Using the Report of District Data for B-4

Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
April 2024

Indicator Definitions

Indicator B-4A: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion

For this results indicator, a district is considered to have a significant discrepancy if 2.6[1] percent or more of all students with an individualized education program (IEPs) were suspended or expelled out-of-school for more than ten cumulative days during the school year. Districts with fewer than five students with an IEP suspended or expelled for more than ten days are exempt from these calculations.

Indicator B-4B: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion by Race/Ethnicity

This compliance indicator focuses on significant discrepancies in the rates of suspension and expulsion of students with an IEP in six racial/ethnic groups. The percentage of students with an IEP suspended or expelled out-of-school for more than ten days is calculated for each racial/ethnic group for each member district. Member districts with percentages greater than or equal to 2.6[1] percent for any racial/ethnic group are identified as having a significant discrepancy. More than one racial/ethnic group may be identified.

Member districts are exempt from significant discrepancy calculations in the following situations:

- The member district has fewer than 30 students with an IEP.

- A racial/ethnic group has fewer than ten students with an IEP (many member districts will not have results for all six racial/ethnic groups).

- A racial/ethnic group has fewer than five students with an IEP suspended or expelled for more than ten days.

_____

[1] Beginning SY 2022-23 (e.g., February 2024 Monitoring, B-4 Member District Data Reports), the updated monitoring threshold is <2.6%. Due to the data lag in reporting, the data reported in the May 2024 Strand Report and Public Reporting will reflect <5.0% since that reporting is based on SY 2021-22.

Purpose of the Report

In order to identify strengths and challenges, allocate resources effectively, and ensure success for all students, educators need to be able to make data-driven decisions. Effectively using data will illuminate initiatives, interventions, strategies, and practices that are working, and those that need to be adjusted.

The purpose of providing member district-level discipline data to the intermediate school district (ISD) is to make ISDs aware of their member districts' rates of suspension and expulsion as it relates to indicators B-4A and B-4B. When reviewing the data, emphasis should be placed on member districts that have not met the state's targets and those that are close to not meeting the targets. ISD personnel, along with member district personnel, should have ongoing meetings throughout the school year to discuss, review, and analyze data as well as implement needed changes to improve discipline for all students at the member district. The member district will need to provide additional data from their student information system where discipline data is stored.

Next Steps

Suspension is a widely used disciplinary technique in both general and special education, but research has raised serious questions about its effects. The frequent use of suspension has many undesirable and unintended outcomes including a less healthy school environment, lower academic achievement, higher levels of disruptive or antisocial behavior, and higher dropout rates. To prevent these undesirable outcomes, member districts should consider the following questions when analyzing their data.

- Are incidents disproportionately occurring at specific times or in specific locations?
- Are some students disproportionately disciplined based on demographic characteristics?
- Are some students disproportionately represented in certain types of referrals?
- Are some students disciplined more harshly than other students for the same infractions?
- Are some staff disproportionately referring all students or groups of students for discipline?
- Are some schools disproportionately disciplining all students or groups of students?

- Are interventions having a positive effect on the frequency of disciplinary referrals for all students? For certain groups of students?

- What interventions are currently used in the member district/school buildings?

- What types of training do the member district/school buildings need? Will it be ongoing? How will it be sustained?

- What universal and targeted interventions for disruptive behavior are used?

- Are disciplinary policies and practices proactive or reactive?

- Is there a need to revise/develop procedures that support alternatives to suspension?

The ISD should consider assisting member districts in establishing a district discipline team to monitor discipline data, recommend interventions, and ensure accountability at the member district and building levels.

Suggested discipline team members include the superintendent, director of special education, ISD personnel, building principals, assistant principals, dean of students, data personnel, social workers, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, and board members.

The Discipline Toolkit and its resources are available on the Catamaran Technical Assistance Website.

For questions, please contact Charles Thomas at thomasc29@michigan.gov.[1]