



Ohio

Ohio's System of General Supervision *Complying with State and Federal Requirements*

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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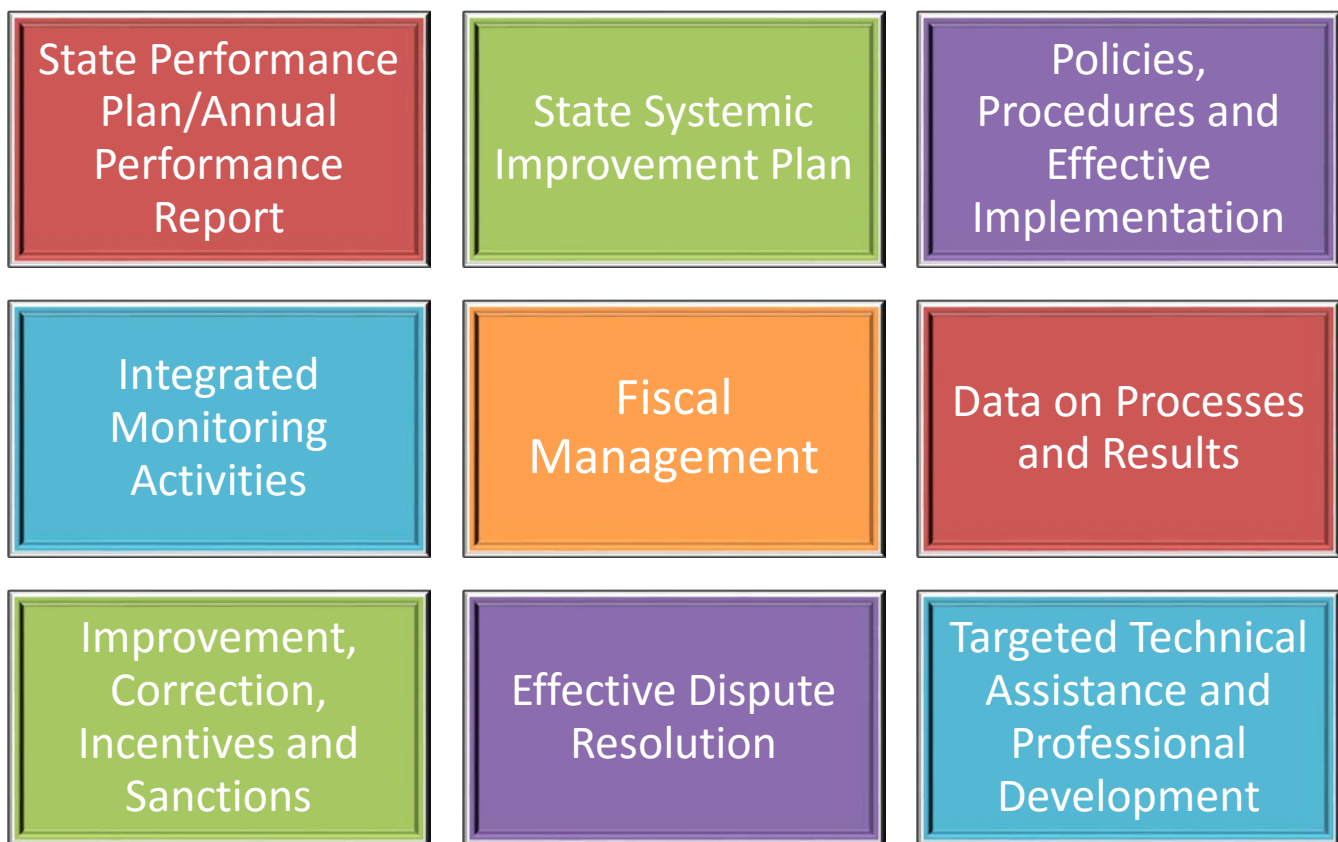
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Introduction

States have a responsibility under federal law to establish a system of general supervision to monitor the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 by school districts. Using this system, states are accountable for enforcing requirements and ensuring continuous improvement. This system is comprised of nine key components and is designed to: a) ensure compliance with federal and state regulations; and b) improve services and results for students with disabilities.

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs identified nine interconnected components that comprise a state's system of general supervision. An effective model of general supervision depends upon fluid interaction among these components, with an emphasis on accountability at all levels to Ohio's children and youth with disabilities served by this system. The Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children directs Ohio's system of general supervision on behalf of both its office and the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, which is responsible for Part B Section 619. Office of Early Learning and School Readiness staff members work in collaboration with Office for Exceptional Children staff members on some components of general supervision where specified.

