Part B Child Count & Ed Environments Data Notes

2014-15 Reporting Year

Alabama

The data note response is for the Year-to-Year change by disability (3-5 and 6-21), LRE (3-5 and 6-21), and LEP (3-5 and 6-21) for the 2014-2015 school year.

Although the year-to-year disability, LRE, and LEP data have been examined by LEA, there are no clear state initiatives, rule changes, or data collection changes that could yield a plausible explanation for the large year-to-year changes. As a result, the state is not able to provide a clear reason for the year-to-year changes.

Alaska

The year-to-year comparison of 2013-14 and 2014-15 data identified significant changes in the count of school age students who were served in the regular classroom setting.

Students served in the regular classroom 80% or more of the day increased 30% from 9536 to 12386.

Students served in the regular classroom between 79% and 40% of the day decreased 48% from 4095 to 2141.

Students served in the regular classroom less than 40% of the day decreased 45% from 1751 to 967.

There was one primary driver behind all three of these changes. One of our “big 5” districts conducted focused training on LRE with all their special education teachers. They especially stressed that LRE is identified by the location of the student, not the activities taught or the level of assistance needed by the student. This resulted in a large shift of students being reported in the 80% of the day LRE.

The year-to-year comparison of 2013-14 and 2014-15 data identified significant changes in the count of early childhood students who were served in two different settings.

Students served at home decreased 36% from 58 to 37.

Students who attend a general education early childhood program < 10 hours per week and receive the majority of their special education and related service in that setting decreased 39% from 74 to 45.

Both of these decreases are being driven by three of our “big five” districts. Two of these districts conducted extensive districtwide training on how to assign EC LREs in 2014-15. A third district is in year two of a new data system coupled with extensive training on EC LREs.

Arizona

Reporting year 2014-2015, 3-5 Specific Learning Disability & Visual Impairment

The decrease can likely be attributed to increased fidelity in screening and evaluation in these areas, resulting from intensive professional development and technical assistance to strengthen early childhood education provided statewide.

Arkansas
In 2014/15, Arkansas has seen an increase in the number of children ages 3-5 identified as having multiple disabilities. Part of the reason for seeing an increase is ongoing training on the disability identification. The 619 Coordinator has conducted trainings across the state on the new EDR form, as part of the training she has focused on the eligibility criteria for each disability category.

In 2014/15, the number of children attending a regular preschool less than 10 hours a week and receive services in the preschool setting dropped significantly. Besides the ongoing training on how to classify children in the EC environments, the amount of time a child is in attendance at a regular preschool is determined by parents/guardians.

In 2014/15, the number of children receiving services in a special education classroom declined by 46%. Part of this shift is a change of individual programs structure as well as the ongoing push to integrate children in the regular preschool setting.

**Colorado**

The following notes are for the comparison between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

In the fall of 2011, Colorado passed new rules for eligibility determinations which included the stipulation to align with IDEA defined disability categories. These changes will be fully implemented by July 1, 2016. Prior to this change, the following federal categories were reported under a category of Physical Disability: Other Health Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Autism, and Traumatic Brain Injury. With the migration to categories that align with the federal reporting categories, changes in numbers are expected in the OHI and OI reporting. In addition, there may be subsequent changes/increases in the categories of autism and TBI which had previously been included in the Physical Disability category.

This decrease in the number of children attending a regular early childhood program less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in some other location might be because Colorado has been promoting provision of special education program within a regular-ed setting.

This decrease in children attending a regular early childhood program less than 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of hours of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program might be because Colorado has been promoting equivalent amount of regular-ed instruction for children on IEPs as those without. Typical amount offered for children without IEP exceeds 10 hours.

The state found that Colorado’s largest LEA, Denver Public Schools, was solely accountable for this significant decrease in the number of children attending a special education program in a separate school. Denver was accountable for 34 count decrease out of the state total of 38 count decrease. According to the preschool specialist at Denver, Denver has been putting a lot of effort in decreasing the number of children attending separate schools; their preschool program increased opportunities for students to be included in the general education setting. They are sending more students to their home schools, and consequently, opportunities for students to be included in the general education setting have grown tremendously.
The LEAs in the Denver metro area are accountable for the increase of children in age 3-5 who are identified as LEPs. Since Colorado also sees the same trend of increase among the school age students, one of the reasons for the increase should be the general steady increase in the immigrant population especially in the Denver metro area. The other reason is that, as the number of dual-language learners increases in preschools and kindergartens, the LEAs are putting more effort in accurately recording students’ language status. The Denver-metro LEAs are holding more professional development for accurate recording of the dual-language learners, which seems to have resulted in the count increase.

