

Indicator 1: Graduation Fact Sheet

WHAT DOES THIS INDICATOR MEASURE?

Indicator 1 measures the percentage of youth with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), ages 14-21, exiting special education with a regular high school diploma. To calculate indicator 1:

- (1) Take the number of youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma;
- (2) Divide that number by the number of all youth with IEPs (ages 14-21) who left special education;
- (3) The result is the percentage of youth exiting special education with a regular high school diploma.

The following categories of youth with IEPs who exited special education are included in the number of all youth with IEPs who left special education:

- (a) Graduated with a regular high school diploma;
- (b) Graduated with a state-defined alternate diploma;
- (c) Received a certificate;
- (d) Reached maximum age; or
- (e) Dropped out.

The following categories of youth with IEPs who exited special education are **not** included in the number of all youth with IEPs who left special education:

- (a) Transferred to regular education; or
- (b) Moved but are known to be continuing in an educational program.

WHAT ARE THE DATA CONSIDERATIONS?

Data Source

Data are collected from the Education Management Information System (EMIS) Student Standing, Special Education Event, Special Education Graduation, Assessment and Student Detail files.

How has this Indicator Changed?

1. Indicator 1 no longer measures the four-year graduation rate, though the number of all youth with IEPs who left special education remains the same.
2. Indicator 1 no longer corresponds to report card data. This means indicator 1 data no longer provide a comparison of graduation rates for students with disabilities to students without disabilities.
3. Indicator 1 now aligns to the “Federal Graduation Rate,” the *EDFacts* Exiting Report, to measure the percentage of students with disabilities exiting special education with a regular high school diploma by meeting the same requirements as students without disabilities.

Data Notes

1. Students with disabilities taking alternate assessments, excused from consequences of standard high school assessments or graduating by meeting their IEP goals are included in the total number of youth with IEPs who left special education but not the number of youth with IEPs who graduated with a regular high school diploma for this calculation. These students are not counted as graduates as required for this calculation.
2. Ohio has one diploma and does not have a certificate. However, students with disabilities cannot be counted as graduates receiving a regular high school diploma if they do so by meeting requirements not available to students without disabilities and instead must be counted as receiving a certificate.
3. Graduation rates are difficult to compare across years due to changing graduation requirements for the classes of 2018, 2019 and 2020. (See the Programmatic Considerations on pages 2-3 for more information regarding changing graduation requirements.)
4. Ohio received a [2021 Special Education Determination](#) score of *Needs Assistance for the second year in a row*. This determination was due to earning zero points for the graduation rate (indicator 1) and the dropout rate (indicator 2) for students with disabilities. A score of zero means Ohio is in the lowest performing group of states on these measures.

HOW HAS OHIO PERFORMED COMPARED TO THE NATION?

Percentage of Students with Disabilities Who Graduated with a Regular High School Diploma 2018-2019