Figure 1: Components of General Supervision



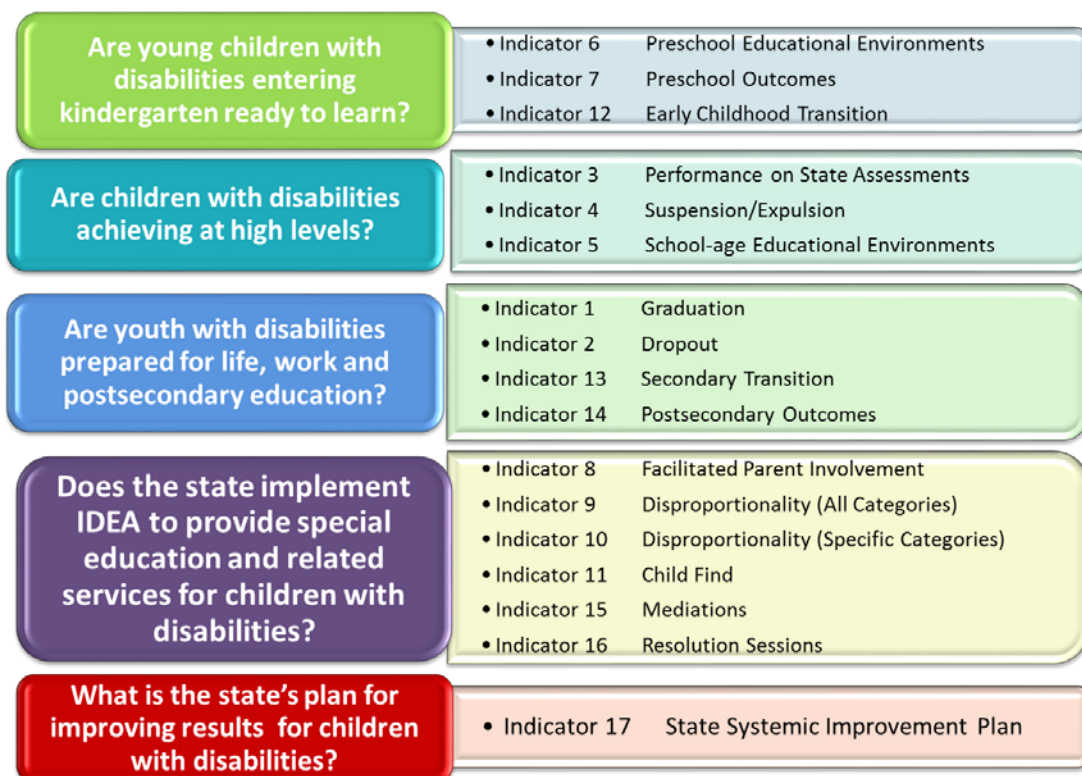
State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report

IDEA requires each state to have in place a State Performance Plan that serves as an accountability mechanism for state and local education agencies to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA. States must report their performance on the targets identified in the plan through an Annual Performance Report. The State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report includes measurable and rigorous targets for 17 indicators established for IDEA Part B (which address the needs of children with disabilities ages 3 through 21). Each indicator provides a measurable indication of a state's performance in specific priority areas under Part B. The Ohio Department of Education's Office for Exceptional Children solicited broad stakeholder involvement, including input and feedback from Ohio's State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, in the development of Ohio's State Performance Plan to set measurable and rigorous annual performance targets. Through the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, the Department of Education and the State Board of Education fulfill the requirements under IDEA that each state establish and maintain an advisory panel for the purpose of providing guidance with respect to special education and related services for students with disabilities.

The state also must report annually to the public on the performance of districts compared to state targets. Ohio's Annual Performance Report and district performance data can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Annual Performance Report*.

Critical Questions Framework – The Office for Exceptional Children adopted an organizational framework to classify the indicators using five critical questions that highlight the relationships among indicators and assist districts in using indicator data to improve services and results for children with disabilities. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 2: Critical Questions Framework



State Systemic Improvement Plan

Indicator 17 of the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report represents the State Systemic Improvement Plan. The State Systemic Improvement Plan is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable plan for improving results for students with disabilities. In order to improve results, states must assess the capacities of their current infrastructure systems and their abilities to enhance these infrastructures to increase the capacities of districts to implement and sustain evidence-based practices that will result in improved outcomes for children with disabilities. States must select strategic focus areas and identify specific, measurable results for their State Systemic Improvement Plans.

The focus of Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan is early literacy. With the implementation of the plan, school districts will utilize a variety of evidence-based practices for early literacy instruction and interventions for students with disabilities and students at risk to increase reading proficiency. Ohio's plan is designed to build a foundation of literacy and overall educational growth for students with disabilities, ultimately leading to college and career readiness for such students, while reducing dropout rates and disciplinary incidences that occur as a consequence of academic frustration. In addition, this work could lead to a reduction in the number of students with disabilities entering the juvenile justice system while supporting student capacity for self-advocacy and adult productivity.

To coordinate the development and implementation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan, the Office for Exceptional Children and the Office of Early Learning and School Readiness work in partnership with Ohio's State Systemic Improvement Plan Stakeholder Team, which consists of representation from: general and special educators; special education administrators; principals; parents of children with disabilities; adults with disabilities; regional technical assistance providers; colleges and universities; other state agencies; literacy specialists; and 10 offices within the Ohio Department of Education.

State Determinations – Every year, the Office of Special Education Programs evaluates each state's implementation of IDEA requirements and issues state determinations. State determinations are based on the data submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs by states in their Annual Performance Reports and include compliance indicators as well as outcome measures for children and youth with disabilities. The Office of Special Education Programs makes the following state determinations annually:

- Meets requirements;
- Needs assistance;
- Needs intervention; or
- Needs substantial intervention.

IDEA specifically designates enforcement actions based on state determinations.¹ Such actions result from determinations other than "Meets requirements," and can include technical assistance, corrective action plans and conditions on, or the withholding of, federal IDEA funding. Ohio's state and district determinations (known as Special Education Ratings in Ohio) can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Determinations*.

¹ 34 C.F.R. 300.604.

Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation

Ohio has policies, procedures and implementation strategies that align with and support the implementation of IDEA. Ohio law requires that educational programs for students with disabilities be operated in accordance with procedures, standards and guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.² School districts, community schools, county boards of developmental disabilities, educational service centers and other educational agencies will not receive state or federal funds for special education programs unless they are operated in accordance with the provisions adopted by the State Board of Education.

Operating Standards - Ohio's special education administrative rules, the *Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities*, became effective July 1, 2014. These operating standards align with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and provide a framework to ensure that all children with disabilities receive a quality education tailored to their unique needs. Ohio's operating standards for students with disabilities can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Operating Standards and Guidance*.

