Significant Disproportionality Calculation Cell Size Change Proposal

What is the proposed change?

The Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services (ADE/ESS) proposes increasing the minimum cell size from 10 to 11 on specific disproportionality calculations.

What is a minimum cell size?

The minimum cell size is the minimum number of students experiencing a particular outcome. In risk ratio calculation, the minimum cell size applies to the numerator in the fraction for calculating the risk for a racial or ethnic group. The minimum cell size also applies to the numerator in the fraction for calculating the risk of the comparison group, which is students in all other racial and ethnic groups.

What calculations would this change impact?

- Indicator 9 – Indicator 9 in the State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) compares the races/ethnicities of students with disabilities to the races/ethnicities of students without disabilities in a school district.

- Indicator 10 – Indicator 10 in the SPP/APR looks at different disability categories in a school district. Within each category, Indicator 10 will then compare the races/ethnicities of students.

- Significant Disproportionality - Significant disproportionality refers to the trend where students from certain racial and ethnic groups are overrepresented in special education, restrictive settings, or disciplinary actions.

Why is Arizona considering changing the minimum cell size?

Arizona must redact any public data with fewer than 10 students to protect student privacy. Increasing the cell size to 11 allows for greater transparency in showing the number of students involved in the calculation.

What impact will this change have on the data?

The impact of changing the cell size will be minimal. Looking at FY 2025 data, if the cell size changes from 10 to 11, two fewer PEAs would be flagged for Indicator 10 and Significant Disproportionality. The change would not impact Indicator 9 results.