Part B Child Count and Educational Environments Data Notes

2016-17 Reporting Year

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which States and entities collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

Arizona

The significant decrease for children between the ages of 3 and 5 in the HI eligibility category is likely due to Arizona’s transition in statewide data reporting systems. The initial transition to the new Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) began in the 2015-2016 school year; however, this system was not fully transitioned until the 2016-2017 school year. One of the education entities that primarily serves children in the HI category, the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB), had technical difficulties with the statewide data reporting system transition that resulted in a significant decrease in its HI student count.

After reviewing PEA-level data from year to year, the significant decrease in the ED category for children between the ages of 3 and 5 is likely the result of several factors: 1) small sample size (which resulted in a higher than normal percent difference), 2) the transition in Arizona’s statewide data reporting systems described in the preceding paragraph, and 3) year to year changes in student enrollment.

The significant decrease in the Educational Environments for Correctional Facilities is likely due to a transition in data reporting systems. The initial transition to the new Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS) began in the 2015-2016 school year; however, this system was not fully transitioned until the 2016-2017 school year. For correctional facilities, this transition was further compounded by an inability to submit complete and accurate data due to lack of or improper set up of student information systems (SIS) for each entity.

Although alternate means for providing Educational Environment data was provided for correctional facilities that had difficulties with an individual SIS, it is likely that the decrease in data is due to the transition in data reporting systems.

Arkansas

Education Environment Early Childhood: The count of preschool children being served in a separate class declined significantly. First, Arkansas a school district which operated their own preschool special education program split into two distinct districts. The new district does not operate their own early childhood special education program and does not have classrooms established for separate class placements. The children who live in the new district are being served via the educational cooperative. Additionally, Arkansas has encouraged inclusion service in the regular classroom, over the past year, especially with districts that operate their own early childhood special education program in their school buildings. Finally, Arkansas provided training via support from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center on data reporting for educational environments.
Education Environment School Age: The count of children parentally placed in a private school increased. While it is not exactly clear as to why the rate of parentally placed in a private school increased there a few influences on the rate. First, home schooling has increased in the state and students who receive services are considered parentally placed in a private school. A second reason is tied to state law. Arkansas’s legislature, in 2015, passed the Succeed Scholarship for Students with Disabilities. If the student met the criteria a parent could apply for the scholarship and if awarded place their child in a private school. School year 2016-17 was the first full year of scholarship awards. If a parent selected to continue services via the LEA, they are treated as any other parentally placed in a private school student.

California

Regarding the year-over-year increase in Emotional Disturbance

The decrease is a result of California’s continued technical assistance efforts and emphasis on accurate identification and reporting at the local level.

Colorado

School Age Year-to-year difference explanation SY2016-2017

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 were 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. Although Colorado had had the categories of Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury, some LEAs put the students with Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury into the physical disability category. With the migration to categories that align with the federal reporting categories, there will be changes 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. Finally, Colorado has extended the age limit of Developmental Delay to eight years of age rather than the prior maximum age of six years of age to align with federal reporting requirements; this change seemed to have resulted in an increase in the number of children identified with Developmental Delays.

Fewer students were reported in the educational environment setting of Correctional Facility. The number of students in a correctional setting has been on an overall downward trend for the past several years. We asked the Department of Youth Correction about these changes, and they reported that the decline of bed capacity Colorado secures likely contributed to this downward trend. Additionally, the Department of Youth Correction has implemented a program called SB 94, which was designed to provide front end interventions to at-risk youth to the extent that they can avoid a detention admission in subsequent commitment. The success of this program might have also contributed to the downward trend of the number of students in Correctional Facilities.

Fewer students were reported in the educational environment setting of Separate Class. One of our sizeable LEAs accounts for the majority of this decrease. They launched a six-year ECE expansion plan that has allowed a lower number of children with disabilities to be placed in each classroom thereby changing the majority of available classrooms to inclusive. Downward trends in numbers of children with
IEPs in all classrooms also permitted classifying more of these services as being provided in the regular early childhood program. There was an 8% (count of 825) increase in the category of At least 10 hours and receiving services in the regular early childhood program.

Connecticut

Data Note for School Year 2016-17

The increase in students ages 3-5 with learning disabilities is a result of changes in Connecticut legislation and associated guidance surrounding identification of students with learning disabilities.

