

**Maine Department of Education
Office of Special Services**

**Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Program and SAU Profile
Frequently Asked Questions**

Draft FAQ 2/25/09

Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Program (CIMP)

1. Where do we get the materials to start the Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Program?
Answer: http://www.state.me.us/education/speced/spp/spp_ta.html#all_indicators

2. Who has to do the CIMP?
Answer: All SAUs must complete the CIMP. Those SAUs that “Meet Requirements” and have indicators with determination levels of 1 must fill out and return Parts 1, 2, and 4 of the Self-assessment to document Promising Practices. See the “Local Determination Levels, Assistance and Enforcement Actions” chart at <http://www.state.me.us/education/speced/spp/documents/ldeforce.pdf>

3. Who has to be on the Part B School Age SAU CIMP Team?
Answer: You need a minimum of three representatives of the SAU, including one certified special education administrator responsible for the supervision of special education, one program building administrator, and the superintendent or a designee of the superintendent. It is also recommended that the team include the person at the SAU responsible for entering data into MEDMS/Infinite Campus. The special education administrator cannot serve as the superintendent’s designee.

4. What information is available to SAUs from the SPP Indicator SAU Profile webinar that was held on February 23, 2009?
Answer: The SAUs who received “Needs Assistance for the 2nd year of two” and the SAUs that received “Needs Intervention for the 1st year of three” were required to attend the webinar on February 23, 2009, or document that they received access to the recording available on http://www.state.me.us/education/speced/spp/spp_ta.html#all_indicators.

5. When will the February 23, 2009, Webinar audio and visuals be available?
Answer: The February 23, 2009, Webinar audio and video may be viewed or downloaded by selecting links on http://www.state.me.us/education/speced/spp/spp_ta.html#all_indicators.

SAU Profile of SPP Indicators

1. Explain the overall ratings, their calculations, and what constitutes the differences in ratings.

Answer: Overall ratings are largely based on the number of individual indicators with a determination level of three or under. An Overall Determination Level (ODL) of *Meets Requirements* (Level 1) means that the SAU has no indicators at a Level 4, and less than half of their indicators are at level three. An ODL of *Needs Assistance* (Level 2) means that an SAU has one to two indicators at Level 4. An ODL of *Needs Intervention* (Level 3) means that the SAU has three to four indicators at Level 4. An ODL of *Needs Substantial Intervention* (Level 4) has five or more indicators at Level 4 (Currently, there are no SAUs that have an ODL at Level 4).

2. Are there school districts in Maine with similar SAU profiles?

Answer: SAU populations are unique to local demographic characteristics and determination levels are based on data from each SAU, which may or may not be similar to SAUs with similar demographics.

3. How long do we have to make changes in our data?

Answer. MDOE's numbers are based on a 3-year average - and the 2008 information has already been submitted to MDOE. Official data for December child count is complete and submitted for years up to 2008-2009. Those data will not change.

4. Why are there blanks where data should be? Does this mean the SAU didn't supply the data and could this be one of the reasons it is on the list?

Answer: No. This means that the Department of Education did not have the data. For example: not all SAUs have high schools. Consequently data are not available for all SAUs regarding graduation. Absence of data does not affect the determination level because calculations use only the years with data.

5. What does a "0" mean in the determination level?

Answer: In making the calculations, a "0" was used to indicate those districts whose percentage on that indicator exceeded a statistical outer limit of what would be expected, given the state average and the number of students in the SAU.

6. What targets should SAUs be addressing as they go through the self-assessment process and identify improvement activities? Where can SAUs find a summary of the SPP targets for the indicators?

Answer: SPP targets for the indicators are given in the SAU profiles. SAUs should focus on meeting State targets for the current school year?

7. What should the SAU do if it feels the data are incorrect? If the data are incorrect, and we have corrected our formulas, is there some avenue to address this?

Answer: Only an SAU with a Determination Level of *Needs Intervention* or *Needs Substantial Intervention* may request reconsideration. Reconsideration is not available for an SAU at the Needs Assistance level. See "Challenges to Determination Levels and

Withholding of Funds” at

<http://www.state.me.us/education/speced/spp/documents/appeal.pdf>

8. What are the timelines for the SAU requesting reconsideration of its data, given it has been over 30 days since the SAU received the letter and the profile?