Model Forms – The Office for Exceptional Children provides required and optional model forms for Ohio schools and parents to use in documenting special education processes and procedures, including an individualized education program (IEP) form, an evaluation team report (ETR) form and a procedural safeguards notice. These forms can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Required and Optional Forms*.

Stakeholder Groups – The Office for Exceptional Children and Office of Early Learning and School Readiness work closely with various stakeholders and professional organizations that are involved in, or impacted by the provision of special education and related services to Ohio's children and youth with disabilities.

The State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children was established in accordance with federal requirements to provide a broad base of input to the Department regarding policies, practices and issues related to the education of children and youth with disabilities from birth through age 21. The panel, which includes approximately 50 members representing various agencies and parents of children with disabilities, also investigates best practices and anticipates future needs for special education in Ohio. More information regarding the panel, including meeting dates, agendas and minutes, can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *SAPEC*.

The Office for Exceptional Children personnel meet regularly with, provide updates to and collaborate with various professional organizations and educational entities, including, but not limited to: the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities; Buckeye Association of School Administrators; Ohio Association of Pupil Services Administrators; Ohio School Psychologists Association; Ohio Speech-Language-Hearing Association; Ohio School Speech Pathology Educational Audiology Coalition; Ohio Occupational Therapy Association; Ohio Association of Administrators of State and Federal Education Programs; Ohio Educational Service Center Association; Ohio School Boards Association; and regional state support teams.

Interagency Agreements - The Ohio Department of Education, which includes Ohio's Head Start Collaboration Office, maintains several interagency agreements aimed at collaborative use of resources and provision of services in support of children and youth with disabilities. The Department's interagency agreements with other state agencies include:

² O.R.C. 3323.02.

- A Memorandum of Understanding with Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, Regions V and XII and the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities regarding provision of services for children with disabilities birth through age five.
 - The Ohio Department of Education's Office of Early Learning and School Readiness oversees the preschool services as part of Ohio's IDEA Part B responsibilities. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities oversees early intervention services for children from birth through age two under IDEA Part C. The Department of Education and Department of Developmental Disabilities work together on systemic transition issues, program monitoring and a coordinated service delivery system. Districts must develop written interagency agreements with early intervention programs (Part C) in their counties to ensure timely and effective transition to preschool services. In addition, districts must take part in transition conferences, consider early intervention data when determining eligibility and implement an IEP by the child's third birthday for any child found eligible for Part B services.
 - Both districts and Head Start programs must have written local agreements that address service coordination for children who are eligible for preschool special education services.

- Both the Department of Education and Department of Developmental Disabilities provide services for students and young adults with developmental disabilities. The Department of Education has an agreement with the Department of Developmental Disabilities on statewide implementation and support of Employment First.

- To ensure quality postsecondary transition, the Department of Education maintains an interagency agreement with Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities designed to:
 - Improve shared efforts to prepare students with disabilities for successful careers, community jobs and independent living;
 - Outline a collaborative framework for coordinating state and local services and resources; and
 - Provide guidance for coordinating plans, policies and procedures developed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services. The Department of Education and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities also work together to create and support public partnerships that engage Ohio's families, advocates, schools, colleges and universities, educators, employers and community organizations in improving the education, work-based learning, vocational/career technology and employment outcomes for students with disabilities.

- The Department also has an interagency agreement with the Ohio Department of Medicaid for the coordination of the Ohio Medicaid in Schools Program.

Integrated Monitoring Activities

Ohio's system of general supervision includes integrated monitoring activities to provide oversight in the implementation of IDEA requirements and in the performance on State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicators at the local level. Ohio's monitoring system is designed to:

- Determine risk for noncompliance in the areas of fiscal management, IDEA requirements and performance;
- Identify noncompliance from a variety of sources;

- Ensure correction in a timely manner;
- Verify that data reported reflect actual practice; and
- Provide technical support and assistance to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Ohio integrates effective monitoring supports and strategies across all components of the general supervision system using various data sources and methods to monitor all districts. Monitoring responsibilities are divided among three teams, the Urban Support Team, which focuses on support to Ohio's eight large urban school districts; the Monitoring Supports and Services Team, which provides support to all other school districts throughout the state; and the Preschool Special Education Team, which collaborates with the other two teams to support programs serving children in preschool. The activities of these teams are designed to ensure continuous examination of performance for compliance and results, both on-site and off-site. Monitoring protocols focus on specific priority areas selected according to State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report targets and improvement needs. Ohio's integrated monitoring activities include:

- 1) Compliance and Performance Indicator Reviews;
- 2) Strategic Improvement Self-Review; and
- 3) Selective Reviews.

All districts participate in some level of monitoring review annually. Each review method involves a different level of intensity and resources from the Office for Exceptional Children, Office of Early Learning and School Readiness, state support teams and districts.

Compliance and Performance Indicator Reviews - Indicator Reviews are conducted annually with all districts to identify and correct noncompliance with the following State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicators:

- Indicator 1 – Graduation
- Indicator 2 – Dropout
- Indicator 3 – Performance on State Assessments
- Indicator 4 – Suspension/Expulsion
- Indicator 5 – School-age Educational Environments
- Indicator 6 – Preschool Educational Environments
- Indicator 7 – Preschool Outcomes
- Indicator 8 – Facilitated Parent Involvement
- Indicator 9 – Disproportionality (all categories)
- Indicator 10 – Disproportionality (specific categories)
- Indicator 11 – Child Find (timely completion of initial evaluations)
- Indicator 12 – Early Childhood Transition
- Indicator 13 – Secondary Transition
- Indicator 14 – Postsecondary Outcomes
- Indicator 20 - Timely and Accurate Data Reporting.

