May 2024

Dear Administrator of Special Education:

This letter provides essential information regarding data collection activities for State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) **Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes**. This year’s Indicator 14 data collection and reporting runs from Monday, May 20 until the **data submission deadline of September 20, 2024**. Your district will collect and report Indicator 14 data by contacting *all* of your former students with IEPs who exited during the 2022-2023 school year.

Last year, your district may have prepared for the Indicator 14 data collection by gathering contact information from exiting students with IEPs. If you did not do so at that time, you should use the most recent contact information available in your students’ files.

**Please read the instructions in this letter carefully, as some procedures may have changed since the last time your district collected Indicator 14 data.**

* In the past, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) required districts to record Indicator 14 data in an Excel workbook and upload it to the DESE Security Portal. In the new data reporting procedure, districts will complete the online *Massachusetts After High School Survey* available at <https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2024>. DESE is pleased to be able to offer the online survey in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. **See #7 below for details.**
* DESE has contracted with the Potsdam Institute for Applied Research at the State University of New York (PIAR) to assist DESE with Indicator 14 data collection, analysis, and reporting. **Please see #11 below for full details.**

**1. Background**

According to federal special education law, DESE must annually report data for each of the indicators contained in the Massachusetts Part B SPP/APR.[[1]](#endnote-2) Indicator 14 is one of the indicators for which DESE collects data each year from every school district. Your district will now begin to collect Indicator 14 data and submit it **on or before the due date of September 20, 2024**.

**2. Why is Indicator 14 important?**

The focus of Pre-K to 22 education in Massachusetts is to prepare our students for success in their adult lives. Indicator 14 follows up with former students with IEPs **one year after they leave high school** in order to find out whether they are engaged in employment and/or further education or training. This summative information gives us some indication of the success of our educational efforts at the state and local levels. Many districts find Indicator 14 highly informative, so much so that some choose to survey their former students even in years when they are not required to do so.

**3. What does Indicator 14 measure?**

Indicator 14 measures – on the district and state levels[[2]](#endnote-3) – the percentage of youths who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and within one year of leaving school were:

1. Enrolled in higher education, *or*
2. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed, or
3. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment

**4. Who is an “exiter”**?

“Exiters” are the former students you will now contact. These are **students with IEPs** who, during the 2022-2023 school year, dropped out, aged out (with or without a [certificate of attainment](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/cert-attainment.html)), or graduated with a diploma. These also include students with IEPs who exited from out-of-district placements for which the district was programmatically responsible. Students who did not have IEPs in effect at the time of their exit are **not** included in the Indicator 14 survey.

**5. Will districts survey *every* exiter?**

Yes, with two exceptions: The school district is not responsible for conducting the [*Massachusetts After High School Survey*](https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2024) with students who resided in its jurisdiction but attended high school in another district(s), or when it has a grade tuition agreement with the other district. In such situations, the school in which the exiter was enrolled will report that student’s postsecondary outcomes data.

**6. Should our district use the *Indicator 14*** [***Massachusetts After High School Survey***](https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2024)**with exiters who were enrolled in Chapter 74 approved Career/Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) programs, even if these same exiters will be included in the *CVTE Graduate One-Year Follow-Up Survey* this year?**

Yes. To improve data quality, DESE has made this change to past practice. Both surveys must be administered to exiters with IEPs enrolled in CVTE programs. Generally the CVTE survey is administered through district guidance offices and the Indicator 14 survey through special education offices. DESE recommends that district guidance and special education offices coordinate their efforts. All questions on each survey must be completed, and each survey must be submitted to DESE according to the protocols and timelines of the Office of Special Education Planning & Policy Development (Indicator 14), or the Office of College, Career, and Technical Education (CCTE).

**7. What steps should districts now take to collect Indicator 14 data?**

1. **Obtain the list of your district’s exiters from the DESE Security Portal.**

First, arrange for your District Directory Administrator, from the list at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/data/diradmin/list.aspx>, to grant you access to the Indicator 14 dropbox on the DESE Security Portal. This dropbox is *not* inside the State Performance Plan dropbox.