Answer: This year the date that marks the beginning of the 30 day timeline is February 23, 2009. This is the date of the webinar when the information was provided.

9. What does a SAU do if it meets all the standards?

Answer: The superintendents received letters that indicated the determination level for the SAU. If the determination level is Meets Requirements, there are three things the SAU must do. **1)** The SAU CIMP must review the profile to see if there are any indicators with a “2” or “3”. If there are indicators with a “2” or “3,” these indicators must be acknowledged by using Self-assessment Sections 1 and 3. After reviewing Section 3 In-depth Review for that indicator, the strategy chosen by the SAU CIMP must be entered into the Improvement/Corrective Action Plan (ICAP). **2)** If the SAU profile has “1” for an indicator, there should be a checkmark on the Self-Assessment Section 1: Data Collection and Comparison form. The SAU CIMP should note the strategy being used for this indicator in the Self-assessment Section 4 Promising Practices. **3)** Self-Assessment Section 2: Internal Audit is a component of procedural compliance and required for SAUS except in the following two circumstances. If the SAU is currently engaged with Office of Program Review or has a “Close-out” letter with a date from the past year 2008-09, the SAU is exempt from completing Section 2: Internal Audit. Lists of SAUs exempt and not exempt are on the Office of Special Services website.

State Agency Clients, Residential Programs, Group Homes, and Private Schools

1. Are State Agency Client (SAC) students going to be backed out of the out-of-district numbers? We have several SAC students in our district.

Answer: If the SAU is responsible for providing special education services for the State Agency Clients in question, they should count them among their population and this should be reflected in the SAU’s December 1 child count. Otherwise, they should not be counted by the SAU. Remember, out-of-district numbers are the responsibility of the resident SAU, not the attending SAU.

2. Some SAUs feel their data is significantly impacted by a residential program in their district. This is not something they can address. Is this the case?

Answer: Residential programs for the districts will be identified and consideration given in relation to any skewed numbers.

3. What if the district has group homes or other programs that take students from other districts– how is this data handled?

Answer: Sending SAUs are responsible for their students and related data. Consideration will be given for placements of State agency clients and parentally placed children with disabilities.

4. SAUs also feel they may be “targeted” because they have a self-contained program for the neediest students, many of whom are tuitioned from neighboring districts which do not have programs. How do we respond to this?

Answer: Sending SAUs are responsible for their students and related data.

Consideration will be given for placements of State agency clients and parentally placed children with disabilities.

Questions about Specific IDEA Part B Performance Indicators in order:

B2: Percent of Youth with IEPs Dropping Out

1. In some profiles there were blanks for 07-08 total dropouts, but there was an SAU average and a Determination Level of 2. Do the blanks mean that data is missing? Why is the data missing from 07-08 and what is the average based on, given that?

Answer: Blank data means that the Department of Education did not have the data for any SAU. The data were not available at the time Maine's Annual Performance Report for IDEA Part B was due. The lack of data does not affect the determination level because averages would be calculated on what data were available.

2. What was the year for the December 1st childcount data that serves as the basis? for the exit by dropout by special education?

Answer: The exit by dropout data was taken from the December 1st childcount data for 2005-06, 2006-07, and 2007-08.

3. When does the calculation for graduation rates for students with and without disabilities becomes consistent?

Answer: Those data should be available for the next set of calculations.

B4: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion

1. What are the definitions and basis? for suspension and expulsion data? Can we be more specific about the source of the data, as the only reference is the Office of Substance Abuse, Incidence of Prohibitive Behavior?

Answer: The profiles consider suspension and expulsion data of 10 days or greater. Definitions for incidences of prohibitive behavior are given in the Infinite Campus module and on the MDOE website at:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/medms/Student/reportingsdfsincidents.html>.

Definitions Regarding Discipline of Special Education Students can be found at:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/medms/SpecEdDisciplineDefinitions.html>. Questions related to Incidents of Prohibitive Behavior data collected by the Office of Substance Abuse should be directed to Peter.Brough@maine.gov.

