



**Department of  
Education &  
Workforce**

# Significant Disproportionality and Indicator 10 SLI Risk Ratio Threshold

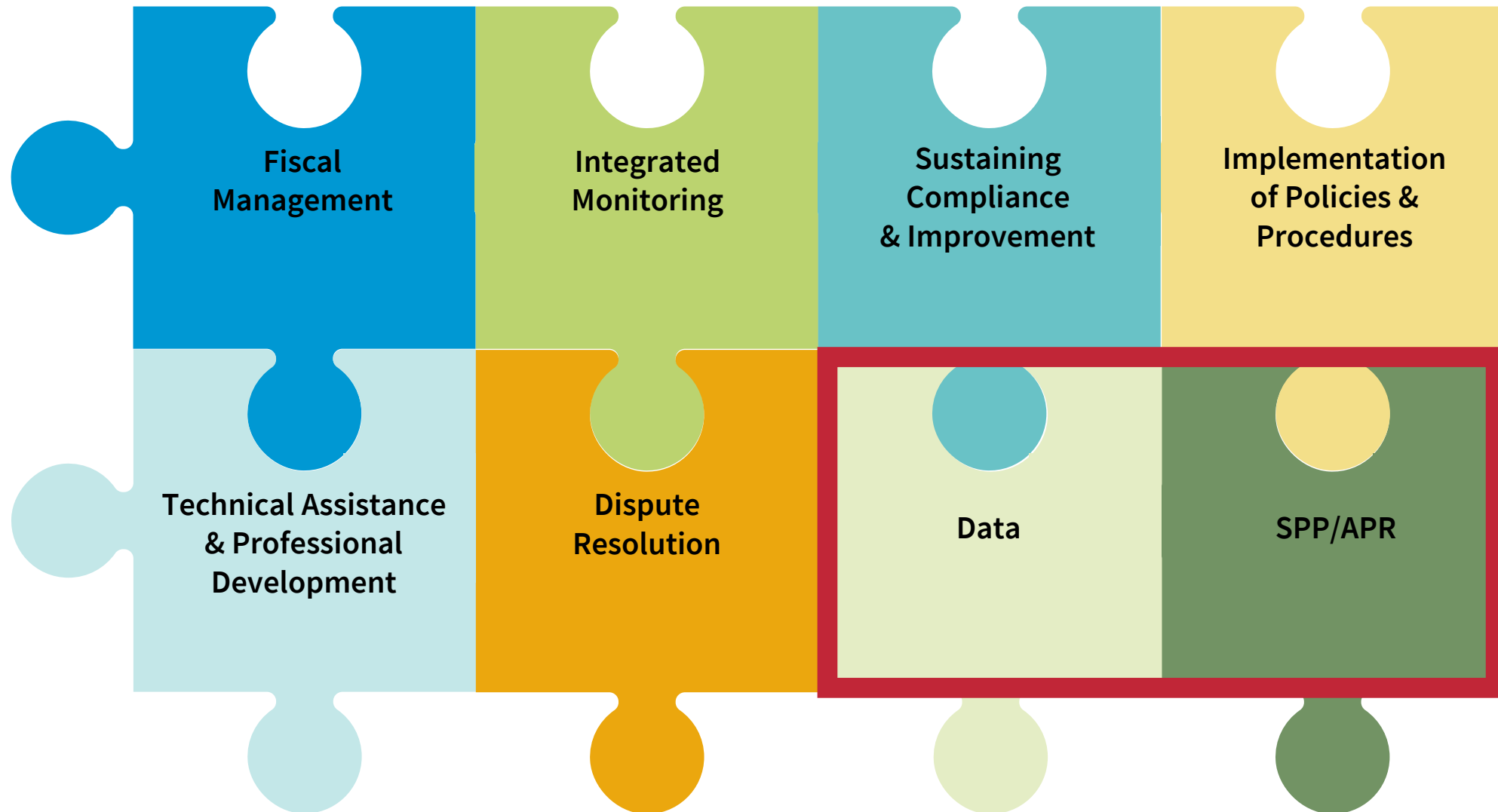
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IDEA Data Team  
Office of Accountability

March 2026



# Components of General Supervision





# Topics

? Indicator 10 and Significant Disproportionality in Identification

 Risk Ratio and Risk Ratio Thresholds

 What Changed?

 Speech or Language Impairment Identification and Risk Ratio Threshold - State and National Landscape

 Risk Ratio Threshold Options for Speech or Language Impairment Disability Category

 Discussion and Survey

# Special Education Indicators

## Essential Questions

Are young children with disabilities entering kindergarten ready to learn?

- Indicator 6: Preschool Educational Environments
- Indicator 7: Preschool Outcomes
- Indicator 12: Early Childhood Transition from Part C to Part B

Are children with disabilities achieving at high levels?

- Indicator 3: Assessment Participation and Performance

To what extent do students with disabilities have access to the general education environment?

- Indicator 4: Suspension and Expulsion
- Indicator 5: School-age Educational Environments

Are youth with disabilities prepared for life, work and postsecondary education?

- Indicator 1: Graduation
- Indicator 2: Dropout
- Indicator 13: Secondary Transition
- Indicator 14: Postsecondary Outcomes

Does the district implement IDEA to improve services and results for children with disabilities?

- Indicator 8: Facilitated Parent Involvement
- Indicator 11: Initial Evaluation Timelines
- Indicator 18: Timely Correction of Noncompliance

Are children receiving equitable services and supports?

- **Disproportionate Representation** (Indicator 9 and **Indicator 10**)
- **Significant Disproportionality - Identification**
- Significant Disproportionality - Placement
- Significant Disproportionality- Discipline



# DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION (INDICATOR 10) & SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY

Measures over-representation of specific disability categories by race and ethnicity

Intellectual Disabilities	Specific Learning Disabilities	Emotional Disturbance	Speech or Language Impairments	Other Health Impairment	Autism
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*Are some racial or ethnic groups being identified for special education in these categories at levels that are meaningfully higher than what we would expect compared to other students?*

# THE GOAL

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Accurately identify racial/ethnic overrepresentation in disability categories to ensure appropriate supports



# SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT (SLI)

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**Definition:** Speech or language means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

## HOW OHIO DETERMINES SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY AND DISPROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION

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### Risk Ratio Calculations and Thresholds

# RISK RATIO AND RISK RATIO THRESHOLD

- **Risk Ratio:** Likelihood that students in one racial group will be identified in a specific disability category compared to the likelihood that students in all other racial groups will be identified in that category
  - Risk ratio of 1.00 = equal likelihood across groups
- **Risk Ratio Threshold:** Level at which disproportionality or disproportionate representation is considered significant

Measures whether students in a racial or ethnic group are more likely than those in other groups to be identified with a disability

The threshold is determined by each state with input from stakeholders

Current stakeholder engagement focused on the risk ratio threshold for Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)

# Ohio's SLI Risk Ratio Threshold

## Risk Ratio Threshold = 2.5

- Districts are flagged if the likelihood (risk) of students from a particular racial/ethnic group being identified with an SLI is **2.5 times higher** than the likelihood for students from all other racial-ethnic groups combined

## Years Considered Varies by Measure

- Indicator 10:
  - 2 consecutive years** of risk ratio  $\geq 2.5$
- Significant Disproportionality:
  - 3 consecutive years** of risk ratio  $\geq 2.5$

# REGULAR RISK RATIO CALCULATION METHOD (EXAMPLE)

## RISK FOR THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP

Number of white students with Speech or Language Impairment

Number of white students

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## RISK FOR ALL OTHER RACES

Number of non-white students with Speech or Language Impairment

Number of non-white students

# Key Criteria for Calculation and Analysis



## Minimum Cell Size and N-Size

At least 10 students with SLI within racial group  
At least 30 students enrolled within racial group



## Alternate Risk Ratio Formula

Used when minimum cell and n sizes for comparison group are not met  
Compares LEA to state instead of other racial groups

# ALTERNATE RISK RATIO CALCULATION (EXAMPLE)

RISK FOR THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP IN LEA

Number of white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the LEA**

Number of white students **in the LEA**

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RISK FOR ALL OTHER RACES IN THE STATE

Number of non-white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the state**

