

Disproportionality in Alaska

DEED conducts an **annual analysis** of data¹ to determine **disproportionality by race ethnicity** in the following areas:

- **Identification** of students for special education and related services;
- Identification of students in specific **disability categories**;
- **Placement** of students with disabilities in education settings; and
- **Discipline** of students with disabilities.

No Disproportionality
 $RR^2 < 2.0$

- DEED will provide each district with its disproportionality annually with notification of disproportionality or risk as appropriate.
- No review or action is required, but recommendations and resources are provided.

At Risk for Disproportionality
 $2.0 \leq RR < 2.5$

Disproportionality
 $RR \geq 2.5$

- DEED will notify each district and provide the data indicating disproportionality.
- The district is required to complete a self assessment (or selections from a self assessment) to determine whether the disproportionality is the result of inappropriate identification or noncompliant policies, procedures or practices.
- As needed, DEED conducts follow-up reviews to verify the information provided in the self assessment and review additional data.
- The district is required to correct any noncompliance identified during the self assessment and follow-up reviews.
- DEED considers these data and any results of subsequent reviews when making local determinations.
- DEED provides intensive TA to districts, upon request, to assist in improving policies, procedures and practices that may be resulting in disproportionality.

At Risk for Significant Disproportionality
 $RR \geq 3.5$

- In addition to all actions listed above for disproportionality:
 - The district is required to complete additional sections of a self assessment to determine the root cause of the disproportionality and develop an action plan for disproportionality.
 - DEED will provide intensive TA to each district.

Significant Disproportionality
 $RR \geq 3.5$ for three consecutive years

- In addition to all actions listed above for disproportionality and at risk for significant disproportionality:
 - The district will be required to use 15% of its Part B grant award for coordinated early intervening services for students who are not yet identified as special education students.
 - The district will report on the students who receive services and track them for two years.
 - DEED will conduct an onsite compliance review of policies, procedures and practices and require the LEA to report publicly on any required revisions.

1 The data used for these calculations are data required under section 618 of IDEA. For discipline calculations, rates of suspensions and expulsions greater than 10 days are used.

2 RR refers to the risk ratio calculation that DEED has chosen to use to calculate disproportionality. The equation used for the risk ratio is:

$$\text{risk ratio} = \frac{\text{risk for racial/ethnic group}}{\text{risk for all other students}}$$

Guide for Understanding Your Disproportionality Report

As required by IDEA, Alaska DEED conducted its analysis of 2021-2022 data to identify disproportionality in identification and LRE and 2020-2021 data for discipline. The results for your district are included in the attached table. Please refer to the "Disproportionality in Alaska" enclosure for Alaska's definitions of disproportionality as well as the actions required for determinations of disproportionality and significant disproportionality.

Alaska DEED determines disproportionality using a risk ratio methodology. A risk ratio, when applied to a category of students in special education from a specific racial/ethnic group, answers the question, "What is a specific racial/ethnic group's risk of receiving special education and related services compared to the risk for all other students?" So, if the risk ratio for Hispanic students is 3.0, that means that Hispanic students are three times as likely to be identified for special education. The equation used for the risk ratio is:

$$\text{risk ratio} = \frac{\text{risk for racial/ethnic group for special education}}{\text{risk for all other students for special education}}$$

If you would like to know more about how to calculate risk, risk ratio and the often necessary alternate risk, we recommend reviewing "Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education" which can be found at the following link: <http://ideadata.org/tools-products/methods-for-assessing-raciaethnic-disproportionality-in-special-education---a-technical-assistance-guide-revised.html>. This is an extensive paper, but if you focus on chapters 1-5, you will gain a good understanding of what disproportionality is and what the process is for calculating both risk and the risk ratio which is the measurement that Alaska DEED has chosen to use to measure disproportionality.

The table that follows reports the risk and risk ratio for identification, placement, and discipline for each racial ethnic category for your district. Areas where your district:

- is at risk for disproportionality are highlighted in blue;
- has disproportionality are highlighted in yellow;
- is at risk for significant disproportionality are highlighted in orange and
- has significant disproportionality are highlighted in red.

If your district has disproportionality or significant disproportionality, this letter contains instructions for next steps your district must take. Technical assistance is available from Alaska DEED upon request.

Here are some notes that will help you understand your report:

- There will be no risk or risk Ratio reported if 0 students were in SPED or 0 students were enrolled (includes gen. ed.) in the analyzed group.
- NA – reported in Risk Ratio if fewer than 10 students were enrolled in the district in the group being analyzed. A small denominator in the Risk calculation results in a Risk Ratio that is statistically unreliable.
- ** These data were not included in the calculations reported in Alaska DEED's APR to meet federal requirements because there were fewer than 10 students with IEPs in the racial/ethnic group of interest or fewer than 10 students with IEPs in the comparison group (all other race/ethnic groups). However, DEED may still require the district to conduct additional analyses if it is concerned about the disproportionality.

Additional important note:

The asterisk (*) located in the 'Number of Incidents of Suspension or Expulsion > 10 Days' area of analysis, indicates that this analysis of data is not the same as the review of suspension and expulsion rates to determine a significant discrepancy from state rates, required by Indicator 4 of the SPP and APR.

Disproportionality Resources

Background: States are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to examine data to determine whether students of certain races and ethnicities are more likely to be: identified for special education; placed in specific disability categories; placed in more restrictive settings; and disciplined. While Congress included disproportionality in IDEA 1997, IDEA 2004 strengthened the requirements for states to examine data, added a reporting mechanism (the SPP and APR), and included sanctions for significant disproportionality. Federal resources on Disproportionality and Equity are available at <https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/federal-resources-stakeholders/disproportionality-and-equity>.

If your district is at risk for or has disproportionality, there are many resources available to assist you and your schools in analyzing data to determine root causes of and address disproportionality in addition to those federal resources.

- **Response to Intervention and the Disproportionate Representation of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students in Special Education**
<http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/diversity/disproportionaterepresentation>