The Ohio Department of Education analyzes year-end data for these indicators to identify districts with performance rates indicating noncompliance. Each district that serves students with disabilities receives an annual Special Education Profile from the Office for Exceptional Children. The profile contains a summary of the district's performance on the special education indicators, identifies areas of noncompliance and low academic performance and describes actions the district must take to improve performance and meet compliance in accordance with IDEA requirements on the identified

indicators. Districts identified as noncompliant for specific indicators must develop corrective action plans that include improvement strategies to ensure correction and must demonstrate correction as soon as possible. As part of the review process, the Office for Exceptional Children reviews student records to ensure correction of individual cases of noncompliance, reviews additional student records to ensure systemic correction and verifies that data reported in the Education Management Information System (EMIS) reflect actual practice.

Strategic Improvement Self-Review Process - The intent of the Strategic Improvement Self-Review Process is to maximize the use of resources that will result in better academic, social and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities and to implement federal and state requirements. This multi-year process is closely linked and integrated into the Ohio Improvement Process, utilizing existing leadership structures and procedures for data analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring of strategies and actions designed to address improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The state support team serves as the primary source for technical assistance and professional development during implementation of improvement strategies and activities and supporting sustained improvement. The process includes four phases:

- Phase 1: The Office for Exceptional Children conducts a record review, those results are incorporated with the data analysis completed by the district (supported by the state support team, Office for Exceptional Children and Early Learning and School Readiness staff) to identify areas of need.
- Phase 2: The district implements identified improvement strategies with the assistance of SST, Office for Exceptional Children and ELSR staff.
- Phase 3: Office for Exceptional Children and Office of Early Learning and School Readiness review the district's self-review and evidence of improvement strategies completed.
- Phase 4: Additional training and directed activities are conducted if needed.

The list of districts selected to conduct a Strategic Improvement Self-Review, along with review documents and information, are posted on the Ohio Department of Education website at www.education.ohio.gov, keyword search *Monitoring*.

Selective Reviews - The purpose of a selective review is to determine both compliance with federal and state requirements and correction and/or improvement of performance in identified areas. Office for Exceptional Children uses district data in the determination of which districts are identified for review.

A selective review is individually designed based on the determination for selection and may be conducted as an on-site and/or desk review. Review activities may include parent meetings, review of student records, staff interviews, observations of specially designed instruction and data verification, as appropriate.

Districts selected for review, along with review documents and information, are posted on the Department's website at education.ohio.gov, keyword search *Selective Reviews*.

The Urban Support Team

Nearly 200,000 preschool and school-age children are educated by the eight largest urban school districts in the state. Ohio's eight large urban districts include Akron, Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown. To provide ongoing support and oversight of the delivery

of IDEA requirements to Ohio's urban school districts, the Office for Exceptional Children created an Urban Support Team.

This team is charged with ensuring that quality instruction and appropriate services are delivered to students with disabilities in urban school settings. Support to the urban districts will include the provision of more intense, ongoing monitoring and technical assistance in the implementation of regulatory and programmatic requirements while addressing the unique needs of urban school districts in Ohio.

Fiscal Management

Ohio's system of general supervision includes mechanisms to provide oversight in the distribution and use of IDEA funds at the state and local levels. These mechanisms include:

CCIP - The Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Plan (CCIP) is a unified grants application and verification system that enables districts to look across multiple funding streams and channel resources to areas of greatest need. Each year, districts submit their CCIP application by completing the Planning Tool, which includes: the goals, strategies, action steps and district goal amounts for all grants included in the CCIP; and the Funding Application, which districts use to describe their budgets, budget details, nonpublic services and other related items. The CCIP supports districts in developing plans that align funding sources and involve parents, staff, teachers, administrators and community members in improving results for all students. More information on the CCIP is available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *CCIP*.

Special Education Maintenance of Effort - States must ensure that all districts expend in local and state funds, for the education of children with disabilities, an amount which is at least the same in total or per capita as the amount spent in the previous fiscal year. This is known as Maintenance of Effort. At the close of each year-end data process, when EMIS officially closes for the prior year, the Maintenance of Effort system pulls the EMIS financial data to test for Maintenance of Effort. If a district appears to fail Maintenance of Effort the district receives notification to check and verify the financial data. Maintenance of Effort system instructions can be found [here](#).

Maintenance of Fiscal Support - Prior to receiving an IDEA fund allocation, districts must provide evidence that they will commit to maintaining fiscal support for students with disabilities with state and local funds. Each district must enter into the CCIP the amount budgeted for special education services for the upcoming fiscal year. For the purpose of establishing eligibility for an IDEA award for the fiscal year, the district must budget, for the education of children with disabilities, at least the same total or per capita amount from the same sources for the most recent prior year that is available with either local funds only or the combination of state and local funds. Office for Exceptional Children staff review the amount detailed in the CCIP prior to final approval. The amount budgeted must be equal to or more than the prior year's state and local expenditures (or the most current year expenditure data) for an application to be approved.

Fiscal Reviews – The Office for Exceptional Children utilizes the fiscal review process to focus specifically on how districts use their special education funds to improve results for children and youth with disabilities.

Districts are selected for a fiscal review based on a risk analysis. The IDEA components that impact the district's risk include mandated coordinated early intervening services (CEIS), Maintenance of Effort status, annual special education determinations and single audit findings. Districts that fall into

a high-risk category are selected for on-site reviews. Other districts are selected for desk reviews, while all remaining districts must complete self-reviews.

On-site and desk fiscal reviews are completed by Office for Exceptional Children personnel and address the use of federal flow-through funds and/or state funds designated for students with disabilities. Fiscal reviews are completed within the Department's Compliance System and consist of the following components:

Statement of Account Review: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district's financial report matches the IDEA Part B budget submitted in the CCIP Application. The Office for Exceptional Children also verifies that the coding used for the IDEA Part B expenditures is aligned with the Uniform School Accounting System (USAS) codes.