Florida

In reference to the (1) decrease in separate school settings and (2) increase in students served in regular childhood programs (less than 10 hours): Florida continues to promote inclusive practices for Pre-K students with disabilities, including a partnership with the Florida Office of Early Learning.

Florida had an increase in the number of students at Florida’s School for the Deaf and Blind reported as residential.

Guam

Guam has a high influx of Micronesian Island people migrating and this year this has resulted in more LEP students who were made eligible for Special Education.

The decrease in students with a Speech or language impairment disability can be contributed to the change in disability as determined by the IEP team throughout the year to adjust for students requiring more services.

Idaho

Relevant File Specification # or EMAPS Submission: 002 - School Age

Disability Category (IDEA) SA Deaf-blindness: Through statewide trainings and implementation of additional data validations Idaho has improved processes and coding of students’ primary disabilities these changes have resulted in a decrease in the number of students coded under the category of Deaf-blindness.

Disability Category (IDEA) SA Hearing Impairment: Through statewide trainings and implementation of additional data validations Idaho has improved processes and coding of students’ primary disabilities these changes have resulted in an increase in the number of students coded under the category of Hearing Impairment. In addition to training and processes changes Idaho has seen an influx of students because of overall population increases.

Educational Environment Correctional Facilities: Idaho has improved the communication and tracking between the Idaho Department of Education and Idaho’s correctional agencies including Idaho
Department of Juvenile Corrections and Idaho Department of Corrections. As a result, Idaho has seen an increase in the number of individuals properly identified for special education services in correctional facilities. In addition to improvement in communication and tracking, a coding issue was addressed between educational environments of Correctional Facilities and Residential Facilities resulting in a marked increase in the number of students listed as participating in the Correctional Facilities educational environment.

Educational Environment Residential Facilities: In the 2016-17 collection Idaho improved data quality by addressing a coding issue between the Correctional Facilities and Residential Facilities educational environments. This change resulted in a marked decrease in the number of students participating in the Residential Facilities educational environment.

Relevant File Specification # or EMAPS Submission: 002 - School Age

LEP Status (Both): The increased number of students identified as students with disabilities and LEP is attributed to an increase in the overall state population and a shift in Idaho’s existing LEP Status (Both) population from early childhood age 3-5 to school age.

Relevant File Specification # or EMAPS Submission: 089 – Early Childhood

Disability Category (IDEA) EC: Intensive statewide training addressing identification, coding, and placement of early childhood students with disabilities has resulted in increases in the number of students identified under the Autism and Hearing Impairment disability categories. In addition, Idaho continues to see an influx of students as the population increases.

Educational Environment: Increase in Services in other location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attends at least 10 hours) and Decrease in Services in other location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attends less than 10 hours):

Idaho does not have state-funded regular early childhood services. Intensive statewide training addressing identification and coding of early childhood students with disabilities, has resulted in increases in the number of students properly coded as receiving services in another location than Regular Early Childhood Program (attends at least 10 hours) and a corresponding decrease in the number of students properly coded as receiving services in another location than Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 hours).

Relevant File Specification # or EMAPS Submission: 089 – Early Childhood

LEP Status (Both): The decreased number of students identified as students with disabilities and LEP in the Early Childhood age 3-5 population is attributed to a shift in Idaho’s LEP Status (Both) population from early childhood age 3-5 to school age. A corresponding increase in the number school-age students identified as LEP Status (Both) is evident in the C002 file.

Kansas

Data Group 74 – Category, Parentally Placed in Private schools, increase in counts. Upon investigation, it was discovered that 60% of the total increase was attributed to two LEAs. Both LEAs confirmed the FY2017 counts and responded that the increase was attributed to new student information / IEP
systems in FY2017 with improved internal structures for tracking private and parochial students being served. Other LEAs also had increases but were not significant in number from the prior school year.

**Kentucky**

Because we are looking at a small population of students, small changes in numbers of students make for large percentage changes. We do know that more students in preschool are being medically diagnosed with mental health or systemic medical issues (such as ADHD or seizure disorders) that do fall under the eligibility category of OHI. While it is a label that is used in K-12 most often, it is beginning to press down to preschool. We will continue training districts to examine whether these labels are appropriate for preschool students.

