

Special Education Pupil Reporting 2020-2021 Frequently Asked Questions

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Michigan Department of Education
Office of Special Education

*This document was developed in collaboration with the
Michigan Pupil Accounting and Attendance Association*



Special Education Pupil Reporting 2020-2021

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How is the full-time equivalency (FTE) calculated this year for students with an individualized education program (IEP)?

The District and/or Intermediate School District (ISD) will calculate the FTE split for the 20-21 school year in the same manner as in a pre-pandemic year and will use the minutes/hours listed in the current IEP for FTE calculation purposes. For example, if the student has an IEP in place and instructional programs are being provided under the same IEP during the 19-20 school year the FTE split for 20-21 will be the same as in the 19-20 school year.

As outlined in Michigan's Return to Learn laws (PA 147, 148, and 149 of 2020), districts must provide students with the equivalent of the educational/course content that would have been delivered in 180 days and 1,098 hours in a pre-pandemic school year. The same flexibility offered to general education students is being offered to special education students under this approach.

2. How is the FTE calculated for this year for students that have a "range" of instructional time (time/frequency) identified in their IEP?

The District and/or ISD will calculate the FTE split for the 20-21 school year using the minutes/hours from the 19-20 school year, as long as the same IEP is in place and the same instructional programming would have been provided during the 20-21 school year had there not been a contingency learning plan in place.

The current or most recent IEP for each student is the offer of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). IEP's are developed based on the assumption a student will be afforded full in-person instruction in a brick-and mortar setting. Legislation, for the 20-21 school year only grants Districts and ISD's the flexibility to provide services in a manner identified by the district to be in the best interest of their students while being comparable to instruction provided in previous years over 180 days and 1,098 hours. Both general education and special education programs will not suffer a days and hours state aid penalty if this requirement is met.

3. What point (low, mid or high) in the "range" should be used to calculate the FTE if an IEP is written with a range of program time?

If the District and/or ISD does not have the option to use the FTE split derived from an IEP in place during the 19-20 school year (the IEP in place in 19-20 is not still in place on the 20-21 count date), the district should fill out the Worksheet B using the current IEP as a guide to inform FTE related to each program. Actual instructional time, under a contingency learning plan, is likely closest to the lower

end of the range identified in the IEP. For the 20-21 school year Districts and ISDs shall use the LOW point in the range to calculate special education pupil membership claim.

4. Should the Worksheet B be filled out using attendance records and direct observation, or should the IEP determine the appropriate FTE for each program?

The Worksheet B should be filled out using the IEP as a guide to inform FTE related to each program. The current or most recent IEP for each student is the offer of a FAPE that was developed based on what would be a full in-person instructional day in a brick-and mortar setting and the student's unique education and behavior-related needs.

5. Are IEPs required to be updated every time the method (virtual, hybrid, in-person) of instruction changes?

No. Each student's IEP must be current to start the school year and is the basis for discussion regarding the development of a contingency learning plan. Whether the school year begins fully virtual, hybrid, in-person, or in another format, each student with an IEP should have a contingency learning plan developed to be implemented when the full offer of FAPE cannot be provided. If developed, a contingency learning plan must be referenced in the IEP, but can be developed outside of the IEP, as long as it is developed collaboratively with parents, and in accordance with the student's IEP. A contingency learning plan will allow for a student to transition seamlessly between modes of instruction.

When a contingency learning plan is not developed, districts would be required to fully implement the IEP as written regardless of the mode of instruction.

6. What is a contingency learning plan?

A contingency learning plan is developed for each student with an IEP ages three to 26 and is implemented when the full offer of a FAPE cannot be provided. The development of the contingency learning plan is highly individualized and should be in accordance with each student's IEP. For more information about contingency learning plans please see the [Guidance to Address Return for Learn for Students with IEPs](#).

7. Do contingency learning plans affect FTE calculations?

No. The information provided in a contingency learning plan will not be used to inform the FTE split between special education and general education.

8. How will this impact my state aid membership claim?

By using the IEP to inform the FTE split between special education and general education on the Worksheet B, and a combination of the State Aid Office's blended membership formula, impacts to funding based on membership should be minimal.

9. What information will I report in the special education component in Michigan School Data System (MSDS) for the general collections?

You will report the information that is within the IEP. The information reported will be drawn from the same sources used in pre pandemic collections.

10. Will we be allowed to submit Worksheets A or B without signatures?

No. Electronic signatures may be accepted when teachers are not in-person. Districts should work with their auditor to ensure the collection of signatures is completed in an acceptable manner.

11. How will the information in contingency learning plans be collected if they are not being used to determine the FTE split?

The MDE OSE will monitor IEP implementation in the spring, which will include implementation of the contingency learning plans written in accordance with the student's IEP, where applicable.

12. Who should I contact if I have questions?

First contact your ISD auditor, and if questions remain, please contact the Office of Special Education Information Line at 1-888-320-8384 or mde-ose@michigan.gov.