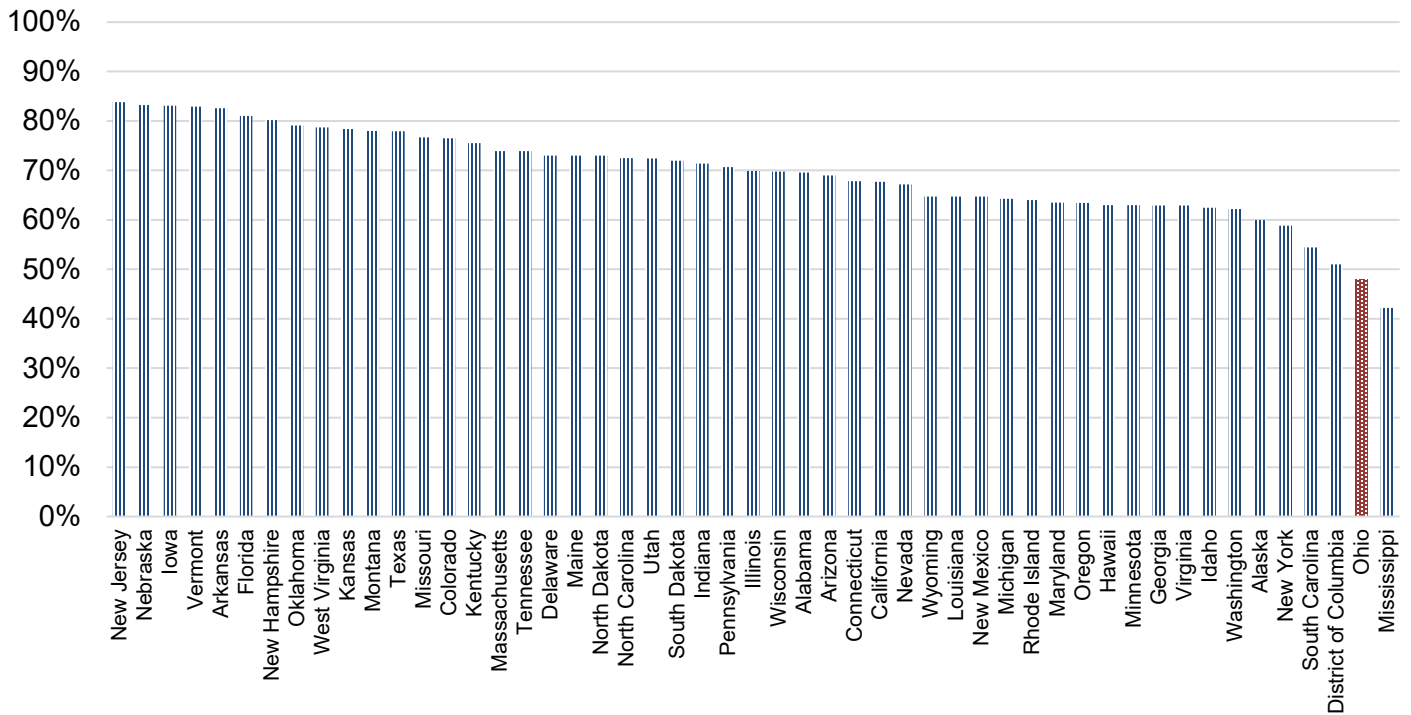


Figure 1. Ohio's percentage of students with disabilities who graduated with a regular high school diploma in 2018-2019 was the second lowest in the nation at 48%, excluding U.S. territories with very small student populations.

HOW HAS OHIO PERFORMED OVER TIME?