B5: Percent of Children with IEPs ages 6 through 21

1. Why do the percentages not always total 100% on the reading your determination profile?

Answer: There are numerous types of placements in addition to the three calculated in this indicator (e.g., private or public residential facility, home, etc.) that make up the denominator for this equation. The calculations used in the profiles are ~~ased~~ based on what is required by OSEP

2. Is Resource (room) Are Resource Room placements measured in this report? Do the students who are in regular education classes for 29% to 55% included in the regular classroom placement? If not, why?

Answer: No. We are required to report on three least restrictive environment categories: rate of placement in the regular classroom **greater than 80%** of the time (regular classroom), rate of placement in the regular classroom **less than 40%** of the time (self-contained), and rate of **out-of-district placement**. There are other students in the population, but the measurements focus on these three as a percentage of the total of students with IEPs.

3. Do you take into account the district's efforts to keep students in district by developing district programs? Where does this factor in the figures?

Answer: If the SAU's programs are reflected in the December child count, they will be reflected in the profiles.

4. What were the bases for setting the targets for the percentages in general education placements?

Answer: Targets are set by the Maine Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities (MACECD); they are the stakeholder group for the State Performance Plan.

B8: Percent of parents who report the school facilitated parent involvement as a means to improved results.

1. Where do we get the data for SPP indicator #8?

Answer: A percentage of parents are surveyed each year, based on the schedule of the program review team. Parent surveys conducted in 2006-2007 were the ones used in the profiles.

2. Why is this on the profile but there is no data?

Answer: Maine's Annual Performance Report (APR) contains parent survey data for a sample of 20% of SAUs each year. Parents in all SAUs are surveyed over a five-year period, 20% each year.

B11: Child Find. Percentage of Children determined eligible within 60 days.

1. Where did the data come from for this indicator?

Answer: Data for the compliance indicators came from PRAF tally sheets completed by the program review staff during their visit to LEAs in 2006-2007. A determination rating of 4 indicates that on-site monitoring review resulted in findings of non-compliance that required correction. They are reported for the year they were discovered, even if they have been resolved.

B13: Secondary Transition with IEP Goals.

1. Where did the data come from for this indicator?

Answer: Data for the compliance indicators came from PRAF tally sheets completed by the program review staff during their visit to LEAs in 2006-2007. A determination rating of 4 indicates that on-site monitoring review resulted in findings non-compliance that required correction. They are reported for the year they were discovered, even if they have been resolved.

B14: Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who are competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within two years of leaving high school as compared to nondisabled youth no longer in secondary school.

1. Why is this on the profile but there is only the State target and average?

Answer: This data is obtained through the monitoring by the Department of 20% of SAUs every year. All SAUs are monitored over a five-year period, 20% each year. If a SAU's profile has no data for the indicator, it means its students were not surveyed.

2. Where did the data for B14 come from?

Answer: It came from the surveys of former students collected in the 2006-2007 school year.

Questions about Compliance Indicators

1. What are the sources of data for the compliance indicators? Are the sources of data from previous monitoring or other sources?

Answer: Data is collected through monitoring, due process documentation and SAU data submission. Non-compliance (indicated by a rating of 4) is shown for the 2006-2007 school year monitoring visit outcome. They are reported for the year they were discovered even if they have been resolved.

2. If there is an SPP Indicator that was addressed during an SAU's Program Review within the last two years and was closed out of the Program Review process, should the SAU complete the record audit?

Answer: The SAU does not have to do the record audit, but must provide documentation with the Close-out Letter dated 2008.

Self Assessments

1. We are going through year 1 of our MDOE Audit? Do we still have to do the CIMP, Self Assessment Section 2, Internal Audit?

Answer: You are exempt from Section 2 if the LEA has been involved with the Office of Program Review (2008-09).

2. What is going to happen to the Promising Practices provided in the Self-assessment Section 4?

Answer: Promising Practices by indicator will be made available to all SAUs to consider for possible strategies in their Improvement/Corrective Action Plan.

Improvement Plans and Activities

1. What resources will the State provide?

Answer: SAUs will use special education funds as necessary to achieve required improvements in their data.