



Exceptional Student Services (ESS) Special Education Professional Check-In

**Significant Disproportionality Proposed
Cell Size Change**

June 19, 2025

Significant Disproportionality Introduction

What is significant disproportionality?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires states to collect and examine data to determine if significant disproportionality in special education based on race and ethnicity is occurring in the State and in public education agencies (PEAs).

State education agencies must examine and determine if disproportionality is occurring in PEAs with respect to:

- the **identification** of children as children with disabilities, including the identification of children as children with disabilities in accordance with a particular impairment that is described in IDEA;
- the **placement** in particular educational settings of these children; and
- the incidence, duration, and type of **disciplinary removals** from a student's placement, including suspensions and expulsions.

Significant Disproportionality Categories

Area	Details
Identification	<p>The identification of children, ages 3 through 21, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A disability• An intellectual disability• A specific learning disability• Emotional disturbance• Speech or language impairments• Other health impairments• Autism
Placement	<p>Placements of children with disabilities, ages 6 through 21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inside a regular class less than 40% of the day• Inside separate schools and residential facilities
Discipline	<p>Disciplinary removals involving children with disabilities ages 3 through 21:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of 10 days or fewer• Out-of-school suspensions and expulsions of more than 10 days• In-school suspensions of 10 days or fewer• In-school suspensions of more than 10 days• Disciplinary removals in total

Significant Disproportionality Categories (Cont.)

- Calculations for identification, placement and rates of disciplinary removal are made in the three areas for seven racial or ethnic groups
 - African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian, Hispanic or Latino
 - Multi-racial
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - White
- Rates are compared for each group to rates for all other children within the PEA. Where numbers are too small for comparison, the rates for each group is compared to the state's rate in that category
- These analyses must be done annually

Significant Disproportionality: Proposed Change

Current calculation using FY25 data

- Cell size = 10
- N size = 30
- Result: 12 PEAs are flagged

Proposed calculation using FY25 data

- Cell size = 11
- N size = 30
- Result: 10 PEAs are flagged

PEAs flagged for significant disproportionality in FY25 will be notified in August of 2025. Placement, discipline and identification data will be taken from SY 2022–2023, 2023–2024, and 2024–2025).

Notice of Public Comment Period

- Visit the [ADE Special Education Webiste](#)
- The public comment period for the proposed Significant Disproportionality Calculation Cell Size Change will be open between June 17, 2025, and July 27, 2025.
- Any individual or organization may submit written comments. The State will review and consider all comments after the public participation period.



The screenshot shows the ADE Special Education website. At the top, there is a banner with the text "SPECIAL EDUCATION" in white on a maroon background. Below the banner, there is a paragraph of text describing the role of Exceptional Student Services (ESS). Below the text, there are two columns of links. The left column is titled "Trending Topics" and contains a list of links, including "ESS Blog", "Important Dates Dashboard", "Special Education Professional Check-In", "Special Education Rules Change, Age of Transition - New!", "FY26 Data Reporting Updates", "Proposed Dispute Resolution Policies and Procedures - New!", "Public Posting and Comment Period", "State Complaint Procedures", "State Complaint Form (Paper)", "Mediation Guidelines and Procedures", "Due Process Procedures", "Proposed Significant Disproportionality Calculation Cell Size Change - New!", and "Public Posting and Comment Period Proposal". A red arrow points to the "Public Posting and Comment Period Proposal" link. The right column is titled "Trending Topics" and contains a list of links, including "(for Administrators, Educators, & Parents)", "Early Childhood Special Education", "Professional Learning & Sustainability", "Special Projects", and "Academic Achievement & Inclusive Practices".

Exceptional Student Services (ESS) ensures that public education agencies (PEAs) in Arizona have special education programs, policies, and procedures that comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its implementing regulations and that eligible children and youth with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). ESS provides professional learning opportunities and technical assistance to schools, supports the needs of families and students with disabilities, monitors schools for compliance with the regulations that implement the IDEA, and administers the IDEA Entitlement grant.

Trending Topics

[ESS Blog](#)
[Important Dates Dashboard](#)
[Special Education Professional Check-In](#)
[Special Education Rules Change, Age of Transition - New!](#)
[FY26 Data Reporting Updates](#)
[Proposed Dispute Resolution Policies and Procedures - New!](#)
[Public Posting and Comment Period](#)
[State Complaint Procedures](#)
[State Complaint Form \(Paper\)](#)
[Mediation Guidelines and Procedures](#)
[Due Process Procedures](#)
[Proposed Significant Disproportionality Calculation Cell Size Change - New!](#)
[Public Posting and Comment Period Proposal](#)

Trending Topics

(for Administrators, Educators, & Parents)
[Early Childhood Special Education](#)
[Professional Learning & Sustainability](#)
[Special Projects](#)
[Academic Achievement & Inclusive Practices](#)



Contact Us

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