Number of non-white students **in the state**

# HOW THE MEASURES DIFFER

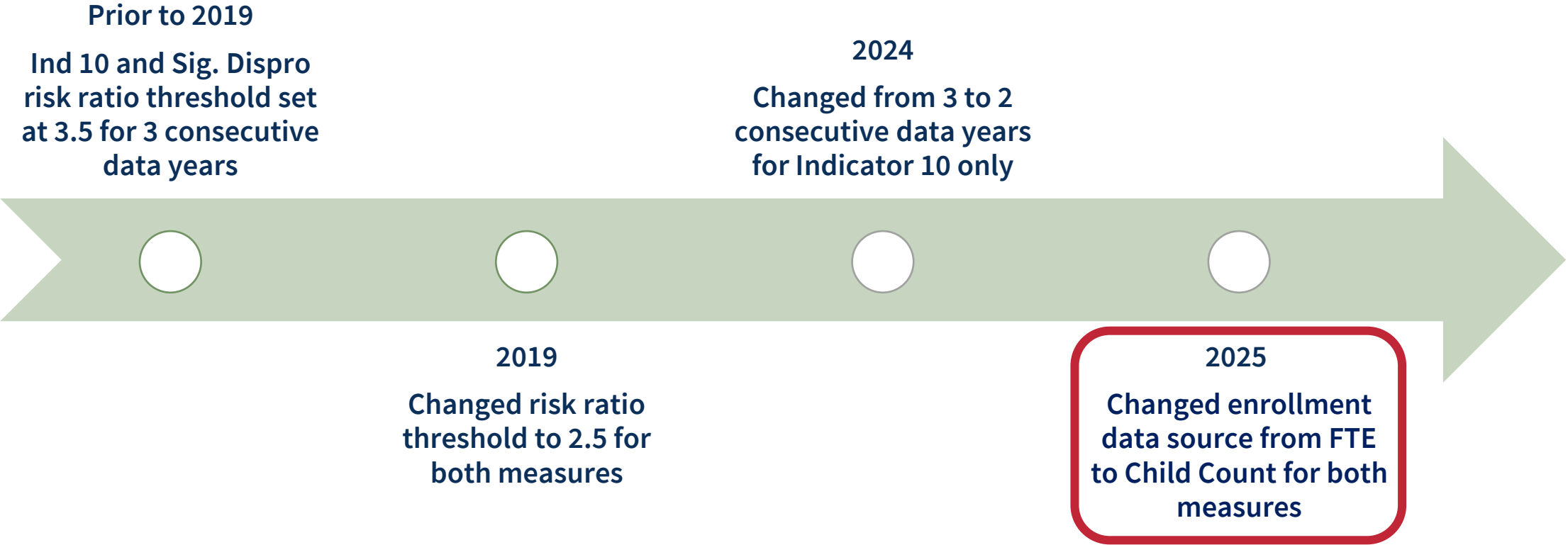
## INDICATOR 10

- Applies to students **aged 5 (kindergarten) to 21**
- LEAs identified when risk ratio  $\geq 2.50$  for **two consecutive years**

## SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY

- Applies to students **preschool through age 21**
- LEAs identified when risk ratio  $\geq 2.50$  for **three consecutive years**
- LEAs must **set aside 15% of their federal special education funds** to address contributing factors

# Timeline of Methodology and Risk Ratio Changes



# Issue Overview

Shift from Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) data to Child Count data

Reported data is a "snapshot" reflecting child count data reported as of Oct 31



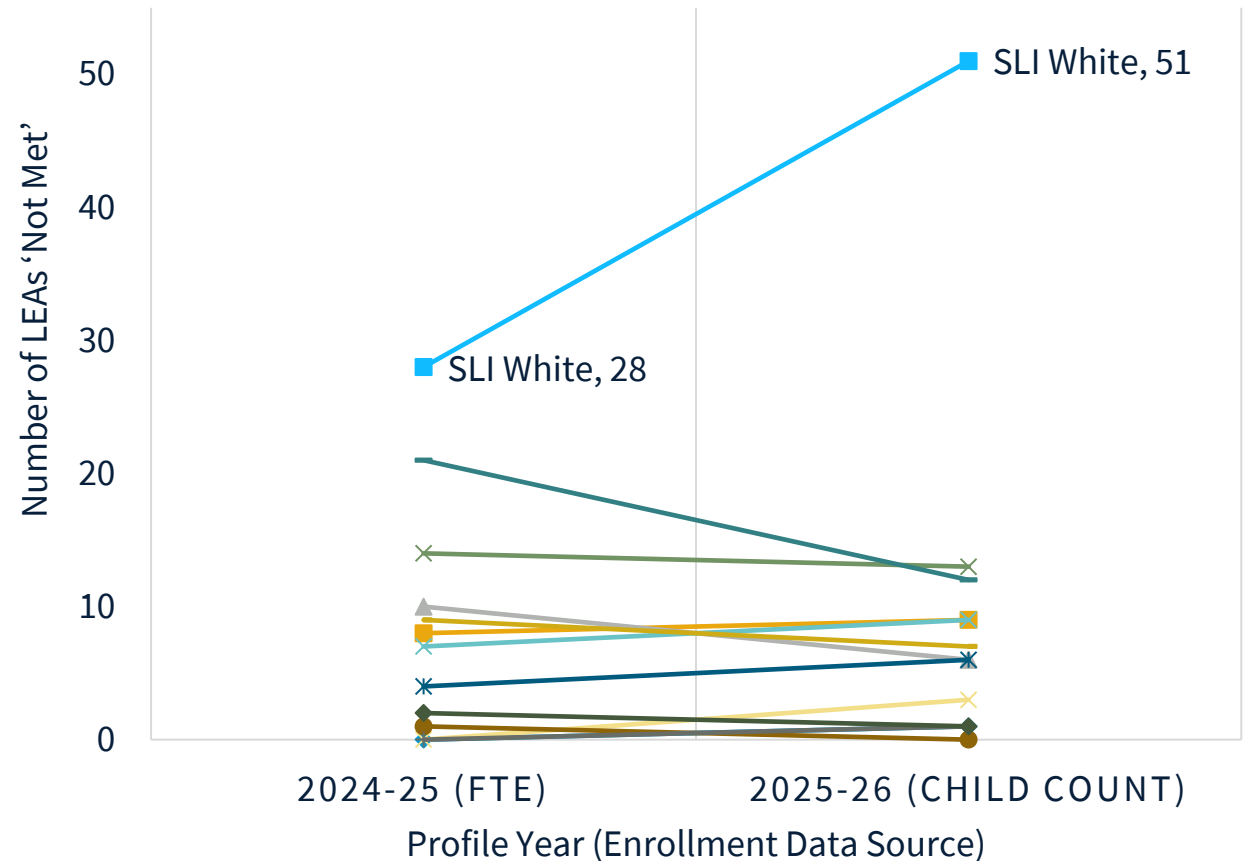
Increase in districts flagged for Speech or Language Impairment disproportionality and disproportionate representation

# IMPACT OF FTE TO CHILD COUNT

# INDICATOR 10: NUMBER OF LEAS 'NOT MET'

- Notable increase shown in the number of districts 'Not Met' for Indicator 10 Speech Language Impairment (SLI) for the White racial group following switch to Child Count
- Data for other disability categories and racial groups remained relatively stable and consistent with previous year's findings

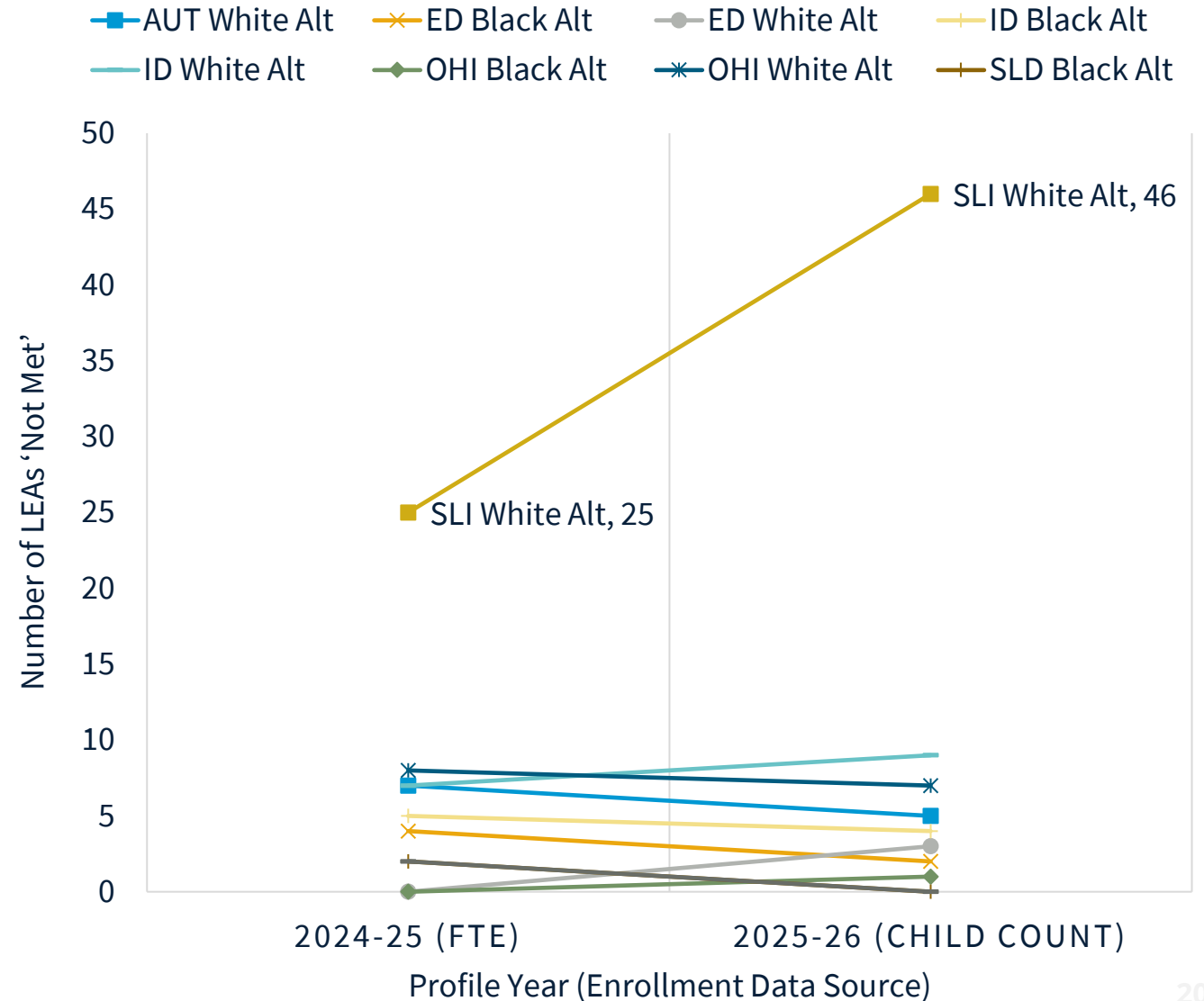
## Indicator 10 'Not Met' by Category/Race