Payroll Expenditure Review: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district charges IDEA payroll expenses to the appropriate fund, function and object codes and it documents time and effort for applicable staff. The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district's special education staff is properly licensed and trained to educate students with disabilities.

Non-Payroll Expenditure Review: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district charges IDEA non-payroll expenses to the appropriate fund, function and object codes, documents expenditures per district procurement policy (purchase orders, invoices, bids, etc.), and justifies that the service or item purchased will support the education of students with disabilities. The Office for Exceptional Children also verifies that the district has expended a proportionate share of IDEA Part B funds on behalf of students who attend nonpublic schools per the district's Nonpublic Data System Consultation Guide and has a contract or a memorandum of understanding in place for all students with disabilities placed outside of the district.

Equipment/Capital Outlay Expenditure Review: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district has in place and follows an equipment/capital outlay procurement policy. The Office for Exceptional Children also verifies that the district has expended IDEA funds on behalf of students with disabilities who attend nonpublic schools.

Child Find for Area Chartered and Non-chartered Nonpublic Schools: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district maintains records of the number of children attending chartered nonpublic schools within the boundaries of the district who were evaluated for special education services, the number of children attending area nonpublic schools determined to be students with disabilities and the total number of children who are receiving special education services and/or related services. The Office for Exceptional Children also verifies that the district holds timely consultation with area nonpublic schools by reviewing data in the Nonpublic Data System Consultation Guide.

Public Participation Verification: The Office for Exceptional Children verifies that the district provides the general public, which includes individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities, with adequate notice of a public hearing, as well as verification that the district conducted a public hearing. The public hearing is held in order to provide comment on how the district plans to spend its IDEA funds.

Redirection for Comprehensive Early Intervening Services (CEIS): The Office for Exceptional Children verifies whether the district voluntarily opted to redirect IDEA Part B funds for CEIS and/or replacement of local expenditures with Part B funds.

After completion of the review, districts are able to access resources and guidance to assist in meeting compliance system requirements within one year of the fiscal review completion date (including the recovery of funds, if warranted). All fiscal review documentation, including forms, policies, comments, technical assistance and corrective action plans are managed through the Department of Education's secure-access compliance system.

Data on Processes and Results

As part of the state's general supervision responsibilities, the Office for Exceptional Children helps ensure that districts meet the data reporting requirements of IDEA. IDEA requires that the state report state, district and building-level data about enrollment, student environment, personnel, student discipline, student assessments, reasons for students exiting special education, procedural safeguards and fiscal maintenance of effort. It also requires each state to use and display data in the state-level Annual Performance Report.

However, the use of the data that districts report is not limited to meeting the reporting requirements of IDEA. Data drives Office for Exceptional Children decision making regarding program management and improvement. The Office for Exceptional Children routinely examines multiple sources of data to track district performance and it relies on data to target technical assistance and resources.

Education Management Information System (EMIS) - Ohio collects and stores nearly all of the data required for federal reporting using its Education Management Information System (EMIS). EMIS is a statewide data collection system for individual, student-level data for preschool, primary and secondary education, as well as for personnel and fiscal data. Much like the federal data collection system, EdFacts, EMIS provides specifications that are used to define certain elements and submission requirements. Each individual district purchases or develops software tools capable of meeting those specifications. Data are collected by the district; examined, corrected where necessary, aggregated at regional Information Technology Centers; and passed on to the state EMIS databases. The state EMIS office and the Department of Education's Office of Data Quality provide data verification reports that provide districts and Information Technology Centers with feedback about the validity of their data. Districts have frequent opportunities for data correction during each reporting window. The Office for Exceptional Children's monitoring includes comparison of individual student records maintained by the district to the data reported in EMIS.

Staff, student, district/building and financial data are collected through EMIS. Demographic, student attributes, special education processes, attendance, program, course and test data are submitted to the Department at the student level. EMIS files comprise the source data for Ohio's accountability and funding systems. The EMIS Manual, reporting schedules, presentation and other information are available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *EMIS*.

To assist special education staff with supplying EMIS coordinators with appropriate EMIS data, the Department provides optional data recording tools, as described below.

Reporting Special Education Procedural Events - As district staff members develop IEPs, many find it helpful to summarize the special education information related to each IEP that will need to be reported in EMIS. To assist in summarizing and tracking the information, the Department provides an optional data collection tool. This tool is NOT a required form – it is a data collection management

tool. The form contains the fields and specific EMIS codes for data that must be submitted in EMIS for the school year. Districts may amend the tool in any way they find useful. The Office for Exceptional Children updates the form regularly to reflect changes in federal data reporting requirements or changes in EMIS. The data collection tool is available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Data Collection Tools for Students with Disabilities*.

Reporting Eye Exams - Ohio law requires students with disabilities to undergo a comprehensive eye examination within three months of receiving special education services for the first time.³ The Department must collect and report data about the implementation of this law; necessary data are collected in EMIS. The Office for Exceptional Children encourages districts to maintain a record of eye exams throughout the school year to ensure data accuracy. To assist in this effort, the office provides an optional data collection tool, available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Eye Exam Data Collection Tool*.

