



Disproportionate Representation (Indicators 9 & 10) Frequently Asked Questions

Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education
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This frequently asked questions (FAQ) document was created to help ISDs and member districts have a better understanding of what their data reports posted on the Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies' website for disproportionate representation (Indicators 9 & 10) mean, and how to interpret the different rows/columns on the report.

FAQ

1. What are the reports posted on WSU's website?

These reports are designed to provide a snapshot of ISD aggregate level and member district performance on SPP Indicator 9 (Disproportionate Representation – All Disabilities) and Indicator 10 (Disproportionate Representation – By Disability Category). These reports utilize the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) disability data to compute Composition, Risk, Risk Ratios, Weighted Risk Ratios (WRR) and Alternate Risk Ratios (ARR) by Operating and Resident ISD/member district for each ISD and member district by disability and race. Determinations of disproportionate representation of particular racial/ethnic groups have been based on the appropriate risk ratio; that is, the WRR, ARR, or basic risk ratio. Michigan examines the appropriate ratios for both the 'Operating' and 'Resident' ISD/member district and chooses the lower of the two in consideration of the state's intervention scheme. Public School Academies (PSAs) have only one set of ratios since they are only tracked as operating member districts. In order to be included in the analysis, ISDs and member districts needed to have 30 or more students with disabilities and 10 or more students in the racial/ethnic and disability group of interest. Michigan substitutes an Alternate Risk Ratio (ARR) in cases where an ISD or member district meets the population requirements above, but where the comparison group (the number of students within the disability category of other racial/ethnic groups) is less than 10.

2. What is the Weighted Risk Ratio (WRR)?

The Weighted Risk Ratio (WRR) is used to assess the risk that students of a particular racial/ethnic category are over-represented among students receiving special education or related services. The WRR weights ISD and/or member district level risk according to the racial/ethnic composition of the state. A description of the WRR can also be found on page 32 of [Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education](#).

3. What is the Alternate Risk Ratio (ARR)?

The Alternate Risk Ratio (ARR) also assesses the risk of over-representation in special education or related services. However, although the ARR uses ISD and/or member district level risk in the numerator, it uses State level risk for the comparison groups in the denominator. For this reason, the ARR is utilized to overcome the problem of small numbers in the comparison groups. A description of the ARR can also be found on page 23 of [Methods for Assessing Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality in Special Education](#).

4. Why have the numbers been calculated using the Operating ISD/member district and Resident ISD/member district data?

The WRRs were calculated using both Operating ISD/member district and Resident ISD/member district data because of the limitations of using only one or the other. Using only the Operating district data over-identifies ISDs and member districts with center-based programs. Utilizing only Resident district data places students receiving services in Public School Academies and schools of choice back in the districts where they live and not where they receive services. Where data were available, the tables present two sets of ratios for each racial/ethnic group, one for Operating district data, and the other for Resident district data. These ratios include the WRR, ARR, and the basic Risk Ratio.

5. What is the difference between Operating ISD/member district and Resident ISD/member district?

Operating ISD/member district refers to the students being served by the ISD or member district. Resident ISD/member district refers to the students living in an ISD or

member district's attendance area but do not necessarily attend the ISD or member district.

6. Why are WRRs used to assess disproportionate representation?

WRRs are used to assess disproportionate representation because they adjust for comparison group variability by weighting the results by state racial/ethnic composition and allow for comparison of ISDs and/or member districts.

7. What are the other values in the table?

The tables include Composition (Comp), Risk, and Risk Ratio (RR). These values are presented along with the WRR and ARR.

8. How is the Composition calculated?

Composition (Comp) tells us the proportion of students who receive special education and related services for a particular disability that are of a particular racial/ethnic group. Therefore, Composition = the ISD or member district population of a particular racial/ethnic group receiving special education and related services for a disability of interest divided by the ISD or member district's total population of students receiving special education and related services for the disability of interest.

9. How is The Risk calculated?

Risk tells us the proportion of students of a particular racial/ethnic group who receive special education or related services. Therefore, Risk = the ISD or member district population of a particular racial/ethnic group receiving special education and related services for a disability of interest divided by the total number of students in the particular racial/ethnic group in the ISD or member district.

10. How is the Risk Ratio calculated?

The Risk Ratio (RR) tells us the degree to which students in a particular racial/ethnic group are more or less likely than their peers to receive special education and related services for a particular disability. Therefore, the Risk Ratio = the risk of a particular racial/ethnic group receiving special education and related services for a particular

disability divided by the risk of all other students receiving special education and related services for that disability.

11. How do you calculate the WRR?

(Using Black students and All Disabilities as an example)

WRR for all Black students receiving special education and related services = [(1-State composition of Black students) * District Risk for all Black students receiving special education and related services]

Divided by

[(State composition of American Indian students * District Risk for all American Indian students receiving special education and related services) + (State composition of Asian students * District Risk for all Asian students receiving special education and related services) + (State composition of Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students * District Risk for all Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students receiving special education and related services) + (State composition of Hispanic students * District Risk for all Hispanic students receiving special education and related services) + (State composition of White students * District Risk for all White students receiving special education and related services) + (State composition of multiracial students * District Risk for all multiracial students receiving special education and related services)]

12. How do you calculate the Alternate Risk Ratio?

(Using Black students and All Disabilities as an example)

ARR for all Black students receiving special education and related services = (District Risk for all Black students receiving special education and related services)

Divided by (State level risk for all students in all other racial/ethnic groups receiving special education and related services).

13. What does the WRR refer to in the table?

The WRR in the table refers to the racial/ethnic and disability group of interest's Weighted Risk Ratio.

14. I just completed the monitoring process—why must I go through this process again?

Each year the State is required to report local educational agencies (LEAs), which are called intermediate school districts (ISDs) in Michigan, with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education. As a result of analyzing disproportionate data and applying selection criteria, an ISD and/or member district may be required to complete a focused monitoring activity.

15. Will I be required to allocate 15% of my budget for Early Intervening Services?

No. Only ISDs identified with **Significant Disproportionality, not Disproportionate Representation**, are required to reserve 15% for Early Intervening Services. ISDs with ratios greater than 3.0 for two consecutive years, as determined by the appropriate methodology for calculating significant disproportionality, are identified with significant disproportionality.