# INDICATOR 10: 'NOT MET' COUNTS BY ALTERNATE RISK RATIO

- This year, 46 of the 51 Indicator 10 Speech-Language Impairment (SLI) findings occurred in districts that did **not** meet the minimum cell size (10) or n-size (30).
- As a result, most Speech-Language Impairment disproportionate representation findings were based on the alternate risk ratio calculation

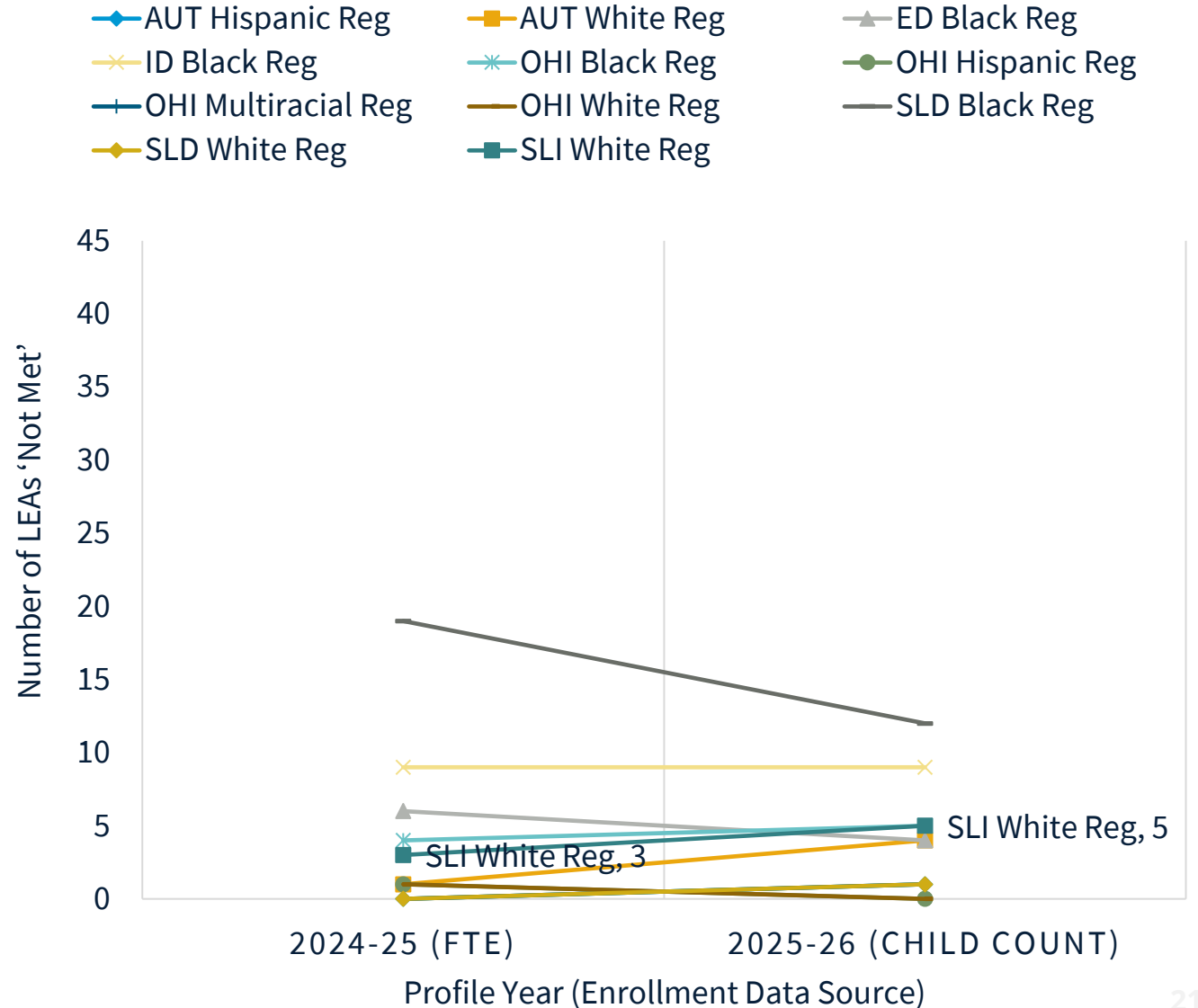
## Indicator 10 'Not Met' using Alternate (ALT) Risk Type by Category/Race



# INDICATOR 10: 'NOT MET' COUNTS BY REGULAR RISK RATIO

- Switching from FTE to Child Count did *not* result in a significant increase in the number of districts meeting or exceeding the 2.5 risk ratio threshold for Indicator 10 when using the regular risk calculation.
- Across disability categories and racial groups, the number of 'Not Met' statuses remained relatively stable.

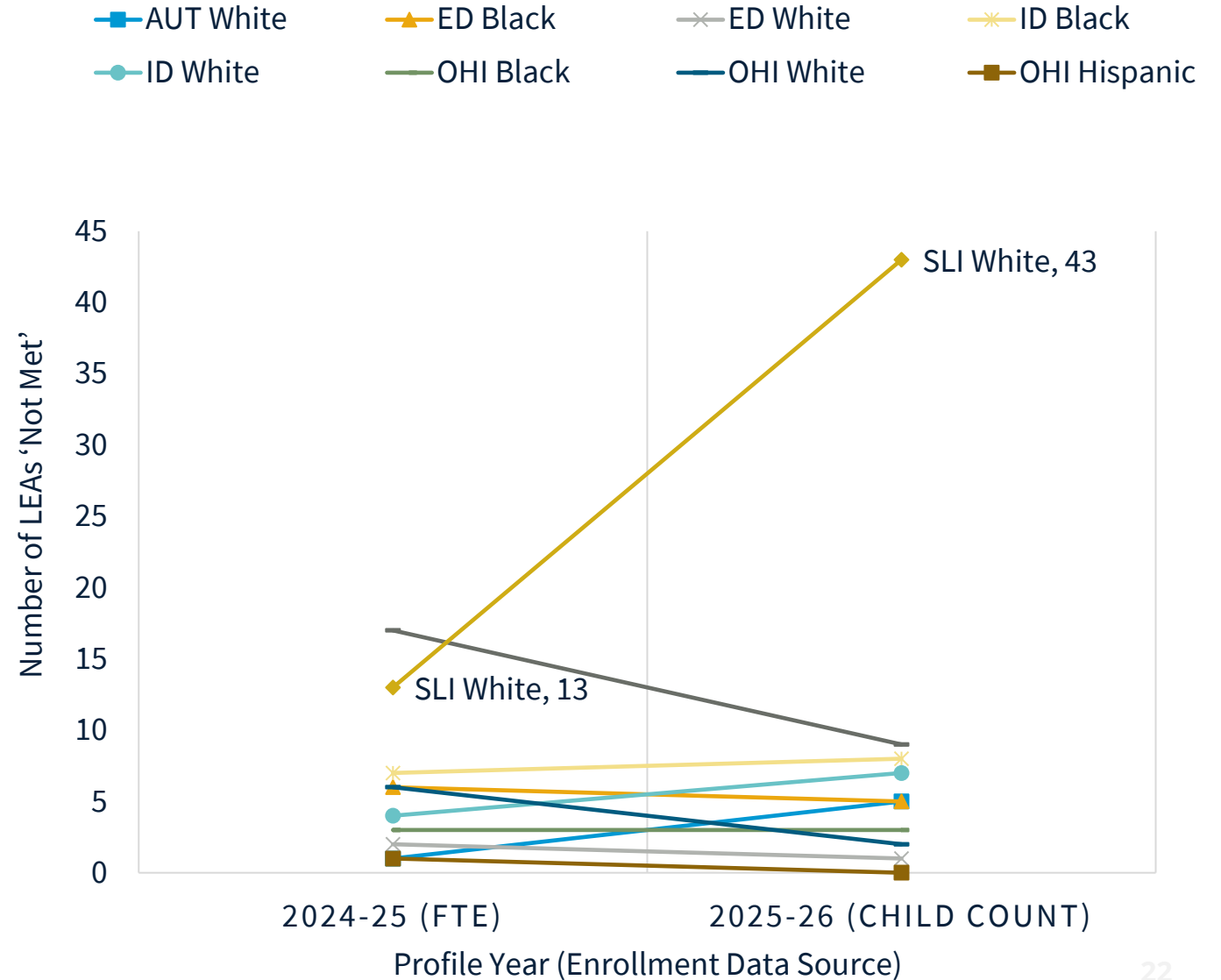
## Indicator 10 'Not Met' using Regular (REG) Risk Type by Category/Race



# SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY: NUMBER OF LEAS 'NOT MET'

- Switching from FTE to Child significantly increased the number of districts identified with Significant Disproportionality in identification of White students for Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)
- 30 more findings compared to previous year

