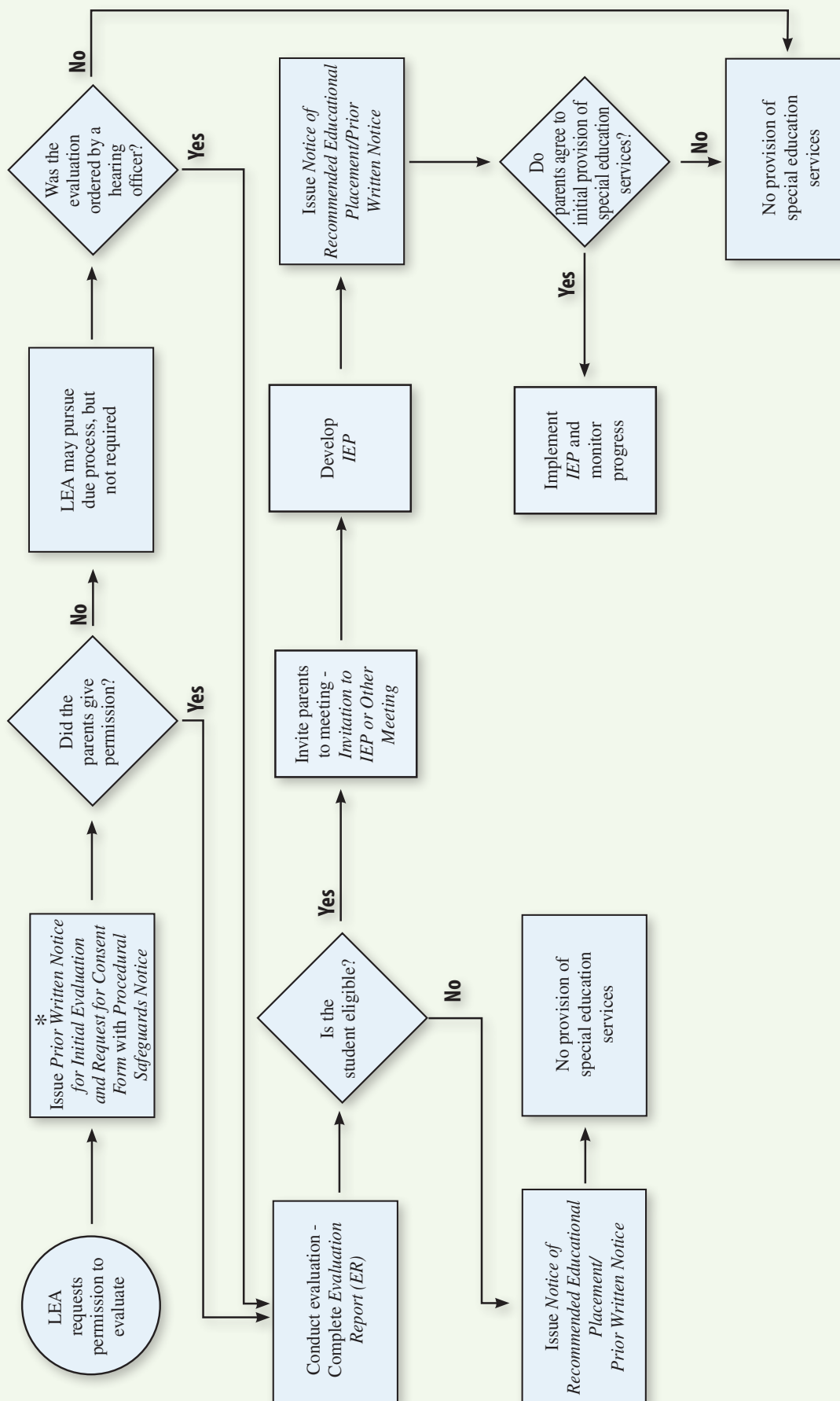