Ohio's Report Card - Ohio has an accountability system as required in both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Ohio law. This system is driven by state, district and building report cards that include six major components, each comprised of multiple measures:

- 1) Ohio's Achievement component consists of the Performance Index measure and performance indicators. The Performance Index quantifies how well students perform on state tests. The indicators met include the percentage of students scoring proficient and above on state tests and an aggregate measure of services and outcomes of students identified as gifted;
- 2) Ohio's Progress component looks closely at the growth all students made based on their past performances. The measures consist of Value-Added measures for gifted students, students with disabilities, lowest 20 percent subgroup and high school;
- 3) Ohio's Graduation component consists of both the federally required four-year and five-year cohort graduation rates;
- 4) Ohio's Gap Closure component compares performance to ambitious but achievable targets for each of the 10 federally recognized subgroups, including students with disabilities;
- 5) Ohio's K-3 Literacy component measures how well schools and districts are working with struggling readers in grades K-3; and
- 6) Ohio's Prepared for Success component includes several measures on how well students are prepared for college and careers. These measures award points based on college entrance exams (ACT and SAT), dual enrollment credits, industry credentials, Honors Diplomas awarded, Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate program assessments.

The Ohio Department of Education publishes an online report card for each traditional district and charter (community) school. Additional report cards are created for career-tech schools and dropout prevention and recovery schools. Report cards contain additional information about each district and school, such as federally required data about teachers, schools in school improvement status and student demographics.

The report card webpages include links to additional data. By selecting a link to "download data," users can access spreadsheets that display data utilized in the report card, as well as additional data required by law. For example, this selection leads to a special education data section that displays performance indices and Value-Added scores for the special education subgroup of each district. The

³ O.R.C. 3323.19

same spreadsheet includes links to other special education data not included in the report card. Individual district report cards are available at reportcard.education.ohio.gov.

Special Education Profiles - Each district that serves students with disabilities receives an annual Special Education Profile in the fall of each school year. This tool displays charts and graphs of the district's longitudinal performance on the Annual Performance Report indicators and identifies targets met and not met, areas of noncompliance and specific actions the district must take to improve performance and meet compliance in accordance with IDEA requirements. Beginning with the 2015-2016 school year data, links to a public version of these profiles will be included in the special education section of the Download Data files described above.

Public Reporting - After submission of the Annual Performance Report each year, states must report to the public on: 1) The state's progress and/or slippage in meeting the measurable and rigorous targets found in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report; and 2) The performance of each district located in the state on a subset of targets in the State Performance Plan. The Office for Exceptional Children annually posts a report displaying the performance of each district on a subset of State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicators. These reports are available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *District-Level Performance Data*.

Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions

Supporting improvement and ensuring correction through incentives and sanctions are critical components of Ohio's general supervision system. The enforcement of regulations, policies and procedures is required by IDEA and state law. State guidelines and directives also steer the technical assistance provided to ensure the correction of noncompliance and, ultimately, to meet state and local targets.

District Special Education Ratings - Each district that serves students with disabilities receives an annual Special Education Rating at the end of each school year. Parallel to the determinations that the Office of Special Education Program annually makes for states, states must use the same four categories to make annual determinations of each district's implementation of IDEA requirements. District determinations (known as Special Education Ratings in Ohio) evaluate the performance of each district against a subset of State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicator targets.

IDEA specifically designates the enforcement actions that states must apply after a district receives a determination (rating) of "Needs assistance" for two consecutive years; "Needs intervention" for three or more consecutive years; or immediately when a district receives a determination (rating) of "Needs substantial intervention."⁴ Based on these regulations, the table below displays the enforcement actions for determinations (ratings) other than "Meets requirements."

Figure 3: Determinations (Ratings) Enforcement Actions

Category	Enforcement Actions
Needs Assistance (Year 1)	Inform districts of technical assistance available from state support teams and other resources.

⁴ 34 C.F.R. 300.600(a).

Needs Assistance (Year 2)	Require training by state support teams with other districts in Needs Assistance – Year 2.
Needs Intervention	Require individualized training and technical assistance from state support teams specific to identified areas.
Needs Substantial Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withhold or redirect, in whole or in part, any Part B funds; • Require completion of specific corrective actions before release of funds; and • Require intensive Ohio Department of Education and state support team support.

Information and resources related to district determinations (ratings) can be accessed at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Special Education Ratings*.

Sanctions - As a means of ensuring timely correction of noncompliance, the Office for Exceptional Children has developed a system of progressive sanctions for districts that do not complete corrective activities within the required timelines. This policy communicates how and when sanctions can be imposed and outlines the Department’s authority to impose these sanctions.

Districts identified as noncompliant receive written notification from the Office for Exceptional Children describing the noncompliance and the requirement to create and implement corrective actions, including due dates for completion, as well as the method for documenting the completion of these actions.

Components of corrective action plans may include any of the following:

- Review of educational records;
- Student-specific corrective actions;
- Professional development and technical assistance;
- Fiscal records review and implementation or correction of fiscal processes to align with federal requirements; and/or
- Recovery of funds or redirection of funds by the Department to address misappropriation of either state or federal funds.

When a school district or other provider does not complete the required corrective activities within the established timeline as determined by the Office for Exceptional Children, the Department will take the following steps:

- 1) The director of the Office for Exceptional Children will send the district a notification documenting its failure to meet the required deadline. The notification will include a revised date for completing the remaining items and will indicate whether specific applicable funds (state and/or federal) will be redirected, in a manner determined by the Office for Exceptional Children as necessary, if the revised dates are not met. Applicable funds include:
 - a. IDEA Part-B funds (pre-K and school-age); and
 - b. State-weighted special education funds (GRF foundation funds).
- 2) If the district fails to meet the revised deadline, it will receive notification by mail and through the CCIP from the director of the Office for Exceptional Children that will:
 - a. Indicate which funds (state and/or federal) will be redirected, as well as steps the district must take to secure the release/control of these funds;
 - b. Indicate that due to continued noncompliance, the Department is moving to withhold, redirect or recover additional funds; and

- c. Inform the district of its opportunity for an Ohio Revised Code Chapter 119 Hearing.

