

Significant Discrepancy in Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions



Special Education Indicator 4a
Fact Book

August 2024



**Department of
Education &
Workforce**

What is Significant Discrepancy in Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions (Indicator 4a)?

This Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) indicator is part of a set of equity measures that measures whether students with disabilities are being disciplined¹ at a higher rate than their peers without disabilities. This measure assesses significant discrepancy between students with disabilities and students without disabilities with more than 10 cumulative days of out-of-school suspensions and expulsions. This is a results measure for which targets are set by the state with stakeholder input.

Why is Significant Discrepancy in Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions Important?

Significant Discrepancy (Indicator 4a) aims to understand whether:

- Students are equally likely to receive exclusionary discipline regardless of disability.
- Discipline is being administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

To promote the most equitable environment for students with disabilities, it is important for districts and schools to consistently review their discipline practices.

How is Significant Discrepancy Calculated?

Ohio calculates significant discrepancy in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions (OSSE) using a rate difference (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The “discipline rate difference” is the difference between the rate of discipline for students with disabilities and the rate of discipline for students without disabilities. Districts and community schools must have at least 10 students disciplined and at least 30 students enrolled for a rate difference to be calculated. Ohio uses three years of data to define “significant discrepancy.” The below graphic shows how to calculate the rate difference.

Figure 1. Calculation step 1: The number of students with disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days divided by the district enrollment of students with disabilities equals the district rate for students with disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days.

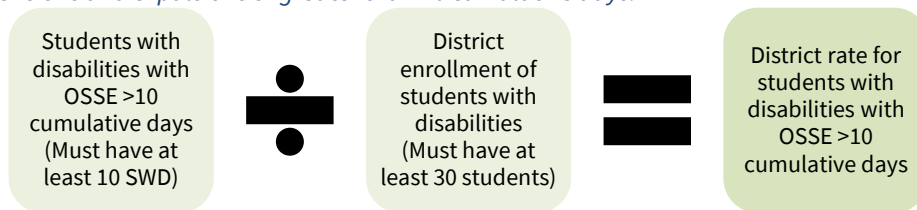
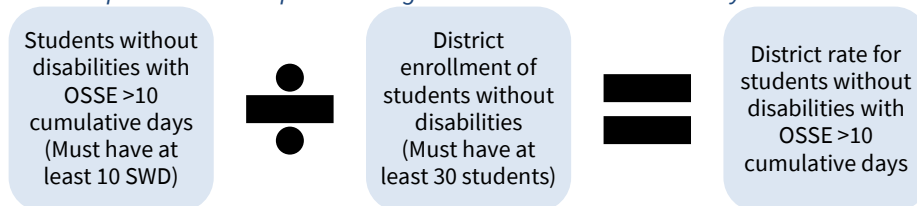


Figure 2. Calculation step 2: The number of students without disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days divided by the district enrollment of students without disabilities equals the district rate for students with disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days.



¹ IDEA 20 U.S.C. [1416\(a\)\(3\)\(c\)](#)

Figure 3. Calculation step 3: The district rate for students with disabilities with greater than 10 out-of-school suspensions or expulsions (OSSE) of greater than days minus the district rate for students without disabilities with OSSE greater than 10 cumulative days equals the discipline rate difference.

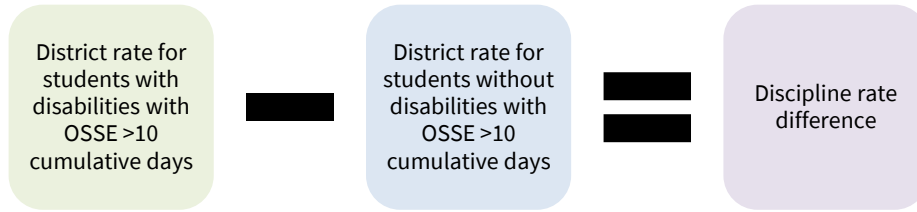


Table 1. Example of a step-by-step calculation for significant discrepancy in out-of-school suspensions and expulsions (Indicator 4a).

Calculation	Description	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
A	Students with disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 cumulative days	10	200	250
B	Students with disabilities enrollment	4,500	4,300	4,400
$C = A \div B$	Students with disabilities discipline rate	0.22%	4.65%	5.68%
D	Students without disabilities with out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 cumulative days	35	580	680
E	Students without disabilities enrollment	17,500	17,200	17,800
$F = D \div E$	Students without disabilities discipline rate	0.20%	3.37%	3.82%
$G = C - F$	Discipline rate difference	0.02%	1.28%	1.86%



To have a significant discrepancy in Ohio, the discipline rate difference must be greater than or equal to 1.00 percentage points for all three years considered. Using the example in Table 1, this district does not have a significant discrepancy, as defined by Ohio, because their rate difference exceeds 1.00 percentage point for only the last two of the three most recent years. A rate difference of 1.00 percentage point means that the rate of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 cumulative days for students with disabilities is one percentage point higher than the rate for students without disabilities in the district. A rate difference of zero means that students with disabilities are no more or less likely to be disciplined than students without disabilities.