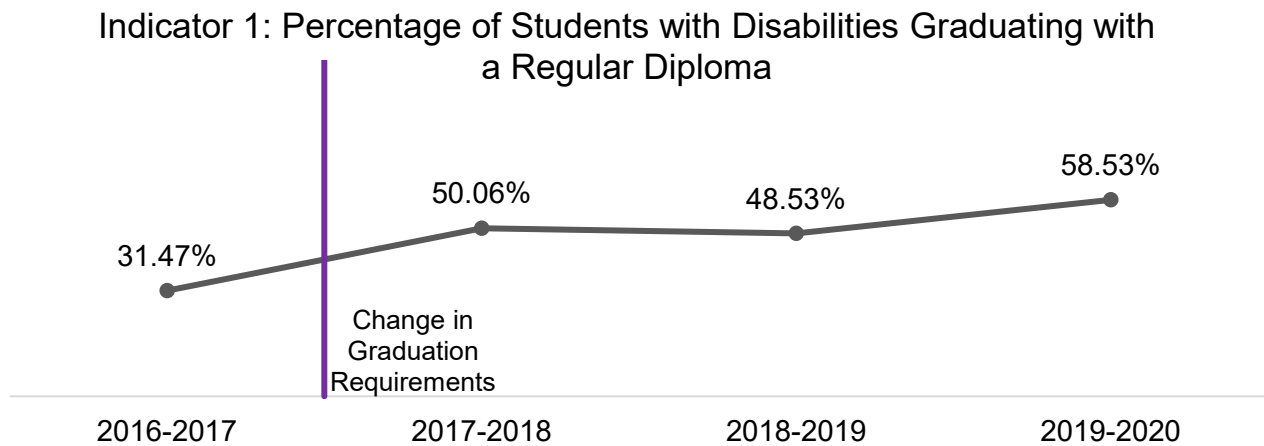


Figure 2. Ohio’s percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma increased from 31.47% to 58.53% over four years. Graduation requirements changed for all students starting with the class of 2018, allowing more students with disabilities to be counted as receiving a regular diploma.

Table 1. Number of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma and exiting school, percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma and the change in percentage from 2016-2017 through 2019-2020.

Indicator 1: Graduation by Standard Requirements	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Number of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma	6,741	10,564	10,296	12,060
Number of students with disabilities exiting school	21,418	21,102	21,217	20,606
Percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma	31.47%	50.06%	48.53%	58.53%
Change in percentage	n/a	+18.59%	-1.53%	+10.00%

WHAT ARE THE PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS?

Strategies and Initiatives

1. The Office for Exceptional Children’s next State Systemic Improvement Plan will focus on improving graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates for students with disabilities.
2. In June 2021, the Office for Exceptional Children released the [11 District Plan](#) in response to the [Doe Settlement](#). This plan outlines increased supports from the Ohio Department of Education for students with disabilities in 11 targeted districts. However, the resources and other supports developed will be available statewide and therefore accessible to any district. In 2019-2020, the 11 Districts included 15.7% of Ohio’s students with disabilities and 12.12% of all Ohio’s students. Improvement in the graduation rate for students with disabilities has been included as an objective within the plan. In addition, the plan includes an objective related to parents’ understanding that their children with IEPs can stay in school until age 22 or until the students meet the requirements for graduation that apply to students without a disability, whichever comes first. Activities include, but are not limited to, school and family training on graduation requirements and development of a Graduation Decision Framework.
3. In March 2021, the Office for Exceptional Children released [Each Child Means Each Child: Ohio’s Plan to Improve Learning Experiences and Outcomes for Students with Disabilities](#). This plan includes a focus on improved postsecondary transition and outcomes.
4. The Ohio Department of Education received a [Statewide Longitudinal Data System grant](#) to develop an Early Warning System and a Progress Toward Graduation reporting system within the Ohio District Data Exchange.

5. The Office for Exceptional Children is leading a state cross-agency initiative titled Establishing Families as Partners in the Secondary Transition Planning Process.
6. The Ohio Department of Education and Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities have developed an interagency agreement to increase access to vocational rehabilitation services starting at age 14. The initiative is called the Ohio Transition Support Partnership.
7. The Office for Exceptional Children has contracted with the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI) to develop an Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment Tool for district use as a resource to offer strategies on transition planning for students with autism spectrum disorders.
8. [Ohio's Alternate Assessment for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Decision Framework](#) likely will reduce the number of students participating in the alternate assessment. Students with disabilities taking the alternate assessment are not included in the number of students graduating by meeting standard requirements (the numerator for indicator 1). Students with disabilities are not counted as graduates receiving a regular high school diploma if they do so by meeting requirements not available to students without disabilities. By reducing the high rate of students with disabilities taking alternate assessments in Ohio, more students with disabilities will be eligible to meet standard graduation requirements.