We are looking at relatively small numbers in each district but they add up to show a larger difference across the state. We have found that many of the students in this category were kindergarteners who were still five years-old on December 1 when our child count data was collected. The districts felt that this category was the closest to their actual setting, so that was what they listed. These settings changed, or will change, when the next IEP is completed for each student.

**Maine**

On July 1, 2016 a new data system was implemented for the 619 program. The system was designed to include reporting requirements (ex. LRE Decision Tree and LEP classification) to ensure the data for all children was captured. For LRE the information the system uses a connection of the data inputted (based on decision tree) and the service setting per the IEP to determine the category the child will be reported in. The IEP considerations (including LEP) are required fields in the system. Various validations have been included in the system to insure data input is complete before moving through the data entry process. Through discovery and development of the new data system CDS worked closely with OSEP funded TA partners to ensure required reporting requirements were embedded in the system prior to implementation. The new system also provides the state access to monitor information more timely to determine TA needs. In addition to the development and implementation of a new data system, CDS worked closely with IDC and ECETA Center to provide targeted TA on LRE to our regional sites. For all of these reasons the data reported for 2016-2017 is more valid and reliable. One of the cautions we have discussed in our trainings of implementation is that data could and most likely would look different than prior years due to the validations and requirements built into the system for a number of reporting areas.

**Maryland**

This increase in the preschool LRE occurred because of the overall increase in the number of preschool children with disabilities, ages three and four, identified by two of Maryland’s largest school districts. These two school districts serve a diverse and mobile population of preschool children with disabilities. This group of preschoolers presented challenging developmental needs that required targeted and intensive interventions in a highly structured setting. The goal of the MSDE, DSE/EIS is to transition these preschool children as full-time participants in the regular early childhood setting, with services integrated into that setting as a part of their daily routines and activities.
**Massachusetts**

As noted in our State Submission Plan, along with Male and Female, Massachusetts collects “Non-Binary” gender. For this file, 9 students were identified in that gender category. Guidance from OSEP was to NOT include these students in any count involving gender. This explains why counts for totals including gender do not equal counts for totals that do not include gender.

**Federated States of Micronesia**

2017 Early Childhood Data Note

The increase in the Federated States of Micronesia’s students receiving Services in Regular Early Childhood Program (attended at least 10 hours) from 2016-2017 (144) to 2015-2016 (89) was a result of more students in some of the LEAs meeting the LEAs Early Childhood Education Program age enrollment requirement, which is age 5.

**Nevada**

Possible explanation for the decrease numbers of students in for the Educational Environment of Separate School for Early Childhood due to the SEA’s targeted Technical Assistance to our largest LEA around inclusion practices as well as EC Inclusion Conference that was conducted for the last several years to the state.

Possible explanation for the decrease in Educational Environment Correctional Facilities due to the new statewide student information system and the inclusion of LEAs providing schools and services to students in Correctional Facilities

Possible explanation for the decrease in Educational Environment of Parentally Placed in Private School is that increase in enrollment within our states two online charter schools.

**Oklahoma**

We believe that improved data reporting and collection methods used during Child Count in fall 2016 resulted in the wide disparities compared to the previous year. Personnel must now answer several questions that require them to add program participation information in greater detail than in previous years. Oklahoma has also improved its training, guidance, and technical assistance to districts on this reporting element. Because of the enhanced data collection process and training, we believe the data more accurately reflects actual EC environments for young children on IEPs.

The count of EC LEP students increased substantially because of an improved data linkage to the student longitudinal data system. Student records of LEP status were more accurate in the last child count and will continue to be more accurate because of the improved data linkage.
Oregon

Oregon’s Special Education Performance Review & Improvement system provides data and targets to districts annually. In 2015-2016, districts not meeting targets were required to develop a three year improvement plan with the understanding that areas of slippage in 2016-2017 would need to be analyzed and addressed. Through this effort, districts are decreasing placements in separate schools.

South Carolina

089 - Early Childhood

Other Health Impairment – The increase in count is correct from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 and is due to seven LEAs serving students identified with Other Health Impairment in 2016-2017 that did not serve any students with this disability in 2015-2016. In addition, four LEAs served five or more students with identified with this disability than in the previous year.

Educational Environment (Home) – The decrease in this category is correct and is because 13 LEAs served fewer students in this LRE in 2016-2017 than in the previous school year.