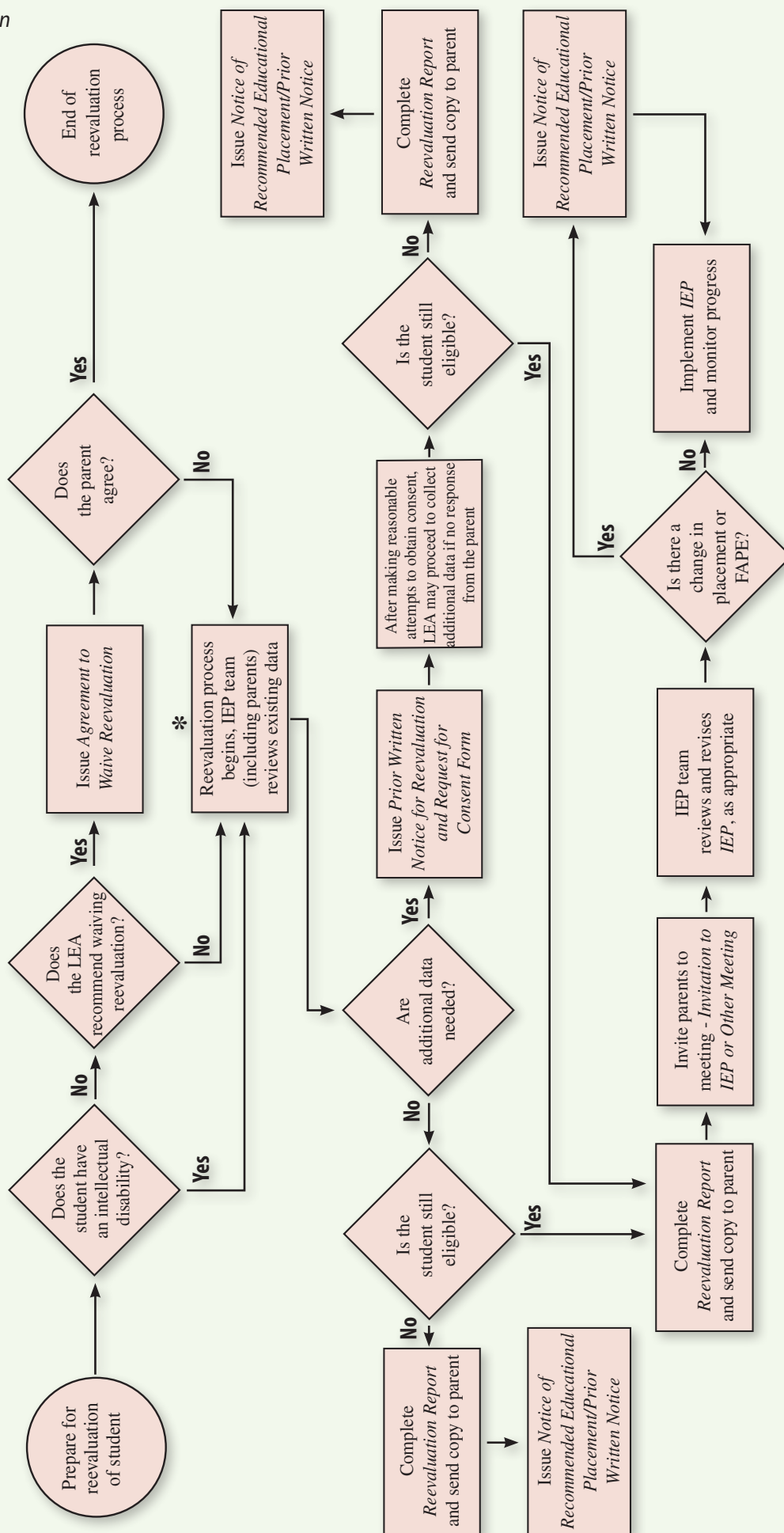


