# IDEA Stakeholder Engagement Process Summary

This document summarizes the stakeholder engagement process and final recommendations from stakeholders on special education indicators 1, 2, 4a, 4b, 9 and 10. See Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage for indicator fact books.

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement

The Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (the Department) developed fact books and feedback forms for each indicator on which the state was seeking public comment. The Department held an initial public comment period in August 2024, a series of three virtual stakeholder group meetings between August and September 2024, presented to the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children (SAPEC) in September 2024, and then a second public comment period and open office hour between September and October 2024. For each of the two public comment periods, the IDEA data team partnered with Communications and the Office for Exceptional Children to provide several reminders of public comment via multiple modes, including one direct email to the 11 largest urban districts in the state, three articles in EdConnection (the Department's newsletter to districts), and two articles in the weekly state support team newsletter. Stakeholders who participated in the first public comment period were invited to take part in the series of virtual stakeholder meetings.

### First Public Comment Period

The IDEA data team collaborated with the Office for Exceptional Children and programmatic experts across the Department to develop indicator fact books. Fact books and feedback forms were posted to Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage. Feedback forms were available for public comment from August 5-23, 2024, and fact books continue to be available.

The first public comment period resulted in a total of 139 comments from 45 individuals across all six indicators. Twenty-one (46.7 percent) of these commenters were individuals who self-identified as parents of children with disabilities, while seven (15.5 percent) were individuals with a disability.

### Virtual Stakeholder Group

The Department held three two-hour virtual stakeholder meetings in August and September 2024 to review public comment and recommend final methodology and targets for each indicator. Indicators were divided into three groups based on like measures, as follows: Exiting (Indicators 1 and 2), Significant Discipline Discrepancy (Indicators 4a and 4b), and Disproportionate Representation (Indicators 9 and 10). Each indicator group was facilitated by programmatic experts from various offices within the Department. Participants were divided into indicator groups based on their individual preferences. One hundred and one stakeholders were invited to participate in the virtual stakeholder group. Forty-one (40.6 percent) individuals participated in the virtual stakeholder meetings, 10 (24.4 percent) of which self-identified as parents. Four (9.7 percent) participating stakeholders self-identified as an individual with a disability.

### Second Public Comment Period

The Department held a second public comment period following the conclusion of the virtual stakeholder meetings. The IDEA data team developed a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and summarized the stakeholder feedback received prior to the second public comment period for stakeholder review; both documents are available on Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage. An additional feedback form was made available for public comment from September 17-October 4, 2024. The IDEA data team and the Office for Exceptional Children held an open office hour during the second public comment period, on Oct. 2, to address stakeholder questions.

This second public comment period resulted in a total of 75 comments from 26 individuals across all six indicators. Twelve (46 percent) of these commenters were individuals who self-identified as parents of children with disabilities, while seven (26.9 percent) were individuals with a disability. Twenty-three (88 percent) of these 26 individuals did not participate in the first public comment period or the virtual stakeholder group, one (4 percent) participated in both,

one (4 percent) participated in public comment but not the virtual stakeholder group, and one (4 percent) participated in the virtual stakeholder group but not public comment.

# Stakeholder Feedback

## Targets for Graduation (Indicator 1) and Dropout (Indicator 2) Rates

*Results*

- More than half (63 percent) of commenting stakeholders were in favor of the less rigorous set of target options for graduation rate (Indicator 1).
- Just under half (49 percent) of commenting stakeholders were in favor of the less rigorous set of target options for dropout rate (Indicator 2).

*Comments*

For both indicators, stakeholders noted these options are more realistic, specifically as staff at local education agencies are still presented with challenges with student engagement post-COVID and have little resources to effectively address the needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Some stakeholders also mentioned the need for developing a growth mindset in the education of students with disabilities. Other comments included difficulty meeting targets when they change from year to year and a general lack of understanding of the different graduation pathways and rates reported by the state agency.

Final targets are reported in the indicator fact book on [Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage](#).

## Methodology for Significant Discipline Discrepancies (Indicators 4a and 4b)

*Results*

More than half (51 percent for Indicator 4a and 55 percent for Indicator 4b) of commenting stakeholders were in favor of using two years of data for calculating significant discipline discrepancy.

*Comments*

For both indicators, stakeholders suggested two years of data is enough to establish a potential pattern and allows for local education agencies to obtain support from the state sooner. Stakeholders appreciated the option to use these indicators as an early warning system for significant disproportionality. Some stakeholders shared a preference for lowering the rate ratio threshold for indicator 4b and for having consistent methodology across indicators where possible.

Final methodology is reported in the indicator fact books on [Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage](#).

## Methodology for Disproportionate Representation (Indicators 9 and 10)

*Results*

More than half (55 percent) of commenting stakeholders were in favor of using two years of data for calculating disproportionate representation.

*Comments*

Stakeholders noted more than two years of data should not be necessary before addressing disproportionate representation and appreciated the option to use these indicators as an early warning system for significant disproportionality. Some stakeholders shared a preference for lowering the risk ratio threshold and for having consistent methodology across indicators where possible.

Final methodology is reported in the indicator fact book on [Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage](#).

Department of Education & Workforce

# Resources

Updated fact books and a final summary of methodology and targets are available on Ohio's Special Education Methodology Updates and Target Setting webpage.