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Colorado’s largest LEA, Denver Public Schools, mainly contributed to the increase in the count of students who are parentally placed in private schools. According to them, this year, the private school team at the Denver Public School Special Education Assessment Services (SEAS) focused on providing outreach to private schools in order to increase customer service and knowledge of special education processes and procedures. Due to the team’s outreach at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year, more private schools contacted the SEAS private school team to discuss student needs. The private school team has provided training on root-cause analysis, data collection, interventions, and progress monitoring to the private schools. These trainings have increased the private school staffs’ knowledge of student needs and determining appropriate referrals for special education evaluations. With the increase in outreach and trainings by the SEAS private school team, this has led to more private schools making appropriate referrals for special education evaluations in Denver.

Connecticut

Separate Class/Separate Schools: The increase in the number of children attending these early childhood settings from 2013-14 to 2014-15 is a direct result of change in Connecticut State Board of Education policy. This policy required public preschool programs to apply for separate codes for purposes of state education reporting. Prior to this requirement, a limited number of codes existed for these programs, and students attending such programs were often reported under the public school code they would otherwise be attending. Considering the large number of new codes assigned for 2014-15 and comparing this number to known preschool practices across the state, there is some question about the appropriateness of code requests by LEAs. Connecticut will conduct a review to assess appropriateness of request and assignment of these new codes.
**Correctional Facilities:** The number and percent of students ages 6-21 in correctional facilities has steadily declined since the implementation of the *Raise the Age* legislation effective 2009. This legislation raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 18. A decline has also been seen in Connecticut’s adult correctional facilities population during this time period. A report released by Connecticut shows the state’s prison population reached a 16-year low at the end of 2014. (*OPM/CIPPD Monthly Indicators* Reports).

**Residential Facilities:** While the number and percent of students ages 6-21 receiving education and living in residential facilities has consistently been declining, the substantially larger decrease seen from 2013-14 to 2014-15 is a direct result of the logic Connecticut has employed to determine a student’s educational environment. Prior to 2014-15, Connecticut was considering both group homes and public or private residential schools as residential facilities. Beginning in 2014-15, after review of the federal definition, Connecticut is now reporting only students who received education programs and lived in public or private residential facilities during the school week. Students living in public or private residential facilities but educated in public schools are no longer reported in the residential category.

**Separate Schools:** The increase in the number and percent of students ages 6-21 in separate schools seen from 2013-14 to 2014-15 is a direct result of change in Connecticut State Board of Education policy. This policy required public alternative schools and programs to apply for separate codes for purposes of state education reporting. Prior to this requirement, a limited number of codes existed for these alternative schools and programs, and students attending such programs were often reported under the public school code they would otherwise be attending. With this new requirement, Connecticut is able to better determine educational environment for students attending these alternative schools and programs and the data reported for 2014-15 reflect this more precise data collection policy.

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**District of Columbia**

This data note is to provide an explanation on the year-to-year changes for the Child Count and Educational Environments data collection during years 13-14 and 14-15. For the SY13-14 collection, the District of Columbia made changes to the method in which it collected Educational Environment data. Due to this change, there was a slight decrease in educational environments. For SY14-15, the state collected educational environment data in the same manner but, made adjustments to how LEAs were able to provide corrections. This allowed the numbers to return to similar rates that it had before SY13-14.

**Indiana**

Indiana’s Hispanic population increased 5,379 students from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Of that growth, 286 students were referred, evaluated, determined to be eligible and placed in special education programs during 2014-15.

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**Massachusetts**
MA reported five students above the age of nine in the developmental delay category. After discussion with each district that submitted students in this category above the age of nine, exceptions to our validation rules were granted, allowing these submissions. Districts were in the process of re-evaluation. It should be noted that these types of exceptions are granted on a case by case basis. In practice, MA expects no district to report students in the developmental delay category above the age of nine.

Missouri

School year referenced is 2014-15. The SLD category for ages 3-5 increased by 26 children from 2013-14 to 2014-15 due to small increases across a number of school districts.

Montana

The data for Montana’s C089 Edfacts file shows an increase in the number of children aged 3-5 who are identified as having Autism when comparing SY2013-14 to SY2014-15. This is due to the continuing education of evaluators to correctly identify autism in children in this age group, as well as an overall increase in numbers in that age group. There is not a need to resubmit the 009 file or to amend the SSS-IDEA survey, as both are correct.