Historical Data for Significant Discrepancy in Long-Term Suspensions and Expulsions

Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with discipline discrepancies greater than or equal to 1.00 percent was 25 percent in 2018-2019, which met the state target of 25 percent. In 2019-2020, Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with discipline discrepancies greater than or equal to 1.00 was 20 percent, which met the state target of 20 percent. Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with discipline discrepancies greater than or equal to 1.00 has remained at 0 percent since the 2020-2021 school year, meeting the state target of 20 percent each year. Figure 1 displays Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with a significant discrepancy since the 2018-2019 school year.

Figure 4. Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with a significant discipline discrepancy.

Indicator 4a: Districts and Community Schools with Discipline Discrepancies $\geq 1.00\%$ for Three Consecutive Years

 Districts and Community Schools with a Discipline Discrepancy  Target

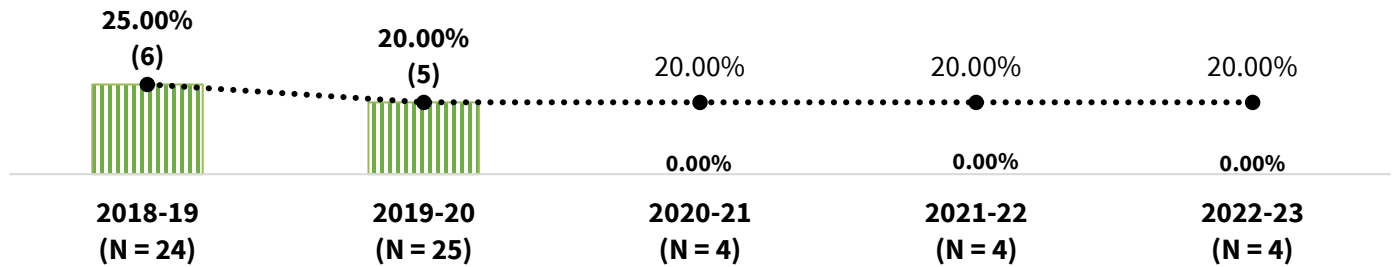


Table 2. Ohio's percentage of districts and community schools with a significant discipline discrepancy.

4a: Discipline Discrepancy	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Three consecutive years of discipline data	Data from the 16-17, 17-18, and 18-19 school years	Data from the 17-18, 18-19, and 19-20 school years	Data from the 18-19, 19-20, and 20-21 school years	Data from the 19-20, 20-21, and 21-22 school years	Data from the 20-21, 21-22, and 22-23 school years
Number of districts and community schools with a discipline discrepancy $\geq 1\%$ for three consecutive years	6	5	0	0	0
Total number of districts and community schools included in the analysis	24	25	4	4	4
Percentage of districts with a discipline discrepancy $\geq 1\%$	25.00%	20.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Target	25.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%	20.00%
Total number of districts and community schools	969	933	932	943	968
Percentage of all districts and community schools included in the analysis	2.48%	2.68%	0.43%	0.42%	0.41%

Data Source: Education Management Information System (EMIS)

Stakeholder Input on Methodology

Ohio is asking for stakeholder input on the number of years considered in the calculation for Indicator 4a. Two methodological options are proposed below. Use [this form](#) to provide your feedback. Ohio will be setting targets with stakeholders based on the new methodology for this indicator in the spring of 2025.

Methodological Options

Both methodological options proposed below:

- Are based on a minimum cell size of zero and minimum n size of zero. This ensures that Ohio is assessing discipline rate differences in all districts and community schools across the state each year.
- Maintain the state's current threshold of 1.00 percentage point to determine whether progress can be made in decreasing discipline rate differences when including all districts and community schools in the analysis each year.