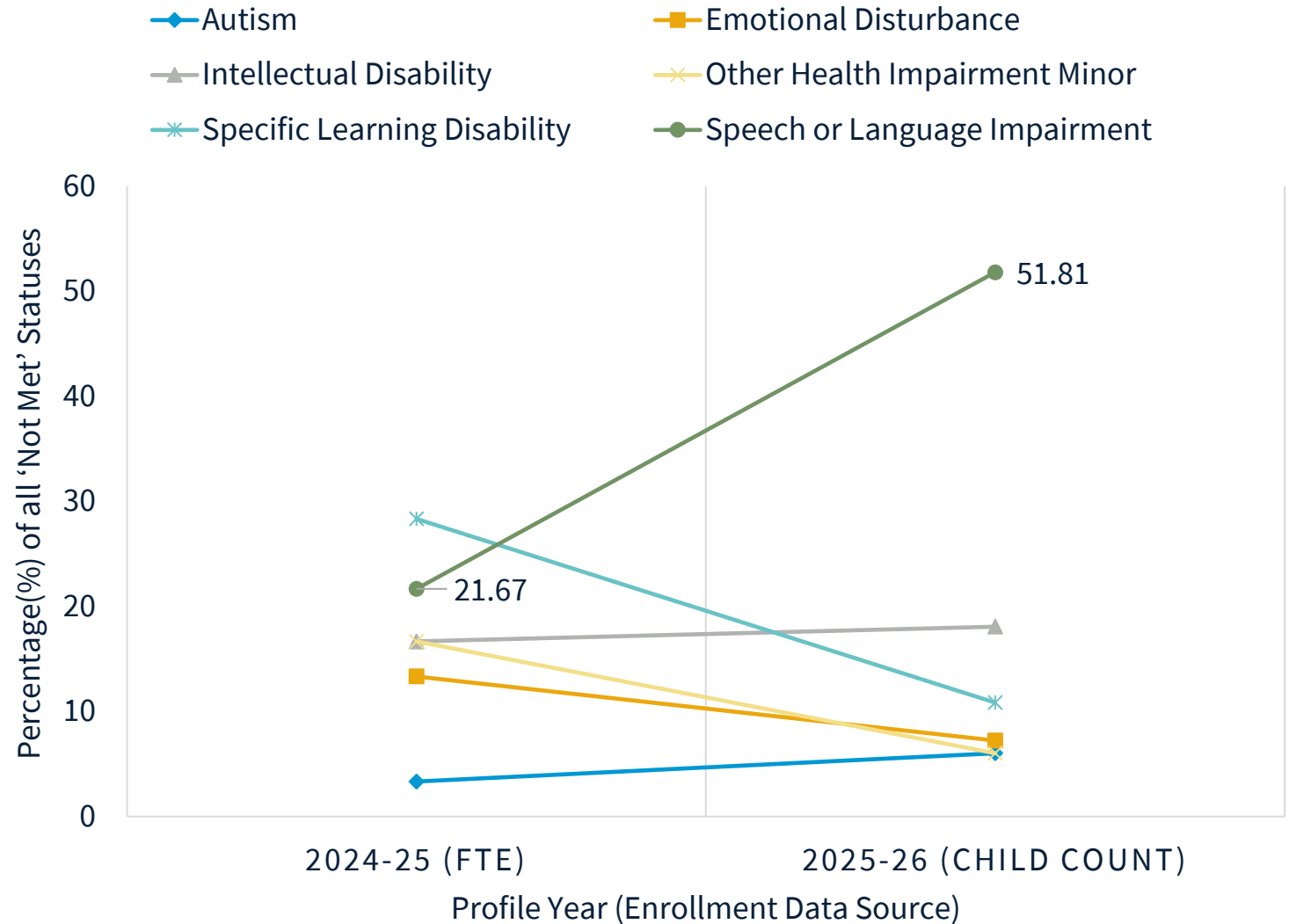
## Significant Disproportionality 'Not Met' by Category/Race



# SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY: % OF 'NOT MET' STATUSES BY DISABILITY

- Over 50% of LEAs flagged for Significant Disproportionality (Sig Dispro) this year will be identified for the SLI category using the 2.5 risk ratio and Child Count enrollment
- Marks a major shift from last year, when only 20% of all “not met” statuses were due to Sig Dispro in SLI
- Now half of all “not met” statuses will be attributed to Sig Dispro for SLI—a substantial proportional increase year over year

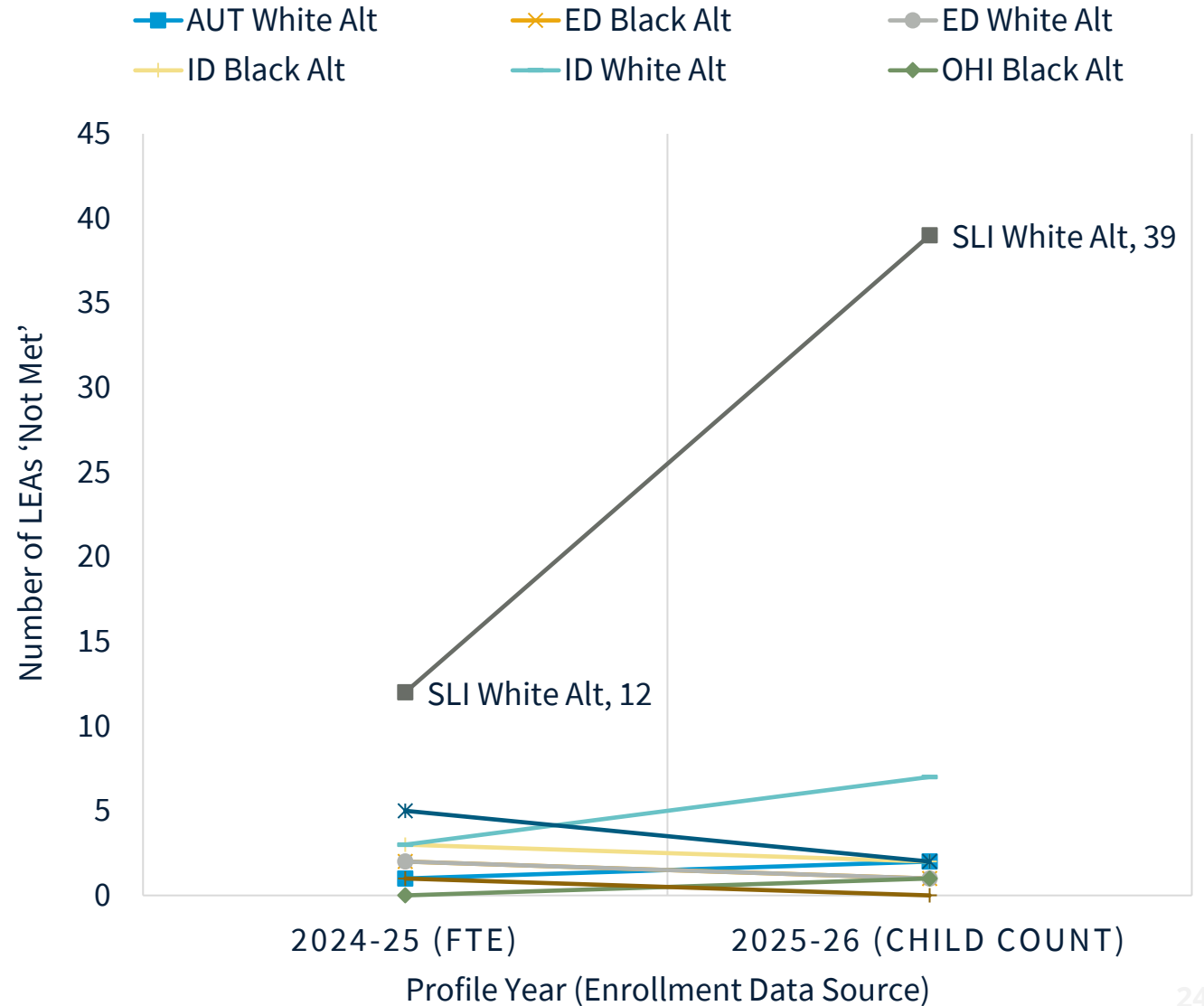
## Significant Disproportionality ‘Not Met’ by Disability Category



# SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY: 'NOT MET' COUNTS BY ALTERNATE RISK RATIO

- Most findings of significant disproportionality of white students with Speech or Language Impairments (SLI) occurred in districts that did **not** meet the minimum cell size and n-size requirements

## Significant Disproportionality 'Not Met' using Alternate (ALT) Risk Type by Category/Race



# WHY IS SPEECH LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT UNIQUELY AFFECTED?



- Child Count approach may overrepresent short-term identification and/or services
- High exit rates
- Frequent change in identification category compared to other disability categories