New Jersey

With respect to the 089 file submitted for 2014-15 school year, as well as for all prior years, all students with an IEP that are ages 3 and 4 are classified as the state classification of Preschool Disabled, the federally defined equivalent of developmentally delayed.

Under N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5, Determination of eligibility for special education and related services, the definition of “Preschool child with a disability” corresponds to preschool handicapped and means a child between the ages of three and five experiencing developmental delay, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the areas and requires special education and related services.

For this reason, 0 counts have not been included for students ages 3 and 4 in disability categories other than Developmental Delay. Such eligibility categories just do not apply.

New Mexico

The state attributed the year to year increase in students diagnosed with autism in New Mexico to coinciding with the growing number of students diagnosed with Autism throughout the United States.

The state attributed the decrease in students in setting REC10YOTHLOC to: a concurrent decrease in the number of children with disabilities (aged 3 – 5) in the state and an increase in the number of students with disabilities (aged 3 – 5) attending a special education program (NOT is any regular early childhood program) specifically, a separate special education class. Historical data supports these findings.
Oregon

In Oregon, for the 2014-15 school year, two programs changed from serving all students to only students who are IDEA eligible.

In Oregon, school age 5 year olds must be cross walked to Early Childhood coding. A couple of large LEAs, during the 2014-15 data collection, coded their records that populate REC09OTHLOC backwards. Data has been corrected and resubmitted.

Oregon has a seamless system for children transitioning from IDEA Part C services to IDEA Part B services. A new program contractor has been having speech services provided at the service provider location resulting in the count/percent difference for the service provider location category.

South Carolina

This data note is in response to the OSEP Year-to-Year Comparisons for the Child Count and Educational Environment 618 Data Submissions for the 2014-2015 school year. The SC Department of Education Office of Special Education Services (OSES) asked for input from the local districts regarding each of the following categories where a data note was requested. Below were the general reasons given for the differences. Our state’s EdFacts team also verified that the Child Count and Educational Environments data submissions were accurate and no data resubmission will be needed.

Age 6-21

- **SS** – Separate School LRE (Decrease)
  - Schools considering less restrictive short term placements through the use of alternative programs at the middle and high school levels
  - Administrative changes at the school level regarding placement
  - Normal attrition (students exiting for various reasons, changes of LRE placement)

- **HH** – Homebound/Hospital LRE (Increase)
  - A district change in data coding from medical homebound to residential homebound
  - A more accurate reflection of the student’s LRE regarding the homebound/hospital LRE after additional monitoring by the LEA

Age 3-5

- **EMN** – Disability Category – Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Decrease)
  - Normal attrition (students exiting the school district, students entering the 6-21 school program)

- **H** – In Neither a Regular Early Childhood Program Nor a Special Education Program – Home LRE (Decrease)
  - Student population decreases along with increases in students being served in other LRE settings that were school-based, in day care, or in Head Start
    - Normal attrition (students transitioning to the regular school program)

- **SS** – In Special Education Program Only – Separate School (Decrease)
  - Change in school locations for the 2014-2015 school year
  - Normal attrition (students exiting, changes of LRE placement, referral and admission year-to-year fluctuations)

- **REC09YSVCS** – In Regular Education less than 10 hours per week – EC Program LRE (Increase)
  - The increase was attributed to a small group service delivery model redesign (focused on communication and social-emotional skill development) that allowed for specialized instruction to be provided in 4K classrooms with support from a special education
teacher. These students, many who were previously served in more restrictive environments, are now spending more time in the general education classroom.

- SPL – In Neither Regular Education or Special Education – Service Provider or Other Location (Decrease)
  - A decrease in the overall number of students in certain districts
  - Providing additional clarification to assist teachers in indicating the correct LRE
  - The addition of K4 classrooms in some of the elementary schools
  - A significant increase in the number of students being served in the regular education classroom

**Tennessee**

There are several areas that Tennessee had highlighted to address as per the 20/20 threshold detailed in the YTY Comparison report provided on OMB MAX. The first flagged area pertains to EdFacts file C002. There was a decrease in the count of students served in the environment of “correctional facility” for the 2014-15 school year as compared to the 2013-14 school year. The State believes this decrease can be attributed to the increase in students being placed in residential facilities and separate schools instead of automatically being relegated to actual correctional facilities.