Figure 2. The Special Education Reevaluation/IEP Process



Indicator 13

Secondary transition services

Secondary transition is the process of preparing students for life after they leave high school, including participation in post-secondary education or training, employment, and community living. These three areas are often referred to as “post-secondary outcomes” and are the driving force behind individualized education programs (IEPs) written for students in high school.

In Pennsylvania, transition planning begins no later than age 14, in middle school or early high school, as students explore what they want their post-school outcomes to be through career awareness exploration activities. It continues through high school as instruction and community experiences support these outcomes.

Transition planning involves a partnership between the student, the family, school-age services and program providers; post-secondary services and program providers; and, local community members. Effective transition involves purposeful planning among all these entities. It entails recognizing the student’s current strengths, interests, preferences, and needs, and then identifying what

services and supports he or she will need to be college, career, and community-ready upon graduation.

Promising Practice

BSE collects data for this indicator from LEAs participating in cyclical and focused monitoring, with approximately one-sixth of the state’s LEAs engaged in on-site monitoring each year. The Pennsylvania State Data Center selects a representative sample of students for file reviews, using parameters established by the BSE. Secondary transition probes within the BSE’s monitoring documents are aligned with the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) Indicator 13 Checklist, and are scored in accordance with strictest guidelines. In order to meet requirements (and thus be reported at 100 percent for this indicator), a file must have 100 percent compliance for all probes. An LEA that does not achieve 100 percent compliance is issued findings of noncompliance, and required corrective action implemented and tracked by BSE.



Indicator 14

Post-school outcomes

Pennsylvania Goal

Increase the number of youth who had individualized education programs (IEPs), are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school.

Promising Practice

During the span of its Indicator 14 Post School Outcomes Survey, Pennsylvania has implemented a wide range of sound strategies to address sporadic lack of representativeness in the annual response rates of various subgroups. These strategies have included:

- Providing enhanced presentations about the importance of obtaining representative response rates during mandatory annual training for LEAs administering Exit Surveys and Post School Outcome Surveys
- Reviewing state summary information and addressing any specific concerns about representativeness in previous surveys
- Reviewing NPSO's Strategies for Hard to Reach Students with participating LEAs
- Providing a mid-point status report alerting LEAs to any potential discrepancies in response rates for specific subgroups, leading to an increase in the intensity of efforts to contact former students, especially those in affected subgroups
- Conducting focus group meetings to discuss the successful strategies LEAs employed

- Conducting focus group meetings to discuss the successful strategies LEAs employed to contact youth, especially hard to reach youth, to develop additional guidance documents for future cohorts of LEAs administering the PaPOS surveys
- Providing continued collaboration with the former NPSO (now a part of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition) to research other states' survey procedures, with specific focus on effective strategies for improving representativeness in response rates

In addition, a new strategy was implemented for FFY 2016. Online data collection will provide all LEAs with a splash page that displays real-time demographic data for previously entered post-school surveys. This includes the total number of post-school surveys assigned to the LEA, and the number and percent of post-school surveys submitted to date by gender, disability, and race/ethnicity.

PaTTAN provided training to participating LEAs to highlight the utility of real-time data as a means for LEAs to monitor the representativeness of their survey return rates.





In Appreciation

"I have always felt like other people were making decisions for me in school. When planning for my accommodations in high school I did not yet know how to advocate for myself, and therefore seemed to have the least amount of input.

I had visited several colleges and had many conversations about possible career paths throughout high school. I decided that I wanted to attend Kutztown University to major in social work. I worked hard to eventually be accepted and successfully make that transition to post-secondary education.

I think it is important to start your search early in high school. I have also been able to participate in internships that have helped me grow into the professional I'd like to become. All youth need to be a part of their planning from the beginning. I wish someone would have encouraged me to ask more questions and take a leadership role from the start."

Ali White, youth

Indicator 15

Mediation sessions

Indicator 16

Resolution session outcomes

The Office for Dispute Resolution (ODR) provides resources for parents and local educational agencies (LEAs) to resolve educational disputes involving children served by the early intervention system, students with 504 Service Agreements, students with disabilities (or thought to have disabilities), and students who are gifted (or thought to be gifted). Visit the ODR website at: www.odr-pa.org.

ConsultLine

ConsultLine is a toll-free information help line for parents and advocates of children with disabilities who have questions or concerns about the education of a school-aged child. ConsultLine specialists answer questions and provide information about special education, gifted education, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the procedural

safeguards. ConsultLine provides culturally responsive services to Spanish speaking families through the assistance of the HUNE Spanish Help Line Plus. ConsultLine Specialists serve other non-English speaking callers with the assistance of a confidential, third-party interpreter.

