

Questions To Help Look at Performance and Progress

1. What is our data history and what are people talking about in this area? What is the story behind the data?
2. What is the state's "climate" and history?
 - Changes in legislation or policy
 - Leadership changes
 - Compliance agreements/case law
 - Changes in procedures, definitions or procedures
 - Disputes
 - Parent advocacy
 - Philosophical disagreements
 - Stakeholder involvement
 - Collaboration with other agencies, programs, etc.
 - The press
3. Are the data that were used to create the indicator accurate, valid, and reliable? That is, can they be trusted?
 - Do they have face validity? Why or why not?
 - What efforts have been made to assure that definitions are used consistently across the state?
 - What type of training is provided to data collectors in the state? To whom is it provided? How often? How are new staff trained?
 - How long have these data been collected with the same definitions and instructions?
 - Does the state have at least three years of data available to establish a trend?
 - Have the data shown erratic changes over time? Are they reliable?
 - What edit checks are in place for data coming from districts/Part C local programs?
 - When monitoring district/Part C local programs, what reviews of district/Part C local program data are included to examine the validity and reliability of their data?
 - To what extent is there missing data? Have all districts/Part C local programs provided data? Have charter schools, separate schools, etc. provided data?
 - Are the number of students, children (personnel, etc.) large enough that the state feels confident in making generalizations from the data?
 - If the data are not accurate, valid, and reliable, how can the data be improved?

4. To what can the state compare itself?
 - Its own targets
 - Its state data over time (trends)
 - National averages/medians
 - Comparable state(s)
 - General education/other early childhood programs in the state
 - Other mandates (e.g., requirements of NCLB)/standards/expectations
 - Other
5. Is the progress/slippage consistently distributed across:
 - Districts/Part C local programs (e.g., geographic regions, district/program size, etc.)?
 - Student/child populations (e.g., disability categories, grades/ages, other demographics)?
6. If progress/slippage is not consistently distributed, what distinguishes those districts/Part C local programs that exhibit progress and slippage?
 - Have they implemented a particular demonstration program, curricula, personnel training program?
 - Do they have other things in common?
7. Are there other state and district/Part C local program data available to explain progress or slippage?
8. What are the key factors that the state can control that facilitate performance?
 - Research
 - Logic models
 - Information on successful state/districts/Part C local programs
9. What might be the barriers to improved performance (i.e., what are the causes)?
 - State policies
 - Funding
10. What has the state already undertaken or have planned (see #11)? What are the results of any completed projects?

11. How best might the state affect improved performance in this area?
- Gather additional stakeholder input
 - Revise state policies and/or procedures
 - Collect, analyze and report new data
 - Provide targeted TA and/or training
 - Produce and disseminate or post (on the web) guidance documents, reference materials, forms and/or other tools
 - Develop and promote model sites
 - Refine/extend curricular materials
 - Refine ways of monitoring or measuring performance
 - Develop new inter- or intra- agency agreements, plans and communication protocols
 - Conduct efforts to strengthen parent-community relations
 - Extend marketing/public relations efforts
 - Re-allocate/re-structure resources and staffing
12. How might the state monitor implementation of its plans?

Questions on Part B Preschool and School-Age LRE

1. Are there geographical differences in the LRE data patterns? Do rural or urban districts tend to serve children more often in separate schools/facilities? Or, do they tend more often to educate children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers?
2. If districts are large, are there differences within school districts?
3. What differences exist in the LRE data patterns for different disability categories, genders, grades, race/ethnicity, etc.?
4. Are there any state or local regulations or policies in place (e.g., funding formula) that promote the use of separate schools/facilities? Or, are there regulations or policies that promote inclusion?
5. In focused monitoring, is the state examining these data? If so, what are the results of these examinations?
6. Is the state's monitoring data connected to the database with the educational environments data? Or, can these data be merged to look at the relationship between monitoring findings and the educational environments data?
7. What is the state finding through its monitoring?
8. Do any enforcement actions exist?
9. Are grant funds or special projects being targeted to problem districts or model districts?
10. What projects that promote inclusion have been implemented? What have been their results?
11. Are data available on whether projects that promote inclusion have faithfully implemented the intended practices? If so, what do they show?
12. What do districts that show greater inclusion have in common? What do districts that show less inclusion have in common?

Questions on Graduation/Dropout

1. What differences exist across districts in graduation/dropout rates?
2. Do graduation requirements differ across districts? Do some districts have their own exit exams? Do districts offer different types of diplomas?
3. Do districts differ in the number of students with disabilities who are exempted from the State's exit exam (if one exists)?
4. Do differences exist across districts in the types of State diplomas (regular, IEP, etc.) awarded?
5. Within school districts, what differences exist across schools in graduation/dropout rates?
6. What commonalities exist across districts/schools that have high graduation/dropout rates?
7. What commonalities exist across districts/schools that have low graduation/dropout rates?
8. What feeder schools do students come from in districts/schools with high/low graduation/dropout rates? What programs, etc. are in place in these feeder schools that promote attendance, low numbers of disciplinary actions, successful middle school to high school transition, etc. (other factors known to be associated with graduation)?
9. What programs/structures are available in districts/schools with high graduation/low dropout rates? For example, do they have remedial reading and math programs, schools within schools, etc? How do the programs/structures available differ in low graduation/high dropout rate districts?
10. What student characteristics are related to graduation/dropping out? Disability? Gender? Race/ethnicity? Other?
11. Do students' ages at dropping out differ across districts/schools? For example, are students dropping out at younger ages in some districts/schools? If so, what do these districts/schools have in common?
12. Do districts/schools that provide greater access to the general education curriculum have higher graduation rates/low dropout rates?
13. Do districts/schools that have large proportions of students with disabilities taking classes in core content areas have higher graduation rates/low dropout rates?
14. Do districts/schools with higher proportions of highly qualified teachers have higher graduation rates/lower dropout rates?