The remaining flagged areas pertain to EdFacts file C089. In the disability categories section there was a decrease in the number of student identified intellectually disabled (MR) and other health impaired (OHI). In Tennessee we are seeing an increase in the number of student identified with Autism or developmentally delay (DD). These are students that may have historically been identified in the MR or OHI disability categories. The increase in medical diagnosis of Autism has led to an increased identification of it in LEAs and the increase in students identified in the DD disability category might be attributed to a hesitation to automatically place students in the MR category at such a young age.

There is a notable change in many of the educational environment categories for students ages 3-5. This is due to a change in environment collection processes for those students receiving early childhood services. Historically Tennessee has had environment data quite disparate from national averages due to a weak environment collection process. In the 2014-15 school year, Tennessee released a new flowchart process in the statewide IEP data management system to provide more intuitive support to districts as they make environment/placement decisions. The revised process yielded environment figures more in keeping with the figures expected and in line with the national averages. In the case of environment categories REC09YOTHLOC and REC09SVCS, the increase can be attributed to the environment categories better understanding what a regular early childhood program is and correctly reflecting the actual time spent in this program.

In the case of environment category REC10YOTHLOC, the drastic decrease can be attributed to the revised environment collection process better identifying for districts what it means for students to be receiving services in another location. There has been a misunderstanding of what constitutes a regular early childhood classroom in the state. Often districts have interpreted this environment category to include specialized programs specifically for students with disabilities, however, this is not the definition of a regular early childhood program. Indeed, this would be the environment category of a separate class (SC). With the assistance of this new flowchart, districts have been better able to see this distinction, thus the reason for the significant increase in the number of students in the SC environment.
The increase in the environment category REC10SVCS can be attributed to the new flowchart better explaining what it means to have districts providing services to students with disabilities in the regular early childhood program setting. In the past districts have interpreted where the students are being provided services differently and listed students as receiving services in another location despite the services being provided in the regular early childhood program. Additionally, a push within the state to ensure students are in settings with non-students with disabilities as much as possible to increase access to core instruction could be attributed to this increase.

The increase in the environment category SPL can also be attributed to the new flowchart. Districts may have previously listed the environment as a student receiving services in another location while attending a regular early childhood program but the student might actually not be attending a regular early childhood program and services are being received at the service provider’s location. Better explanation of what constitutes of a regular early childhood program and a service provider location in the new flowchart has helped mitigate such environment reporting errors.

Finally, the decrease of students in the separate school (SS) environment category can be attributed to the new flowchart better directing districts to the correct environment. As well, increased explanation of the difference between SC and SS may have also improved awareness of the difference between a separate school and separate class within a school where services are being provided.

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**Texas**

RF count increase of 147/28% occurred due to state instructional setting code clarifications within the Texas School for the Deaf. Previous coding allowed for some confusion that was clarified with edit checks and quality control within the statewide data collection system. The numbers reported for SY 2014-15 correctly account for the total number of students in this educational environment. Data was not resubmitted.

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**Utah**

In SY2014-2015, Utah reported 304 students as receiving special education in an Other Location Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 hours). This is an increase of 105 students, or 53% from SY2013-2014. In addition, Utah reported an increase of 37 students, or 21%, attending separate schools.

1. Utah continues to improve procedures for the collection, validation, and reporting of EdFacts data. As a result the State is able to more accurately provide an unduplicated count of students.
2. Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that the “10 hours” referenced in the environment code represents the number of hours the student is attending a regular early childhood program, not the number of hours the student is receiving specialized instruction or related services.
3. Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs on accurate data reporting by providing multiple training sessions and publication of a data manual. Upon increased reporting quality, the SEA provided additional supports and services related to LRE for children ages 3-5.
4. Utah provided technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that students who are age 5 and enrolled in kindergarten must be reported using the 3-5 early childhood environments.
From 2013-2014 to 2014-2015 the number of students age 6-21 reported in the educational environment “Correctional Facility” decreased from 142 to 99. This is a reduction of 43 students, or 30%.

1. In SY2013-2014 Utah implemented more rigorous procedures for the collection, validation, and reporting of EdFacts data. As a result the State was able to more accurately provide an unduplicated count of students. These procedures continued to be refined for 2014-2015.

2. High levels of variation are expected from year to year in the placement of students with disabilities in correctional facilities. Factors outside of the IEP team impact this environment, such as funding levels for the Department of Human Services, the severity of the offense, overcrowding in correctional facilities, and the delinquency history of the student. Of all Utah youths involved in the corrections system, about 23% are in correctional facilities.