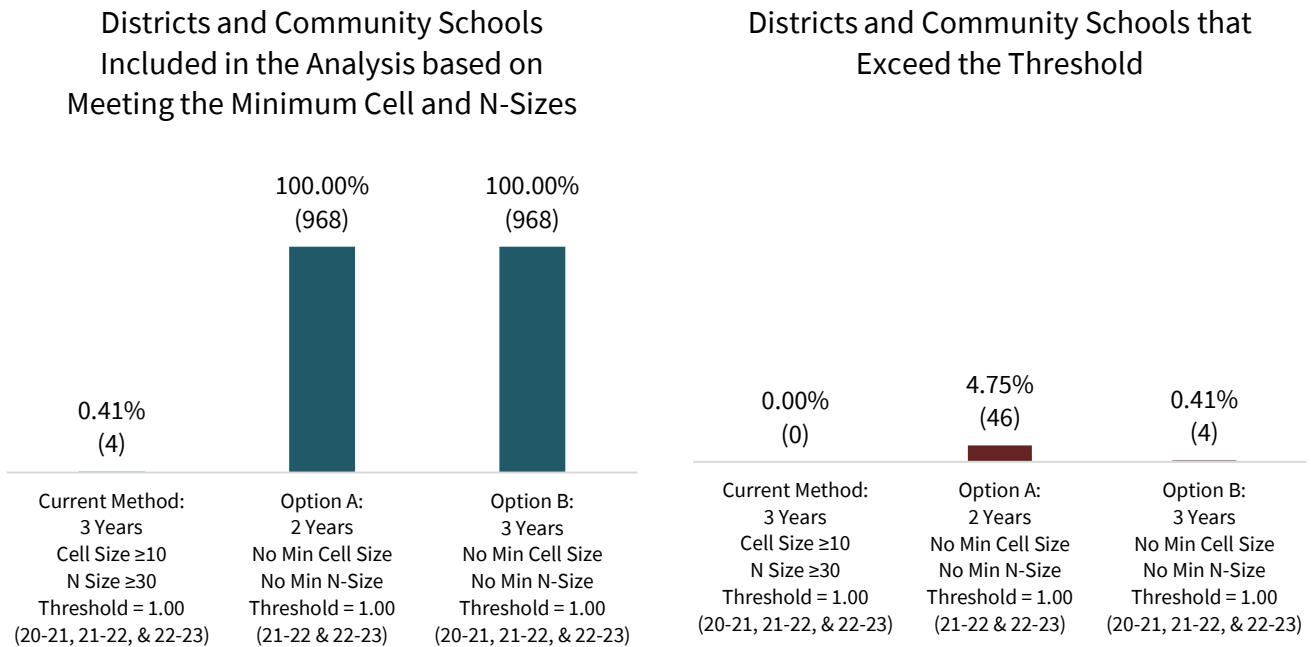
- Consider multiple consecutive years of data to ensure districts and community schools are reviewed based on systemic discipline concerns rather than a single year anomaly.

Both the current methodology and Option B are based on three consecutive years of data that include a pandemic year (20-21). The new methodology for Indicator 4a will be first implemented with the 2024-2025 Special Education Profile and based on data from up to three consecutive years, including the 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24 school years. The state expects an increase in the number of districts and community schools with a significant discipline discrepancy based on increased discipline rates as students transitioned back to in-person classroom experiences from virtual settings post-pandemic.

Table 3. Comparison of Ohio's current Indicator 4a methodology and the two proposed methodological options.

Methodological Component	Ohio's Current Methodology	Proposed Methodology Option A	Proposed Methodology Option B	Ohio's Definition
Threshold	1.00 percentage point	1.00 percentage point	1.00 percentage point	Ohio defines, "significant discrepancy," as a discipline rate for children with disabilities that is 1.00 percentage point or more than the discipline rate for children without disabilities in the same district or community school.
Minimum Cell Size	10	0	0	A proposed minimum cell size of 0 means a rate difference will be calculated for all districts and community schools. Ohio currently uses a minimum cell size of 10. This means that for a district to be included in the analyses, there has needed to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 10 children with disabilities suspended/expelled for at least 10 cumulative days in the district; and at least 10 children without disabilities suspended/expelled for at least 10 cumulative days in the district.
Minimum N Size	30	0	0	A proposed minimum n-size of 0 means a rate difference will be calculated for all districts and community schools. Ohio currently uses a minimum n-size of 30. This means that for a district to be included in the analyses, there has needed to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 30 children with disabilities enrolled in the district; and at least 30 children without disabilities enrolled in the district.
Multiple Years of Data	3	2	3	The proposed options include using either two or three years of data. Ohio currently uses three years of data to determine if "significant discrepancy" is occurring in a district or community school. A district or community school must have a rate difference that exceeds 1.00 percentage point for each of the years considered to have a significant discrepancy as defined by Ohio.

Figure 5. Comparison of the percentage and number of districts and community schools included in the analysis based on meeting the minimum cell and n-sizes and exceeding the threshold by methodological option.



Required Actions for Significant Discrepancy

Districts and community schools exceed the threshold of 1.00 percentage point for each year considered must:

- 1) Review their policies, procedures, and practices and submit documentation to the Department of Education and Workforce. If noncompliance is identified during this review, correct the noncompliance according to IDEA.
- 2) Identify and address the factors that may be contributing to the significant discrepancy.

Resources for Addressing Systemic Improvement of Significant Discrepancy

Resource	Resource Description
Implicit Bias Modules from The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity	Activity addressing possible biases staff may have between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.
Learning Management System (LMS)	Professional learning opportunities including <i>Culturally Responsive Practice Program</i> .
Ohio's Whole Child Framework	A framework to support a student-centered environment that meets mental, behavioral, physical health, wellness, nutrition, and safety needs.
Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence's (OCALI) Teaching Diverse Learners Center	Provides learning opportunities through the <i>Challenging Behaviors Webinar Series</i> and <i>Bullying and Individuals with Special Needs and InspirED Zoomcasts</i> .
Ohio Preschool Expulsion Prevention Partnership	Partnership developed between Nationwide Children's Hospital and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to reduce the rate of expulsions for preschool children.
SchoolSafety.gov	Created by the federal government to provide schools and districts with actionable recommendations to create safe and supportive learning environments for students and educators.