Effective Dispute Resolution

The Office for Exceptional Children ensures timely and effective resolution of disputes related to IDEA requirements through a variety of means, including facilitation, mediation, the complaint resolution process and due process hearings. In addition, the office tracks the issues identified during dispute resolution to determine whether patterns or trends exist and to prioritize guidance and technical assistance activities.

Mediation - Mediation is a voluntary process for resolving disputes between two parties at no cost to the parents or the district. For mediation to occur, both sides must agree to mediate. The process involves a trained, neutral third party — the mediator — who helps the parties communicate with each other about their concerns in an effort to reach a mutually agreeable solution. A party does not have to file a formal written complaint or request for a due process hearing to utilize mediation. Parents and districts do not need to be involved in a pending complaint or due process request to engage in mediation. To keep parents and districts informed about mediation and other alternative dispute resolution options, the Office for Exceptional Children performs the following:

- Provides information on mediation available through the Department’s website and through a toll-free telephone number;
- Contacts parents directly to provide information on mediation when the parent files either a formal written complaint or a request for a due process hearing or when parents inquire about dispute resolution; and
- Collaborates with the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Ohio Legal Rights Services, Ohio Protection and Advocacy Association, Child Advocacy Center of Ohio, Buckeye Association of School Administrators and the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution to disseminate information on mediation to a wide range of stakeholders, including district staff, educational service centers, regional state support teams and parents.

Facilitation – The Office for Exceptional Children also manages a facilitation process that takes place in a team meeting, such as an IEP team meeting, evaluation planning meeting or an evaluation team meeting at no cost to the parents or the district. Facilitation may be used at any time the team cannot reach consensus concerning a student’s evaluation results and eligibility for special education or the IEP. A party does not have to file a formal written complaint or request for a due process hearing to utilize facilitation.

While facilitation is not required by statute, it has been adopted by the Office for Exceptional Children as an alternative to the complaint resolution process or due process hearing. The facilitator is a neutral third party who is not a member of the student’s IEP/ETR team and does not make any decisions for the team. The facilitator assists the team in keeping the focus on the student and models effective methods of communication and listening with the goal of improved services for the student and more effective communication among team members in the future.

The Office for Exceptional Children conducts required training for hearing officers, mediators and facilitators on IDEA and state requirements and dispute resolution procedures. The Office for Exceptional Children also evaluates the dispute resolution options on an ongoing basis and makes revisions to these processes based on evaluation data and feedback from participants, as appropriate. More information on mediation and facilitation is available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Dispute Resolution*.

Complaints Resolution Process – The Office for Exceptional Children and the Office for Early Learning and School Readiness encourage parents and family members, as well as third-party individuals, to work with schools to resolve differences related to special education. However, situations may arise where parents or third-party individuals allege that a district has not complied with a federal or state special education requirement. The Office for Exceptional Children implements a complaint resolution process, in accordance with IDEA, to allow for issues to be resolved in a timely manner. During the complaint resolution process, if a district is found in noncompliance of federal or state special education requirements, a letter of findings is issued addressing the noncompliance and any required corrective action(s) to be taken by the district, as appropriate. The Office for Exceptional Children’s complaint resolution process requires that all corrective actions be implemented within one year. The complaint file remains open until the corrective action is completed, while the Office for Exceptional Children monitors corrective action plans to ensure compliance with timelines. If the corrective action is not completed, the district may be subject to sanctions as outlined above. In general, the complaint resolution process allows for the prompt resolution of complaints at no cost to either the complainant or the district and may be considered less adversarial than a due process hearing.

Due Process Hearings – The Office for Exceptional Children is responsible for establishing procedures for due process hearing requests, which provide an avenue for a parent or district to address special education issues related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement or provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child with a disability. Within 15 days of receiving notice of the parent’s due process request, and prior to the initiation of a due process hearing, the district must convene a resolution meeting with the parent and the relevant members of the IEP team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the request. The purpose of this resolution meeting is for the parent of the child to discuss the due process request, so that the district has the opportunity to resolve the issue that is the basis of the filing. Upon mutual agreement between the parent and the district, the Office for Exceptional Children will assign a facilitator for the resolution session to assist both parties in clearly communicating their concerns and how they are willing to address those concerns. If a resolution to the dispute is not reached at the resolution session, the parties still have until the end of the resolution period (30 days total) to resolve the dispute. If the parties do not reach a resolution in that period of time, the due process request proceeds with a hearing in front of an impartial hearing officer who will take testimony from both parties, review evidence and render a written decision. More information on complaints and due process hearings is available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Dispute Resolution*.

Tracking Issues Over Time – The Office for Exceptional Children reviews and analyzes dispute resolution data to identify trends and patterns over time and to inform guidance and technical assistance efforts. These data are shared with stakeholders, including the State Advisory Panel for Exceptional Children, district personnel, parents, regional state support teams and related service organizations at conferences, meetings and other training opportunities.