Educational Environment (Service Provider Location) – The increase in this category is correct and is because seven LEAs served at least 10 or more students in this LRE in 2016-2017 than in the previous school year.

Tennessee

For the 2016-17 SY data, there were a noted year-to-year concern for the Hearing Impairment disability category for ages 3-5. In digging into this, it appears that the 2015-16 count for students with Hearing Impairments was an anomaly and low based on historic numbers. Thus, the count of students for the 2016-17 SY seems to be more in keeping with previously reported totals. What specifically led to the aberration in counts of students in this disability category in the 2015-16 SY is not clear. It appears that the figures reported for this disability category in the 2015-16 SY were an outlier. On the whole, there has been an upward trend in counts in most of the disability categories for students ages 3-5.

Utah

In SY2016-17 Utah reported an increased number students as receiving special education in Other Location Regular Early Childhood Program (less than 10 hours).

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 continues to provide technical assistance to LEAs clarifying that the “10 hours” reference 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 specialize instruction or related services.
3. 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.
4. Utah continues to experience rapid growth within our preschool population
Virginia

VDOE has provided targeted assistance to LEAs in the areas of evaluation, identification, and eligibility. This has included state-wide regional trainings for LEAs on evaluation and eligibility, including guidance documents and sample eligibility check lists. Although VDOE has reported a decrease in intellectual disability, VDOE has reported a subsequent increase in autism, developmental delayed, and other health impairment for early childhood students. In addition, VDOE has participated in the TA grant with DASY (center for IDEA early childhood data systems) which has allowed VDOE to provide training and resources to divisions regarding early childhood special education. These targeted resources, specifically for early childhood special education, has resulted in LEAs accurately identifying and providing services for early childhood students.

VDOE has participated in TA through DASY (the center for IDEA early childhood data systems) in addition to participation in conferences with LEADS (leadership in effective and developmentally appropriate services in early childhood special education). Early childhood special education has been a heightened focus for VDOE for the last two years. VDOE has developed comprehensive resource documents and webcasts for LEAs (i.e., including indicator 6 decision tree, question and answer document). This focus, along with the training and resources, have provided LEAs with the necessary tools to accurately evaluate and provide services for early childhood students. This increase directly correlates with the decrease in educational environmental, services in other location than regular early childhood program (attend less than 10 hours).

VDOE reported an increase in services in regular early childhood (less than 10 hours) from 2015-2016 2016-2017 (an increase of 26.2%). This increase coincides with a parallel increase in services in regular early childhood program (at least 10 hours) which reported a 25.3% increase. Increases in services in regular early childhood program, both less than 10 hours and at least 10 hours, are a result of an increased focus and attention to evaluation, identification, and provision of services for early childhood special education students, and particularly VDOE’s focus on the importance of inclusion in the regular early childhood setting for students with disabilities.

Washington

The Special Education Department of the Washington SEA has provided focused training and technical assistance to LEAs and detention centers in the area of tracking students as they move through these facilities, even though the stay is usually very short term. This focused attention to tracking of these students is directly related to the increase in the educational environment reporting category.

West Virginia

The area of concern for WV’s year to year report was in the area of the number of students in correctional facilities. According to our Coordinator of Juvenile Programs, the following explanation is provided: The main explanation is that we have no control over enrollment. Each and every student that enters our DJS facilities are tied to a court case number and judge. We do not own any buildings... we simply educate children once they are sent to state facilities.

The program (Safe at Home) was designed to reduce the number of children placed in DJS facilities... which based on 2014-15 may indicate that the implementation of the program was successful
temporarily. The goal of the program was/is to increase the number of children who can stay at home and have services “wrapped around”.

If more children with exceptionalities commit crimes... we will likely see an increase. Thankfully, the inverse is true. The data may also indicate that at least during the data collection period, fewer students with exceptionalities committed crimes that resulted in placement in a WV DJS facility.

Here is a link to the Safe-at-Home website for your viewing: http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/Services/Pages/Safe-At-Home-West-Virginia.aspx

**Wisconsin**

Wisconsin has transitioned to a new student data collection system. The differences in numbers are attributed to district data validation issues that were not able to be fully resolved prior to the final closure of the collection. The issues have been addressed to ensure greater data accuracy in future collections.