# DEEPER DIVE INTO STATE SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT IDENTIFICATION LANDSCAPE

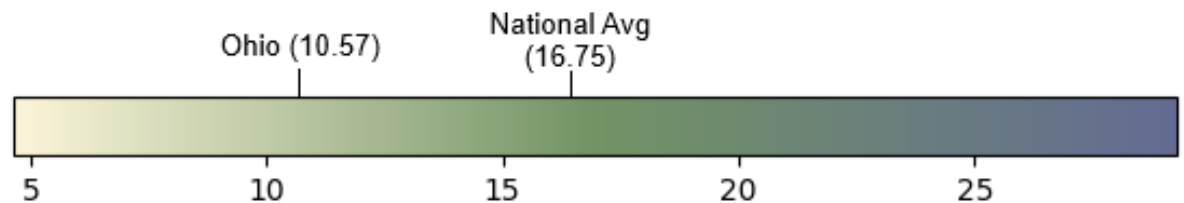
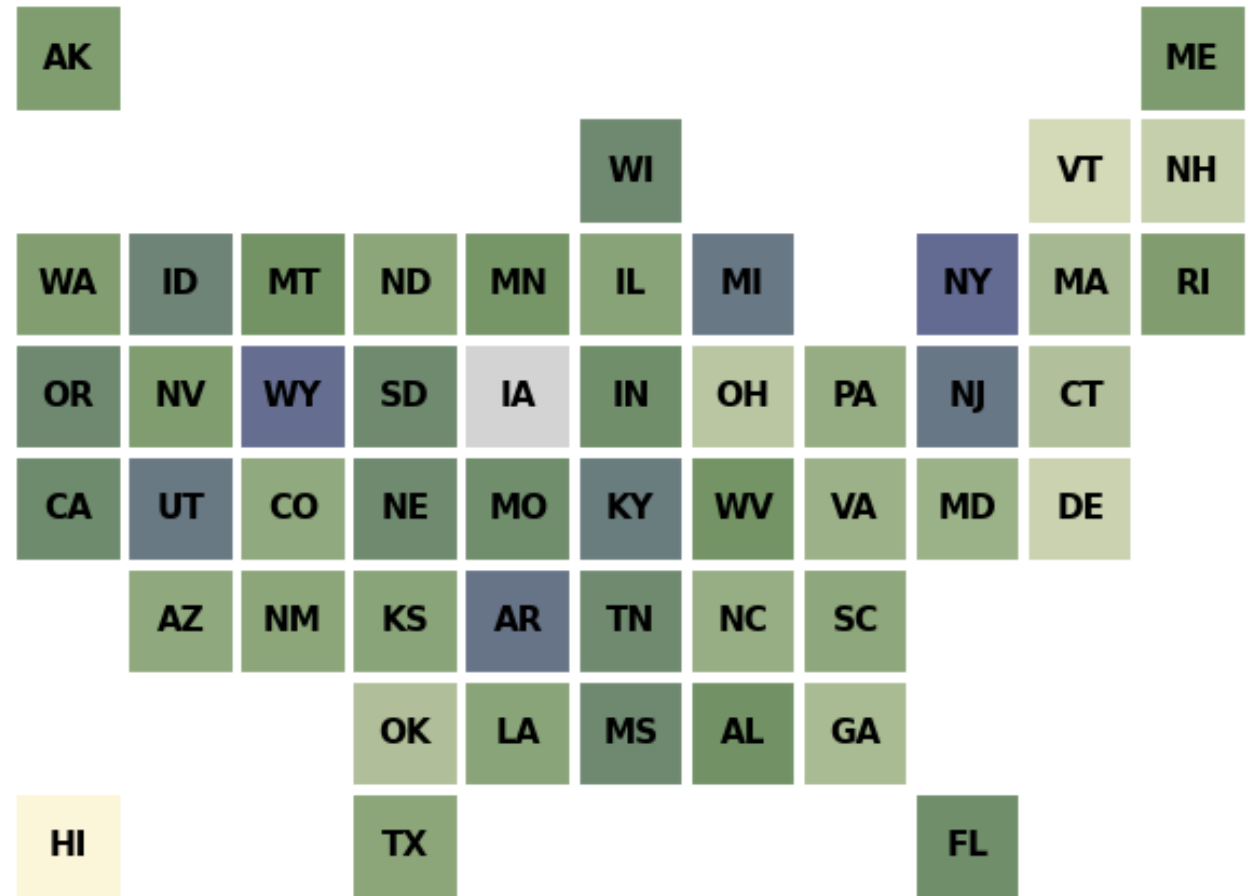
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What additional data sources can help us understand why so many LEAs in Ohio are being identified for disproportionate representation in Speech and Language Impairment?

# SLI IDENTIFICATION LANDSCAPE

- **10.57%** of Ohio children enrolled in kindergarten through age 21 and served under IDEA are identified with a Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) compared to the 16.75 national average.
- Ohio ranks **45th out of 49 states** in the percentage of students with disabilities identified with SLI

## Proportion of SWD Identified with SLI



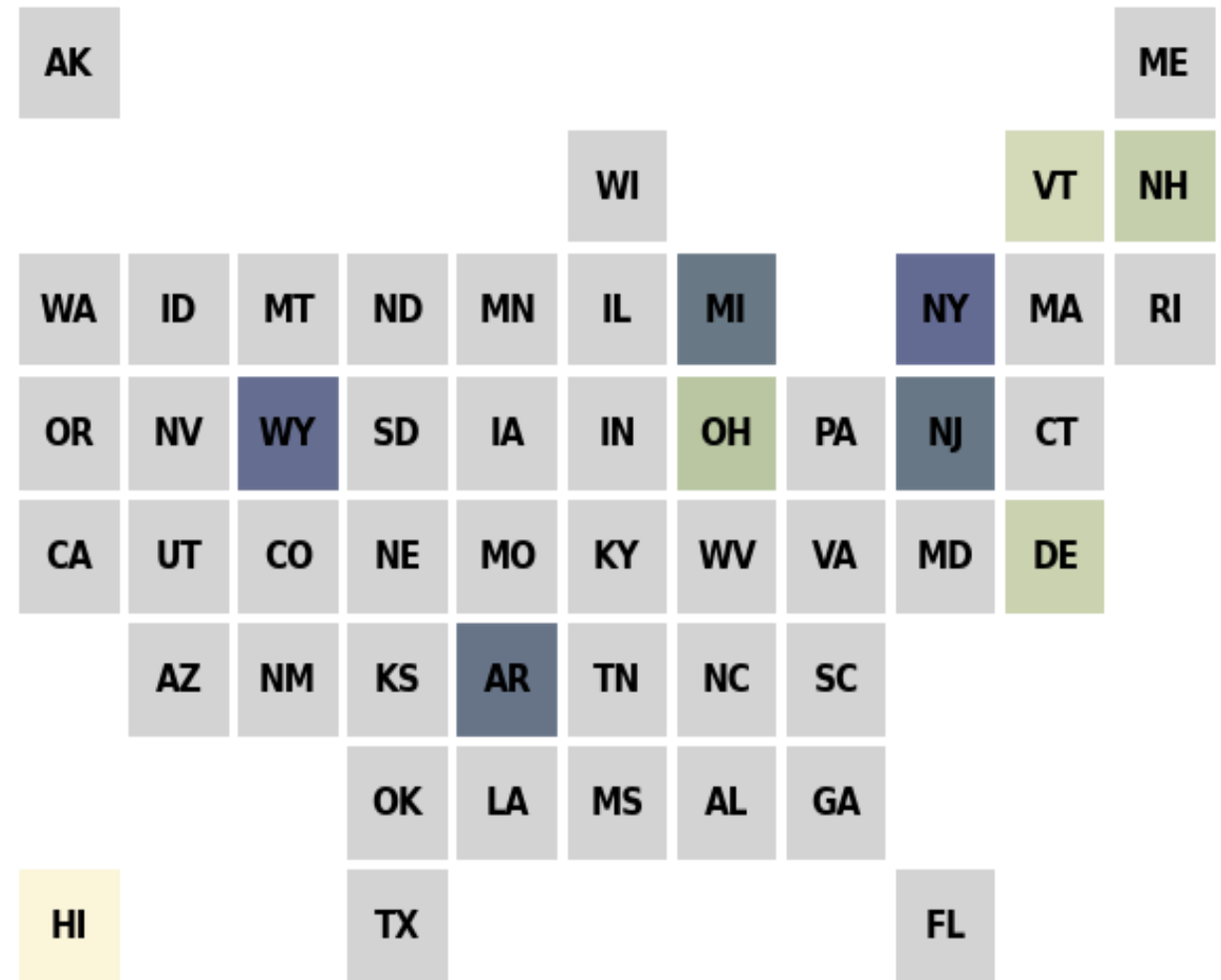
# HIGH VS. LOW SLI IDENTIFICATION: A LOOK AT THE TOP AND BOTTOM 5 STATES

- **High**

- New York, Wyoming, Arkansas, New Jersey, Michigan
- 25.39% to 29.28% of SWD population

- **Low**

- Hawaii, Vermont, Delaware, New Hampshire, Ohio
- 4.64% to 10.57% of SWD population