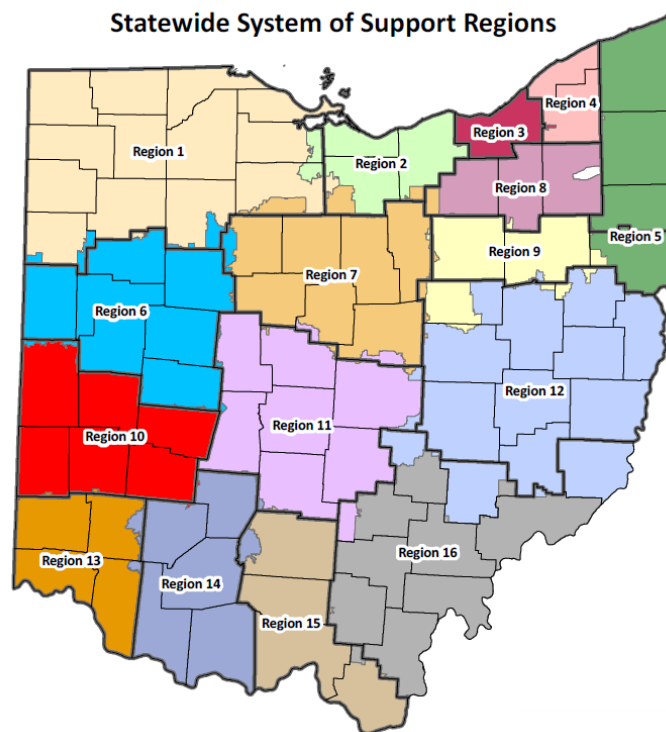
The Office for Exceptional Children maintains a public dispute resolution database that contains letters of findings corresponding to specific complaints and information regarding mediation and facilitation. The office also maintains a public due process decision database for due process hearing decisions. The searchable database currently provides a brief description of each decision and offers the user the option to either view the full decision online or print the information. These databases are available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *Complaint and Due Process Databases*.

Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Learning

Ohio provides technical assistance that is designed to improve services and results for students with disabilities. Through this assistance, the Department uses a variety of strategies, at varying levels of intensity, to build capacity throughout the state.

Ohio's State System of Support – Ohio House Bill 115 established the creation of a coordinated, integrated and aligned regional system to support state and school district efforts to improve school effectiveness and student achievement. The Department of Education awards 16 contracts to educational service centers designated as fiscal agents for the state support teams within their geographic regions. The 16 state support teams, along with the Department, comprise Ohio's State System of Support.

Figure 4: Ohio's State Support Teams



The goal of the State System of Support is to build the capacity of local and related education agencies to engage in systemic and sustainable improvement that impacts educational outcomes for students. State support teams are integral to implementing and achieving this goal. By providing high-quality technical assistance and professional learning, state support teams support districts in developing the capacity to fully implement research-based processes and evidence-based educational practices that result in data-based decisions, learning across all levels of the system and sustained implementation. Through collaboration within and across regions, state support teams access national, state, regional and local agencies and resources to support districts and families.

The Department determines the scope of work for the state support teams, as outlined in an annual performance agreement. State support teams are responsible for the regional delivery of training and support to districts related to special education, school improvement and early learning and school readiness. The performance agreement details specific deliverables to guide state support teams' work with local districts, organized by national and state priority areas (i.e., academic achievement of students with disabilities). State support teams provide tiered levels of technical assistance and

professional learning in these areas, based largely on the district's report card, special education profile and special education determination (rating). State support teams use multiple years of data to identify patterns of strengths and weaknesses within each district and across districts located in their regions. State support teams also provide information and services to parents and families of children with disabilities and those at risk of being identified with disabilities.

In some cases, the Department designates that state support team personnel provide support in priority areas. Areas of priority include Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports as part of a multi-tiered system of support, early language and literacy professional learning and implementation for preschool through grade three, and secondary transition/workforce development. They also support districts in meeting requirements and implementing best practices, aligning efforts statewide in order to improve results for students with disabilities and other underperforming students, including third grade reading performance, graduation rates and post-school outcomes.

At each state support team, consultants provide technical assistance and professional learning to support identified regional issues related to the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report results indicator data such as least restrictive environment and improving reading and mathematics performance of children with disabilities. State support teams also provide technical assistance and professional learning related to parent and community engagement, support and services for students with autism, sensory disabilities and low-incidence disabilities and assistive technology. State support teams are an integral part of the State System of Support in the delivery of technical assistance and professional learning as it relates to both regulatory requirements and improved outcomes for students.

More information on the state support teams, including links to individual state support team websites, is available at education.ohio.gov, keyword search: *State Support Teams*.

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence – With funding from the Department and other sources, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence serves families, educators and professionals working with students with autism and low-incidence disabilities, including autism spectrum disorders, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairments, other health impairments and traumatic brain injuries. The new statewide Center for Sensory Disabilities was recently awarded to the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence to unify existing programs for students with deafness/hard of hearing, blind/visual impairment and print disabilities and expand them to create a collaborative comprehensive network of regional resources that positively impact the educational achievement of students with sensory disabilities. Through the center, the Office for Exceptional Children is working to build state and system-wide capacity to improve outcomes through leadership, training and professional development, technical assistance, collaboration and technology. The Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence also provides assistive technology services, including resources, professional development and loans of specific devices. More information is available at ocali.org.

Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities – As Ohio's Parent Training and Information Center, the Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities supports parents and families of children with disabilities and works to promote support for the professionals who serve them. The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities has both centralized and regional consultants throughout Ohio, providing parent support, resources and learning activities. More information is available at ocecd.org.

Parent Mentors – Across Ohio, a network of more than 100 parent mentors serve more than 16,000 parents and families of children with disabilities and those at risk. Parent mentors are parents of children with disabilities who work within school districts to provide families and school personnel with

information, resources and support to build collaborative partnerships between families and schools. The details of the parent mentor role vary by location based on the needs of the district and parents. Parent mentors serve as resources for parents on a variety of topics related to special education, including the rights and services afforded to them by state and federal law, as well as networks and other resources available in their communities. They work as liaisons between families and district personnel to encourage productive communication that results in effective programs for children with disabilities.

Seminars, trainings, conferences – The Office for Exceptional Children offers various in-person and web-based seminars, trainings and conferences throughout the state targeted to school district administrators, teachers, related service providers, college/university faculty representing teacher preparation programs and parents of children with disabilities.