Determining Disproportionality in Special Education

Illinois State Board of Education
Special Education Services Division
March 2015

(For FY15 – 2013-2014 School Year Data)
Topics to be Discussed

- Definition of Disproportionality
- ISBE’s Process for Determining Disproportionality
- Next Steps for Districts and ISBE
- Significant Disproportionality
What is Disproportionality in Special Education?

- Involves comparisons by race or ethnicity between groups of students identified as eligible for special education services.

- Disproportionate Representation in Special Education =

  Students from a particular racial or ethnic group identified at a greater rate than all other racial/ethnic groups.
Illinois’ Definition of Disproportionality

- Students in a particular racial/ethnic group (i.e., Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native American, *Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander*, White, or *Two or More Races*)
- Being at a considerably greater risk of being identified as eligible for special education and related services
- Overall or by disability category (i.e., Speech/Language, Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Disability, Intellectual Disability, Autism and Other Health Impairment)
- Than all other racial/ethnic groups enrolled either in the district or in the state
Indicators 9 & 10: Disproportionality

- **Indicator 9:** Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services overall *that is the result of inappropriate identification*

- **Indicator 10:** Percent of districts identified with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories *that is the result of inappropriate identification*
SPP Measurable & Rigorous Performance Target
ISBE’s Process to Determine Disproportionality

- Analysis of preceding 3 years’ Fall Enrollment data and December Special Education Child Count

- Calculate weighted or alternate risk ratio

- Illinois’ Criterion for Determining Disproportionate Representation
  - Weighted or alternate risk ratio of 3.0 or greater for a particular racial/ethnic group for three consecutive years
Weighted Risk Ratio

- At least 10 students in the racial/ethnic group in question who are eligible for special education overall or within a particular disability category and

- At least 10 students in the comparison group enrolled in the district
Comparison Group
(Weighted Risk Ratio)

- **Definition:** All other racial/ethnic groups enrolled in the district

- **Example:**
  - To calculate a district’s weighted risk ratio for *Hispanic* students eligible for special education overall, comparison group would be:
    - All non-Hispanic (Asian, Black, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White and Two or More Races) students enrolled in the district
What does this mean for districts?

- ISBE notifies districts with disproportionality based on risk ratio calculations,
- BUT calculated risk ratio alone not sufficient to determine if disproportionality is due to inappropriate identification. THEREFORE…
- Districts conduct self-assessment activities, including data analysis and review of policies, procedures and practices, and submit documentation to ISBE.
How to Complete the Self-Assessment

- “Special Education Disproportionality District Self-Assessment” is posted on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/special-ed/html/disproportionality.htm
- For newly identified districts and districts identified for 4 consecutive years
- Districts assemble a team to complete self-assessment
- Submit electronically to assigned ISBE contact person by March 18, 2015
How to Complete the Self-Assessment (continued)

- Self-Assessment Focus Areas
  1. Curriculum and Instruction
  2. Child Find
  3. Initial Evaluation & Re-evaluation
  4. Eligibility Determination
  5. Individualized Education Program
How to Complete the Self-Assessment (continued)

- For each focus area outlined in the self-assessment tool:
  - Brief narrative of how district is implementing policies, procedures and/or practices associated with each focus area
    - Narrative must delineate practices/activities specific to that district; districts submitting identical self-assessments will be required to make revisions
    - If identified under Indicator 10, narrative should focus on disability category(ies) in question
  - List sources of evidence reviewed to verify implementation of the policies, procedures and practices
How to Complete the Self-Assessment (continued)

- "Conclusions Based on Self-Assessment Activities"
  - Specify, under one or more of the focus areas, the reason(s) disproportionate representation exists and provide a brief explanation as to why.

- Accessing Technical Assistance and Training Resources
  - Describe how district has used any of the listed resources and/or other resources

- "Next Steps to Address Disproportionality"
  - Based on reasons identified in “Conclusions” section, outline at least three improvement activities the district plans to implement to address disproportionality.
    - Include a brief narrative for each activity
    - Identify resources, timelines and persons responsible for each activity
Continuing Districts – Status Reports

- For districts with continuing disproportionality in the same area (for less than 4 years)
- Address implementation of improvement activities delineated in self-assessment completed in conjunction with initial determination
- Submit electronically to the assigned ISBE contact person no later than April 3, 2015
Continuing Districts--Status Report w/ Self-Assessment Update

- For districts determined to have disproportionality in:
  - The same area(s) as preceding year **and**
  - One or more **new** areas

- Self-Assessment Update must include:
  - Additional information specific to new disproportionality issue(s)
  - Conclusions specifying reason(s) new area(s) of disproportionate representation exist and brief explanation as to why
  - Technical assistance and training resources accessed
  - Next Steps to address new area(s) of disproportionality
Status Report w/ Self-Assessment Update (continued)

- Refer to prior District Self-Assessment submitted to ISBE
- Template titled “Disproportionality Status Report with Self-Assessment Update” will be emailed to districts by ISBE consultant
- Submit completed report electronically to ISBE contact person no later than April 3, 2015.
Continuing Districts – Self-Assessment Update

- Area of disproportionality identified in preceding year (2012-2013) no longer present
- New area of disproportionality for current year (2013-2014)
- Complete Self-Assessment Update only (unless identified for 4th consecutive year)
- Template emailed to districts by ISBE consultant
What does this mean for districts? (continued)

- ISBE reviews district documentation, with district data, to determine if disproportionality is due to inappropriate identification
- ISBE notifies districts of determination
- Districts with inappropriate identification must develop and implement an Improvement Plan, with support from ISBE
- Noncompliance must be corrected within one year of notification, i.e., May 2015.
# Timelines

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District documentation submitted to ISBE</td>
<td>By April 3, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>District notification of ISBE’s determination re: disproportionality is or is not due to inappropriate identification</td>
<td>May 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>District improvement plans submitted to ISBE (via format specified by ISBE)</td>
<td>By June 10, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>District improvement plan initial implementation</td>
<td>No later than June 30, 2015</td>
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<td>District correction of noncompliance associated with inappropriate identification</td>
<td>No later than May 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISBE monitoring of improvement plan &amp; provision of technical assistance</td>
<td>Will vary by district</td>
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ISBE Resources & Contacts for Special Education Disproportionality


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