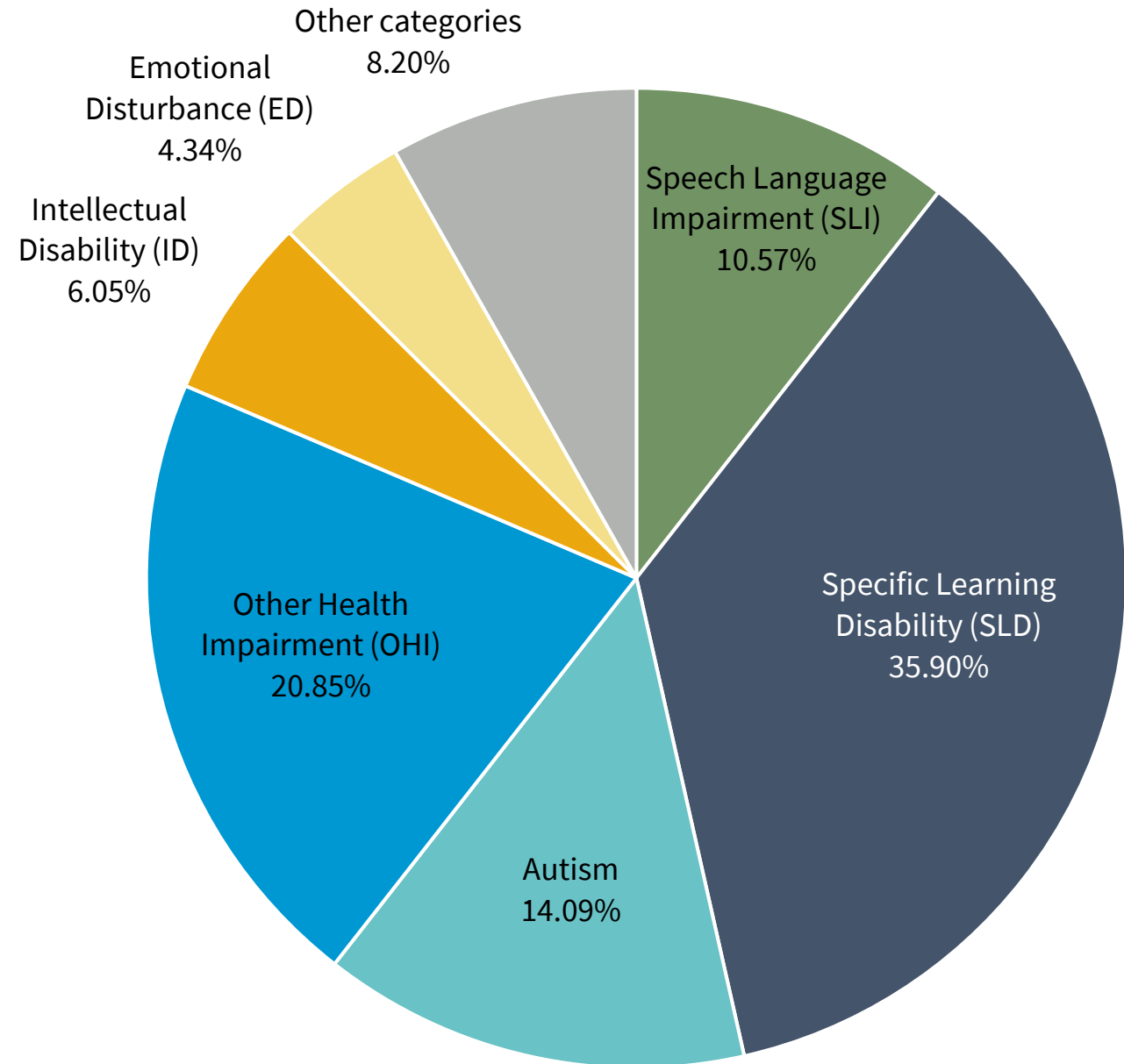
Proportion of students with disabilities (SWD) identified with Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)



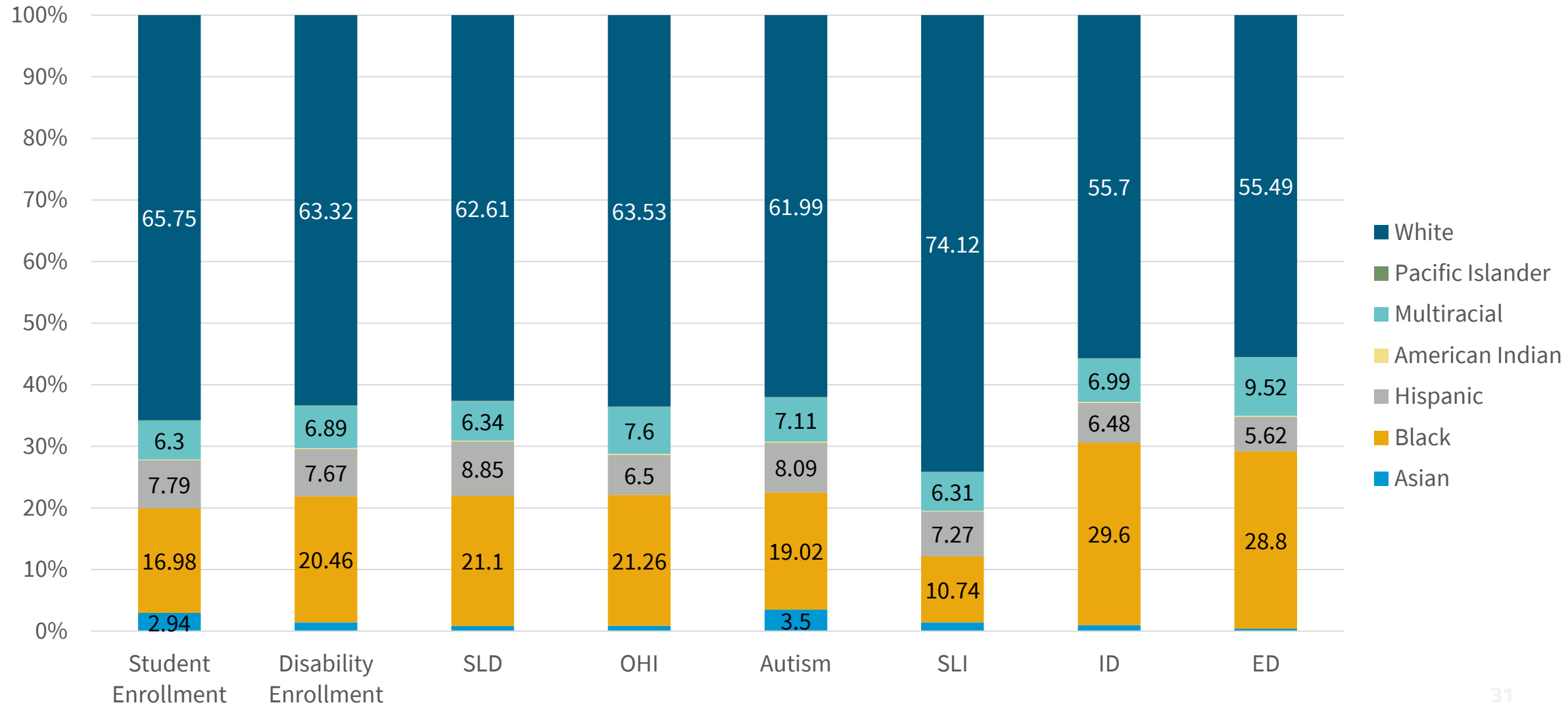


# PERCENTAGE OF OHIO SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS IDENTIFIED IN EACH DISABILITY CATEGORY

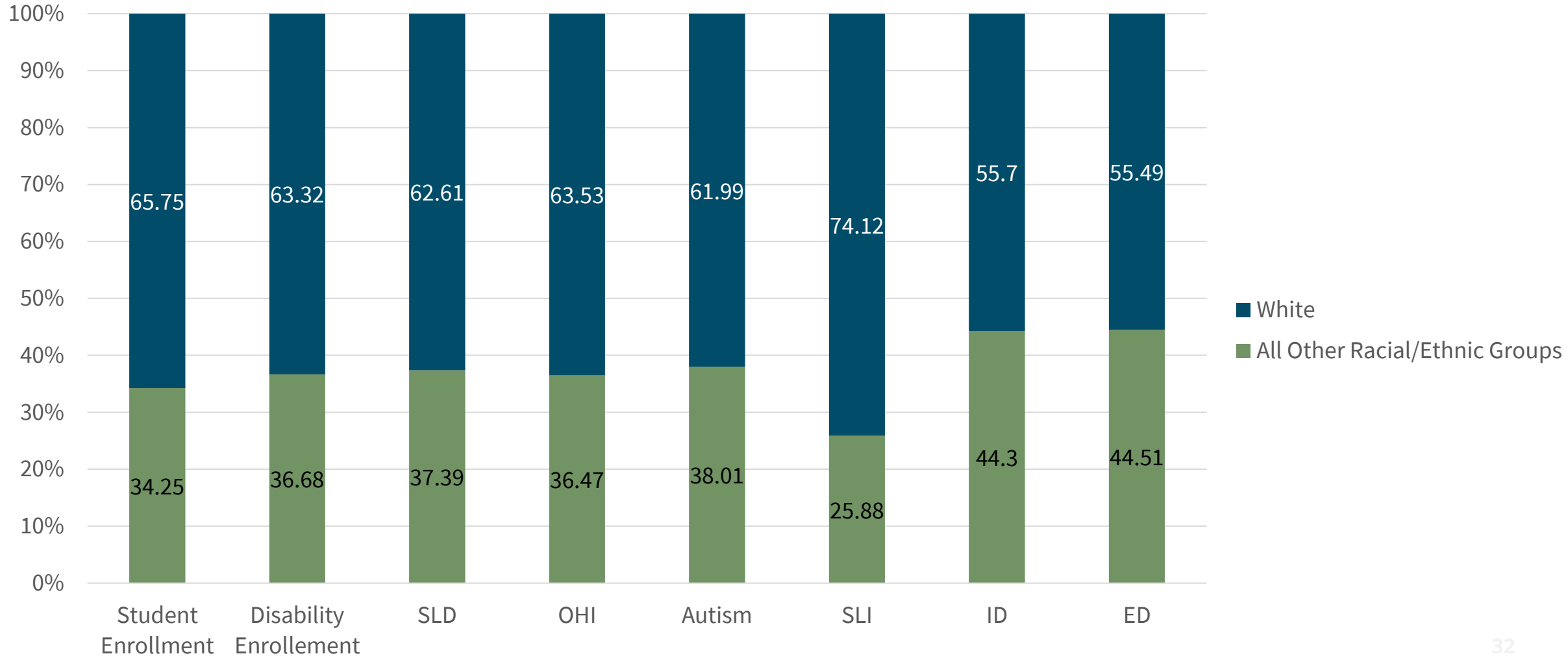
- Includes children with disabilities ages 5 (and in kindergarten) through 21 based on Child Count as of Oct. 31, 2024
- Other categories not examined in Indicator 10 and Significant Disproportionality calculations
- Majority of students with disabilities (81.45%) are identified in one of four categories:
  - Specific Learning Disabilities, Other Health Impairments, Autism, and Speech or Language Impairments