Hearing Officer Settlement Conference

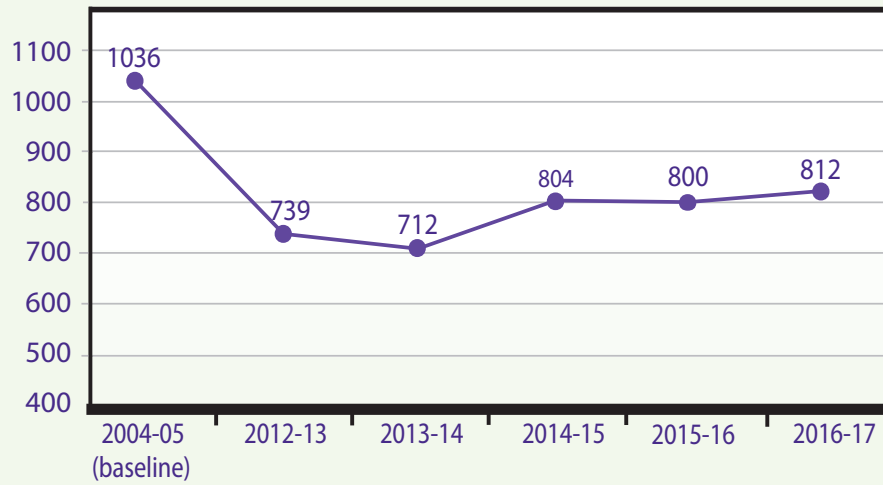
A hearing officer settlement conference (HOSC) is a service where parties who are close to a resolution, but have identifiable sticking points or roadblocks, can work with a sitting hearing officer to see if those sticking points/roadblocks can be overcome so that the parties can avoid a hearing and can move to finalizing the resolution.

Due Process Requests and Hearings

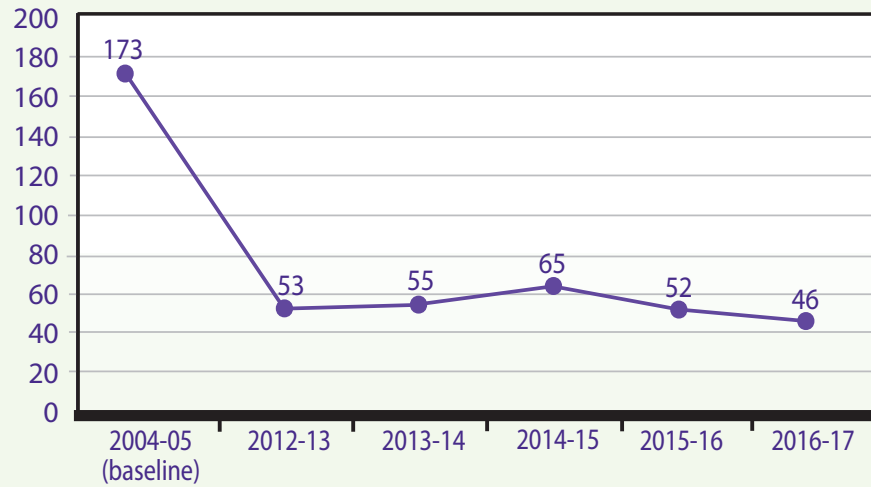
In an 11-year span, due process hearing requests have decreased by 224, from a high of 1,036 IDEA-only requests in 2004-2005 to 812 requests in 2016-2017. All of these statistics are located in ODR's 2016-17 Annual Report at: <https://tinyurl.com/ODR-PA-2016-17AnnRpt>



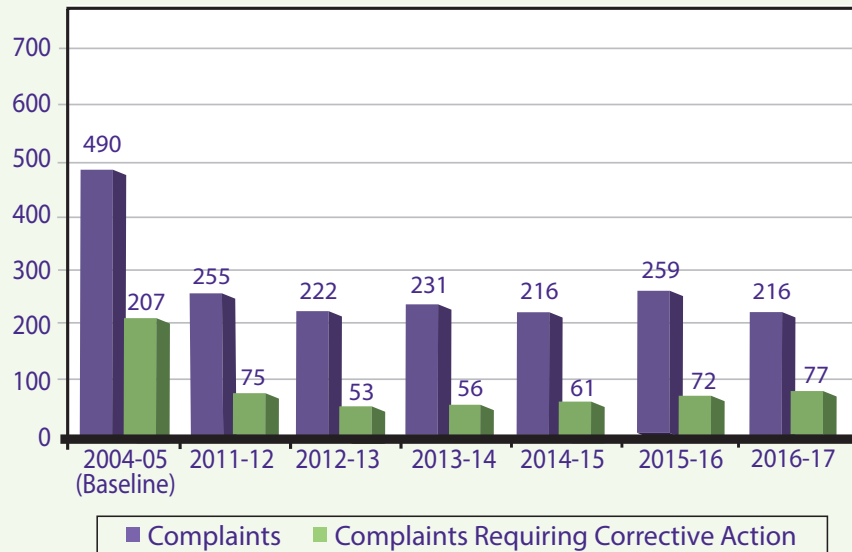
Due Process Requests (IDEA only)