Federal Legislation

9. State-defined alternate diplomas can no longer count toward a regular diploma for indicator 1. The alternate diploma will still count in the four-year graduation cohort calculations per the *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

State Legislation

10. New graduation requirements consisting of credits and three pathways to demonstrate competency were put into place for students in the class of 2018. Ohio law then allowed two additional options to earn a high school diploma for students in the [classes of 2018 and 2019](#) who did not meet any of the originally required pathways. The additional options allowed more students overall to earn a diploma and students with disabilities to graduate by the same requirements as typical peers. A slightly modified version of these additional options were continued for the [class of 2020](#). The additional options to meet graduation pathways were not in place for the [classes of 2021 and 2022](#).
11. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an emergency Ohio law was enacted that gave eligible students in the class of 2020 [graduation flexibility](#), allowing a course grade in lieu of assessment scores for graduation requirements. This option resulted in more students overall earning a diploma and more students with disabilities graduating by the same requirements available to typical peers. Ohio law continued [graduation flexibility](#) for students in the class of 2021. At this time the law does not allow graduation flexibility for the class of 2022.
12. Ohio's graduation requirements for the [classes of 2023 and beyond](#) offer multiple pathways to graduation. Ohio's newly adopted graduation requirements provide greater flexibility and acknowledge that students can demonstrate competency and readiness through a variety of mechanisms. The Ohio Department of Education anticipates students with disabilities will have more opportunity to graduate by standard requirements through these pathways.
13. Per Ohio Revised Code [3313.617](#), all students in grades 9-12 in Ohio are required to have graduation plans in place.
14. Per Ohio Revised Code [3313.617](#), districts must have a policy in place to identify students who are at-risk for not meeting graduation requirements and to develop intervention plans.

PROPOSED TARGETS

- Targets should be rigorous, yet attainable.
- Targets may remain the same several years in a row, though the final target year (2025-2026) must reflect improvement over baseline.
- The goal for indicator 1 is to be at or above the target.

Table 2. Proposed Target Table Option A.

Indicator Measure	2019-2020 Indicator Baseline	2019-2020 State Data	2020-2021 Proposed Target	2021-2022 Proposed Target	2022-2023 Proposed Target	2023-2024 Proposed Target	2024-2025 Proposed Target	2025-2026 Proposed Target
Percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular high school diploma	58.53%	58.53%	58.53%	58.55%	59.00%	59.50%	60.00%	60.50%
Data Year*	n/a	n/a	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025

*Due to data availability, Indicator 1 lags one year behind the other indicators for reporting purposes. Targets for this indicator reflect the reporting year rather than the year of the data. For example, the 2019-2020 graduation rate is held to the target for the 2020-2021 reporting year. The Data Year row of this table identifies the data year for each target.

Option A Rationale

- A more conservative set of targets will account for varied differences in graduation rates due to the changing graduation requirements as described above.
- Small incremental increases in the yearly targets will allow time for the impact of new graduation requirements for the class of 2023 to have an effect.
- In comparison to Ohio’s 2019-2020 performance, meeting the final target of 60.50% by 2025-2026 will require 407 more students with disabilities to graduate by standard requirements.

Table 3. Proposed Target Table Option B.

Indicator Measure	2019-2020 Indicator Baseline	2019-2020 State Data	2020-2021 Proposed Target	2021-2022 Proposed Target	2022-2023 Proposed Target	2023-2024 Proposed Target	2024-2025 Proposed Target	2025-2026 Proposed Target
Percentage of students with disabilities graduating with a regular high school diploma	58.53%	58.53%	60.00%	62.00%	64.00%	66.00%	68.00%	70.00%
Data Year*	n/a	n/a	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025

*Due to data availability, Indicator 1 lags one year behind the other indicators for reporting purposes. Targets for this indicator reflect the reporting year rather than the year of the data. For example, the 2019-2020 graduation rate is held to the target for the 2020-2021 reporting year. The Data Year row of this table identifies the data year for each target.

Option B Rationale

- Option B is a more rigorous option in comparison to Option A.
- Reaching 70% by the 2025-2026 school year would move Ohio from the lowest-performing group of states to the middle-performing group of states in the annual ranking and scoring for state Special Education Determinations by the U.S. Department of Education.
- Research supports high expectations of students with disabilities leads to increased graduation rates and improved post-school outcomes.
- In comparison to Ohio’s 2019-2020 performance, meeting the final target of 70% by 2025-2026 will require 2,364 more students with disabilities to graduate by standard requirements.