# OHIO DATA: RACIAL/ETHNIC REPRESENTATION IN DISABILITY CATEGORIES AND SCHOOL-AGE ENROLLMENT



# RACIAL/ETHNIC REPRESENTATION IN COMMON DISABILITY CATEGORIES & OVERALL ENROLLMENT: WHITE STUDENTS COMPARED TO ALL OTHER GROUPS IN OHIO



# STATE SLI IDENTIFICATION LANDSCAPE TAKEAWAYS

- Ohio identifies far fewer students with disabilities with SLI compared to other states.
- Racial differences within the students Ohio *does* identify, particularly the relatively lower identification of Black students for SLI.

# WHY DOES THE STATE'S SPEECH OR LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT IDENTIFICATION LANDSCAPE MATTER?

- Some LEAs lack enough non-white students to form a valid comparison group.  
When that group is too small, the LEA's rate is compared to the statewide combined rate for all other racial/ethnic groups using the Alternate (ALT) risk ratio calculation.  
Over 90% of flagged LEAs are identified using the ALT.
- Statewide identification patterns (not just local practices) can influence an LEA's calculated risk using the ALT calculation.  
Lower state SLI identification rates for some racial groups (e.g., Black students) can increase the risk for White students in certain LEA's with low enrollment of other races.  
An LEA might be flagged because the statewide comparison group is under-identified (or appropriately identified at lower rates).

# ALTERNATE RISK RATIO CALCULATION EXAMPLE

RISK FOR THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP IN LEA = **0.033**

50 white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the LEA**

1500 white students **in the LEA**

RISK FOR ALL OTHER RACES IN OHIO = **0.012**

7,400 non-white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the state**

619,000 non-white students **in the state**

ALT  
RISK =  
2.75

RISK FOR THE RACIAL/ETHNIC GROUP IN LEA = **0.033**

50 white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the LEA**

1500 white students **in the LEA**

RISK FOR ALL OTHER RACES IN OHIO = **0.016**

9,600 non-white students with Speech or Language Impairment **in the state**

619,000 non-white students **in the state**

ALT  
RISK =  
2.06

# DRIVERS OF SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSEP) acknowledges that overrepresentation of one racial or ethnic group that rises to the level of significant disproportionality may occur for a variety of reasons.

Over-representation of a racial or ethnic group

Under-identification of another racial or ethnic group or groups

Appropriate identification, with higher prevalence of a disability, in a particular racial or ethnic group

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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# THE GOAL

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Accurately identify racial/ethnic overrepresentation in disability categories to ensure appropriate supports



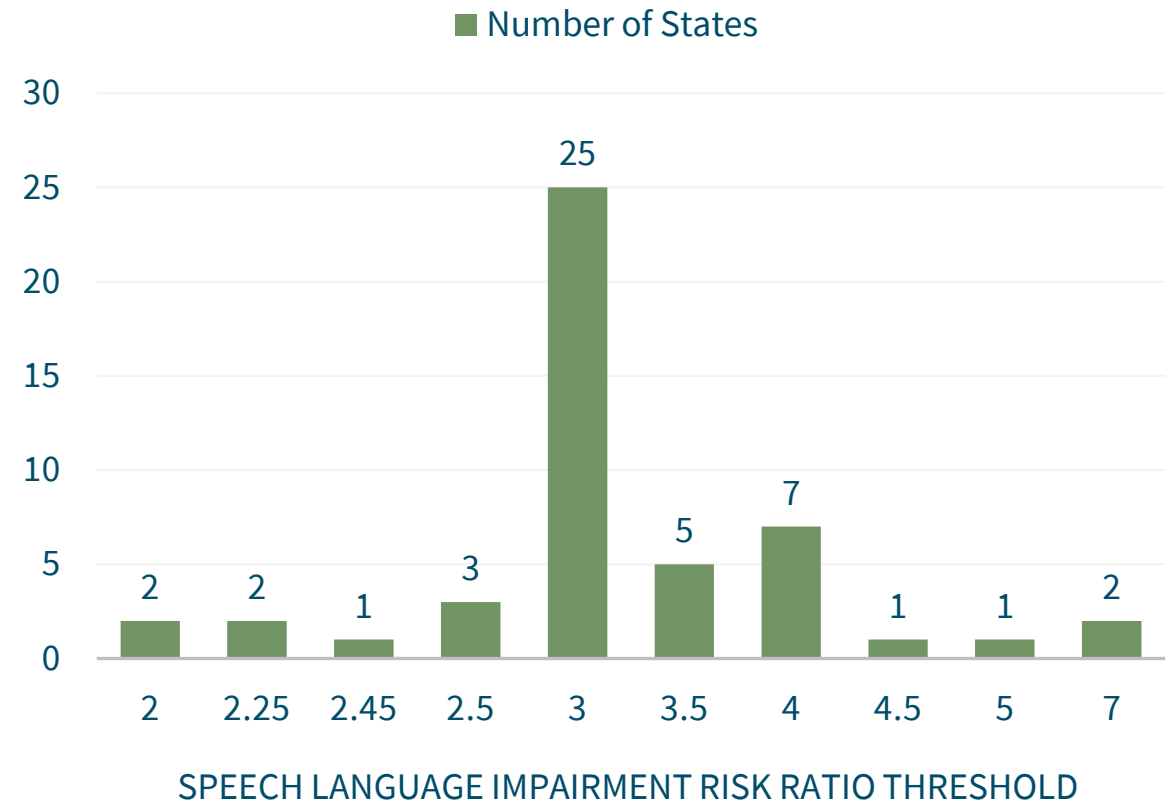
# OHIO'S OPTIONS MOVING FORWARD

- Maintain the Speech Language Impairment (SLI) risk ratio threshold at 2.5
- Consider adjusting the Speech Language Impairment risk ratio threshold

# SLI RISK RATIO THRESHOLDS ACROSS STATES

- Significant Disproportionality thresholds range from 2.0 to 7.0
- Most states use 3.0 or higher; Ohio currently uses 2.5
- Other differences include: # of consecutive years, cell/n size requirements

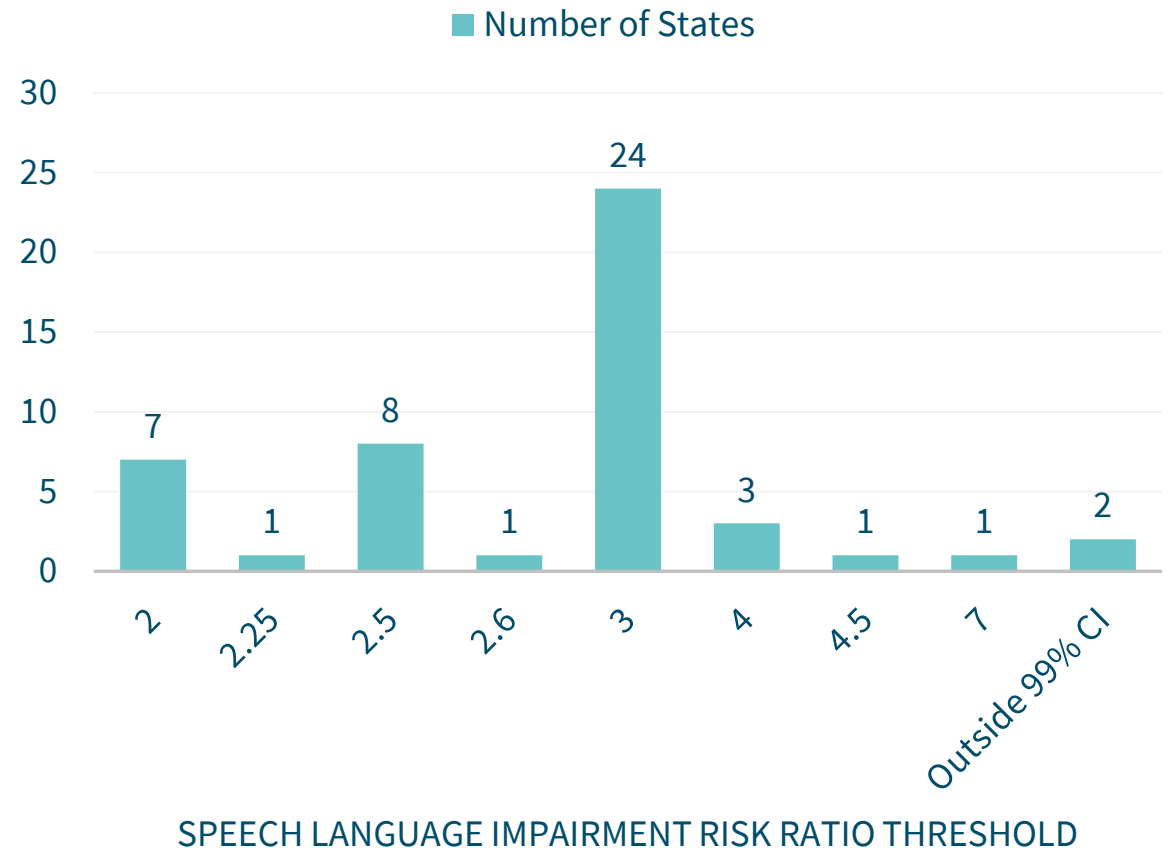
Variability in Significant Disproportionality Thresholds across U.S. States