Fully Adjudicated Hearings (IDEA only)



Complaints and Corrective Action



Indicator 17

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

IDEA 2004 requires states to develop an SPP/APR describing how the state will implement the requirements and purposes of the Act and improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Indicator 17 of the SPP/APR is the State Systemic Improvement Plan, or SSIP.

PDE has collaborated with multiple stakeholders to select a focus for its SSIP; the focus area is called a State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). Pennsylvania has selected increasing the graduation rate for students with disabilities as its SIMR.

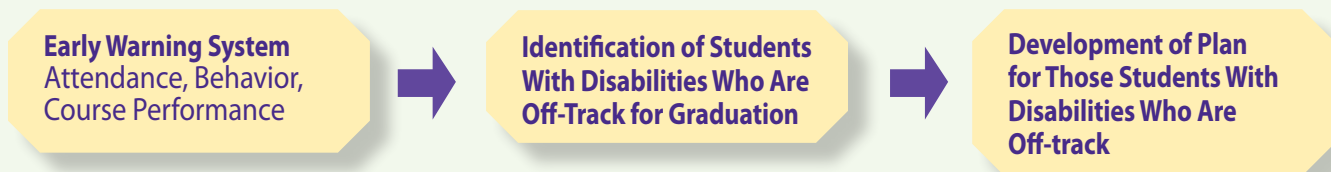
To achieve results for students, the U.S. Department of Education expects states to adopt and implement evidence-based practices. The BSE, in collaboration with stakeholders and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students With Disabilities, has identified seven evidence-based practices that lead to higher graduation rates. Following a

comprehensive assessment of needs, selected strategies are being implemented by schools.

BSE is partnering with a number of LEAs to implement its SSIP, offering high quality training and technical assistance to schools. Lessons learned are being shared with all LEAs in the commonwealth to promote statewide improvement in graduation rates for students with disabilities. BSE is also partnering with the federally-funded Community Parent Resource Center, Hispanos Unidos para Niños Excepcionales (HUNE). Community and mentoring materials and resources developed through this partnership are being shared with other organizations.

For additional information, go to www.pattan.net, Educational Initiatives, Increasing Graduation Rates and Decreasing Dropout Rates.

Process to Identify Students With Disabilities Who Are Off-Track for Graduation



First Look at Results: Students With Disabilities Who Are On-Track and Off-Track for Graduation in SSIP Learning Sites

Students With Disabilities	January 2016	June 2016
On-Track Total	1,912	2,255
On-Track Percentage	67%	79%
Off-Track Total	950	592
Off-Track Percentage	33%	21%



Pennsylvania SSIP Theory of Action

Strands of Action	If PDE	Then
Leadership	Communicates its vision effectively and provides guidance and general supervision in a timely and responsive manner	LEAs will have the information, support, and resources necessary to align their efforts to PDE's vision. LEAs will have uniformly high expectations for all students with disabilities.
Collaboration	Partners with LEAs, federally funded TA providers, PTIs/ CPRCs, and other state and local agencies that serve students with disabilities and their families	PDE will leverage resources to improve services for students with disabilities.
Technical Assistance	Promotes professional learning opportunities to effectively prepare and empower stakeholders to support students with disabilities	LEAs will facilitate shared leadership toward enhanced collaboration and implementation of evidence-based practices. CPRC will develop materials and resources to be shared with other community organizations.
Accountability	Holds LEAs accountable for effectively implementing assessment and evaluation practices to measure outcomes	LEAs will have systems that lead to improved results for students with disabilities and protect the rights of students and families.
Evaluation: Data Collection – Data Analysis – Data Interpretation – Reporting		

Vision: All students with disabilities will be academically, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally engaged in order to stay in school, graduate, and become contributing members of society.