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**Virginia**

There are numerous training and technical assistance centers located throughout Virginia to assist and provide resource to school personnel. As a result of this ongoing technical assistance, Virginia is seeing an increase in services provided in the student’s natural environment (i.e., playground, day care center, Grandparent’s home, Child’s home, library, etc.), replacing traditional office settings.

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**Virgin Islands**

Some of the children counted on the December 1, 2013(SY 2013/2014) child count in the disability category of developmental delay were counted under another disability category (such as specific learning disability category (SLD)) under the ages of 6-21 subsequent to additional evaluation(s) that were conducted.

Some of the children counted on the December 1, 2013 (SY 2013-2014) exited (moved, returned to regular education) the part B program prior to the December 1, 2014 child count date (SY 2014/2015).

Subsequent to the December 1, 2013 Child Count(School Year 2013/14) the number of students ages 3-5 who received services under part B decreased by twenty five (25) percent.

For the December 1, 2014 child count (SY 2014/2015) the decline in the number of children ages 3-5 attending a regular early childhood program at least 10 hours per week and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program can be attributed to the fact that there has been a twenty (20) percent decrease in the number of children ages 3-5 receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program, which can also be attributed to the twenty five (25) percent decrease in enrollment ages 3-5 receiving special education and related services captured on the December 1,2014 Child Count (SY 2014/2015)

For the December 1, 2014 child count (school year 2014/2015) the decrease in the number of children ages 3-5 receiving special education and related services who were not limited English proficient (LEP) when compared to the December 1, 2013 child count can be attributed to the overall twenty five (25) percent decrease in the number of children ages 3-5 receiving special education and related services and also the number of children ages 3-5 who exited the program (e.g. moved).

For School Year 2014/15 Data group 613 by disability category: the increase for school year 2014/2015 when compared to school 2013/2014 for the disability category specific learning disability(SLD) can be attributed to the number of children who were found eligible for Part B
services subsequent to the December 1, 2013 Child Count date (School Year 2013/14) and were eligible under the disability category of specific learning disability (SLD) and also the number of children of ages 3-5 who were reported also in the category of children ages 6-21.

**West Virginia**

Child Count data for Ages 3-5 for 2013-14 & 2014-15 is accurate as reported. An explanation for the decrease in SLI is two pronged: In the last two years OSPs trainings has implemented the Step Up to Speech multi-tiered approach intervention to speech intervention, as well as an intervention/push-in approach, if appropriate, with parent and teachers prior to referral for evaluations. Speech folks worked with children prior to being identified. This program was implemented as a result of the high identification of speech students in previous years. Additionally, the eligibility for speech was tightened within WV's Policy 2419 as well.

There are also a combination of factors that has resulted in a decrease of DD services in PreK from 2013-14 to 2014-15:

- WV has had Universal prek for 10 years. Many classrooms are collaborative with Head Start. As a result many children receive the full range of Head Start services which include those wrap around services for families and siblings being linked to needed resources. Children are receiving needed services prior to being identified for special education.

- The changes in eligibility around speech has also assisted in appropriately identifying children for speech/language services but does impact the numbers of DD.

- The continued professional development for supporting children in community settings, the interagency training and partnerships with WV Birth to Three, home visitation programs and other partners for working with families and providing needed services have been effective. In addition, the work that has been done with health check and coordinating Heath care and encouraging families to have a home medical provider has assisted in families/children being seen sooner by doctors which has assisted families getting intervention services sooner.

Child Count data for Ages 6-21 for 2013-14 and 2014-15 is accurate as reported. Explanations for each category affected by this year to year report are as follows:

- **AUT** – The prevalence of Autism continues to increase, resulting in increased eligibility determinations throughout the state

- **EMN** – has decreased due to ongoing training and the implementation of PBIS in schools

- **MR** – Continued Eligibility training to make sure that students are truly intellectually disabled is an ongoing need within our state.

- **OHI** - Districts tend to go directly to special education referral without using the 504 Plan to determine if accommodations would improve student performance. Continued training on the 504 process is being implemented across the state

- **SLD** – An increase in SLD students reflects the lack of implementation of the SPL process and ongoing training is needed.

- **SLI** – A decrease in speech students reflects the use of other strategies such as SPL, prior to determining eligibility for special education need.