# SLI RISK RATIO THRESHOLDS ACROSS STATES

- Indicator 10 thresholds similar but vary by state
- Most states use 3.0; Ohio currently uses 2.5
- Other differences include: # of consecutive years, alternate risk ratio, cell/n size requirements

Variability in Indicator 10  
Thresholds across U.S. States



# WHAT SLI THRESHOLDS DO SIMILAR STATES USE?

Ohio compared to 5 Peer States by key metrics: Racial/Ethnic Makeup, Enrollment Size, Number of LEAs, Disability and SLI Identification Patterns, and Use of Alternate Risk Ratio for Indicator 10

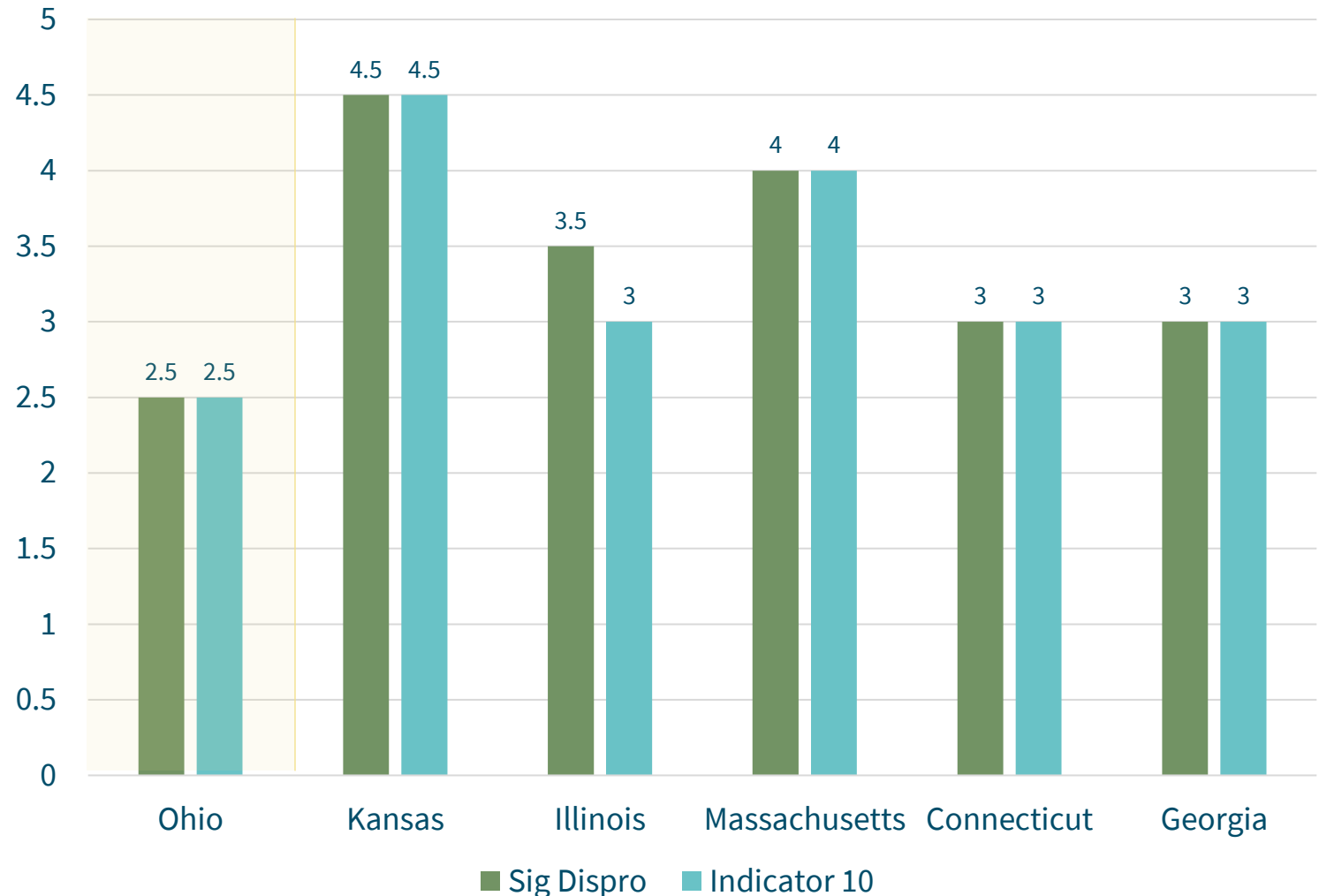
## Significant Disproportionality

- Range: 3.0 to 4.5

## Indicator 10

- Range: 3.0 to 4.5

Speech Language Impairment (SLI) Risk Ratio Thresholds: Ohio vs. 5 Comparable States Using Alternate Risk Ratio for Indicator 10 and Significant Disproportionality



# OHIO RISK RATIO THRESHOLD ANALYSIS

- Tables show LEAs flagged at thresholds from 2.5 to 4.0
- Lower thresholds flag more districts; higher thresholds reduce flags
- Flagging more districts could potentially reduce the Speech or Language Impairment identification rate in Ohio even more
- Analysis includes both regular and alternate risk ratios

# NUMBER OF DISTRICTS & SCHOOLS 'NOT MET' STATUS BY RISK RATIO THRESHOLD

Risk Ratio Threshold	Projected Number of Districts with Significant Disproportionality in Speech Language Impairment*	Projected Number of Districts with Disproportionate Representation in Speech Language Impairment**
2.5	43	51
3.0	14	15
3.5	2	4
4.0	1	1

\*Projections based on 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 data years

\*\*Based on 2023-24 and 2024-25 data years



# SIGNIFICANT DISPROPORTIONALITY: NUMBER 'NOT MET' BY RISK RATIO THRESHOLD & TYPE (REG OR ALT)

Risk Ratio Threshold	Projected Number of Districts with Significant Disproportionality in Speech Language Impairment	
	Regular	Alternate
2.5	4	39
3.0	1	13
3.5	0	2
4.0	0	1

Projections based on 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 data years



# INDICATOR 10: NUMBER 'NOT MET' BY RISK RATIO THRESHOLD & TYPE (REG OR ALT)

Risk Ratio Threshold	Projected Number of Districts with Disproportionate Representation in Speech Language Impairment	
	Regular	Alternate
2.5	5	46
3.0	1	14
3.5	0	4
4.0	0	1

Based on 2023-24 and 2024-25 data years



# IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTRICTS



Unexpected flags for disproportionality



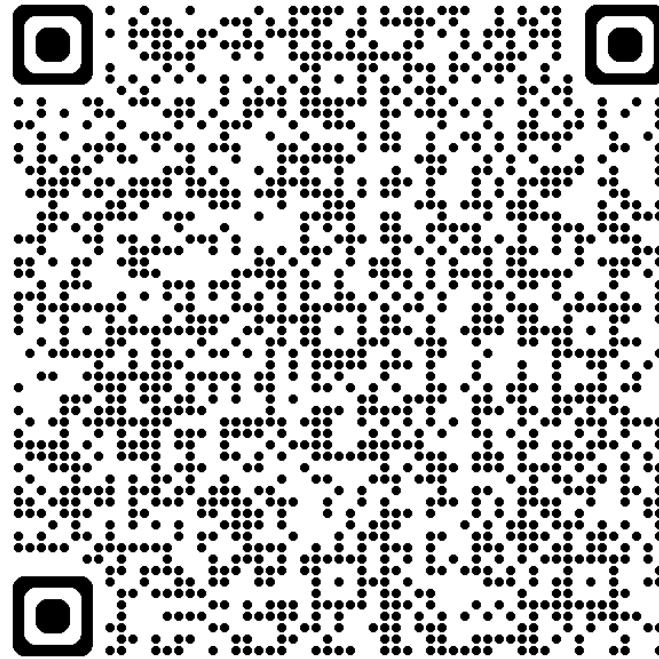
Funding implications: 15% IDEA Part B funds set aside to provide comprehensive coordinated early intervening services (CEIS)

# KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROPOSAL

- Balance between accurate identification and minimizing false positives
- Impact on districts and funding
- Alignment with federal guidance and similar states
- Best ways to address low Speech or Language Impairment identification rates overall
- ALT risk ratio: Although it is not required to have an Alternate risk ratio for Indicator 10, it is required for Significant Disproportionality

# SURVEY

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