Then	Then
<p>Local Educational Agencies in Pennsylvania will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilize data systems to identify, inform, monitor, and increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities. <i>Early Warning System Data Tools. Diagnostic intervention.</i> 2. Implement increasingly intensive evidence-based methodologies toward improved academic outcomes. <i>MTSS academic support, culturally responsive instruction. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.</i> 3. Implement increasingly intensive evidence-based methodologies toward improved social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. <i>MTSS behavior support and social skills, school climate, assignment of adult advocates, culturally responsive practices, behavioral health, mentors, Check and Connect. Schoolwide targeted interventions.</i> 4. Promote the implementation of attendance strategies and alternative programming that will increase the likelihood of graduation. <i>Credit recovery, after school/night school, online learning, school re-entry. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.</i> 5. Ensure culturally responsive learning environments and instructional practices. <i>Culturally responsive instructional practices. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.</i> 6. Embrace a philosophy of partnership that empowers families and communities to become more meaningfully involved. <i>Family engagement, mentoring, partnering with federally funded centers (i.e., PTIs and CPRCs). Schoolwide, targeted, and community interventions.</i> 7. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and have positive post-school outcomes. <i>Transition, college prep courses, career and technical training, life-skills training, socially related employment skills. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.</i> 	<p>Pennsylvania will increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities.</p> <p>Pennsylvania will reduce the number of students with risk factors that impact the likelihood of school completion.</p>

Promising Practice

Check & Connect

The BSE is funding Check & Connect training and implementation through a grant as part of their SSIP. PaTTAN has been charged with implementation. Seven high schools in seven different school districts began implementing Check & Connect in the fall of 2016 and continued into the fall of 2017. The program is currently serving over 140 students with special needs. These schools are part of a consortium of learning sites for Pennsylvania's SSIP. Check & Connect is one intervention that the sites may elect to implement as part of their implementation framework.

Pennsylvania's SSIP is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for students with disabilities. When students are identified as being off-track for graduation using an Early Warning System, the school selects Coherent Improvement Strategies to match the students' needs and support them. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for Behavior is one of the Coherent Improvement Strategies that schools can select to implement who are participating in Pennsylvania's SSIP. Check & Connect is considered one of the intensive interventions suggested within the MTSS-Behavior framework.

Results: In the first year of Check & Connect implementation, the following benefits have been reported:

- Students are responding positively by creating and setting goals and improving their attendance.
- Several of the sites are including families by hosting events for families to highlight students and mentors and share the positive outcomes demonstrated thus far in the school year.
- The current mentors who are doing this work are clearly dedicated to supporting students; more people in the school would like to become mentors.
- The training has been well received and now other schools outside of the SSIP project are asking for training to implement Check & Connect.

In Appreciation

"I used to be a bad student because I used to be bullied because of my color. It was difficult for me because I did not know how to speak English. The program helped me with anger management issues that I had in the past. It helped me figure out my future goals in life. The program is awesome and it helped with everything like being a good student, being a better son and a better person. We have awesome trips and great mentors here. We play sports and have adventures. We do cool projects and good team work."

José Rivera, student
in a HUNE program

Pennsylvania's Statewide System of Supports

The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is designed to support the efforts and initiatives of the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Bureau of Special Education, and to build capacity of intermediate units (IUs) and local educational agencies (LEAs) to serve students receiving special education services. Technical assistance provided is tied directly to federal regulatory requirements and evidence-based practices in education. There are three PaTTAN locations, one in the eastern (PaTTAN-East in Malvern), central (PaTTAN-Harrisburg), and western (PaTTAN-Pittsburgh) areas of the state.

www.pattan.net

800-441-3215 (East)

800-360-7282 (Harrisburg)

800-446-5607 (Pittsburgh)

Our Partners

Hispanics United for Exceptional Children (HUNE, Inc.)

www.huneinc.org

215-425-6203

contactus@huneinc.org

PEAL Center

<https://pealcenter.org>

412-281-4404 (Pittsburgh)

215-567-6143 (Philadelphia)

866-950-1040 Toll Free



Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Wolf
Governor