Next, go to the DESE Security Portal, <https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us>, then navigate to **Dropbox Central**, then **Indicator 14**. Select your district and click “next.” Inside the DESE Outbox, you will see an Excel workbook with your district’s SIMS exiter file. The names and SASIDs of former students in this file were reported to DESE by your district in spring 2023 and comprise the complete list of your district’s exiters for Indicator 14 data collection: those who in 2022-2023 graduated, dropped out, or aged out (with or without a certificate of attainment). Download the workbook and save it to your computer. *If you believe there is an error on this list, refer to* [*FFY 2023 Indicator 14 Step-by-Step Instructions and Guidance (TA1)*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/)*. Follow the directions under the heading “Pre-Survey Preparation.”*

1. **Contact your exiters to administer the survey**.

Referring to the exiter contact information your district collected in spring 2023 for Indicator 14 and/or your student record system, contact the exiters from the Indicator 14 SIMS file to obtain the information required by the *Massachusetts After High School Survey*.

The online survey (<https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2024>) must be completed once for **each** of your district’s exiters. To ensure the highest possible response rate, please make **at least three attempts** to contact your former students. To increase the likelihood that they will respond, we suggest that you vary the means of contact and the time of day of your outreach. Use one or more of the following methods:

* **Email:** Send the exiter an email explaining why you are reaching out and giving them the option to (a) contact you so that you can complete the online survey with them or (b) use the online link above to complete the survey themselves. Additional instructions are in our [*FFY 2023 Indicator 14 Step-by-Step Instructions and Guidance (TA1)*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/)document.
* **Telephone:** Complete the online survey on behalf of the exiter while you have them on the phone. For additional guidance, please see [*Sample Script for Telephone Contact – Technical Assistance 2*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/) posted on our website.
* **U.S. Mail:** Send the exiter a letter explaining why you are reaching out and giving them the option to (a) contact you so that you can complete the online survey with them, (b) use the online survey link above to complete the survey themselves, or (c) complete a paper copy of the survey and mail it back to you. A [*Translated Outreach Letter*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/) and additional instructions are in the [*FFY 2023 Indicator 14 Step-by-Step Instructions and Guidance (TA1)*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/)document on our website.
  + **Social Media:** Announce on your school’s or district’s official social media account(s) that you are conducting the survey and ask exiters to call or visit you so that you can complete the online survey with them. (DO NOT post the online link to the survey on social media, because you don’t want anyone but 2022-2023 exiters with IEPs to complete it.)
* **In Person:** Complete the survey with the exiter online or on paper (and then enter the data online later). A printable version of the can be found [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/). **If you are unable to reach a former student, it is acceptable to obtain Indicator 14 information from the parent or guardian, if you are confident the information is accurate.**

1. **Fill in the online response form.**

When all exiters have been surveyed, or when you have attempted to contact everyone on the list at least three times and collected as many responses as possible, enter your information into the online form by **September 20, 2024.** PIAR will monitor the number of online survey responses for your district as compared to the number of exiters in your SIMS data, and will contact you regularly to let you know how many exiters are responding as the weeks go by.

**8. What is the online survey link?**

<https://bit.ly/WorkSchoolSurvey2024>

**9. How can districts ensure a high response rate?**

The greatest challenge in Indicator 14 data collection is to achieve a high response rate. Although districts are seeking important information, it can be difficult to track down mobile former students who may not wish to make a connection with their past. In addition, the COVID-19 crisis has stretched thin many people’s capacity to engage with activities that may not seem essential to them.

Suggestions to optimize your district’s response rate:

* Former students with IEPs who have dropped out are often the most difficult to find, but we need to know what happened to them. Because district CVTE personnel are required to survey former students every year, you may wish to ask them for contact advice. If your district has a student re-engagement center, collaborate with center staff to find students who dropped out during the 2022-2023 school year *but did not re-enroll in high school.*
* National research shows that exiters are more likely to respond to an approach from someone they know and trust. Consider having teachers, guidance counselors, or other well-liked staff do the outreach. This is not a requirement, but *it is the most effective strategy you can use* to ensure a high response rate. Whatever strategy your district uses is entirely at your discretion.
* To increase the usefulness and importance of the call to the exiter, have on hand helpful resources such as lists of community college contacts and financial aid information, upcoming job fairs, and/or contact information for your local [Independent Living Center](https://www.mass.gov/independent-living-centers), [MassHire Career Center](https://www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers), or [Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)](https://www.mass.gov/vocational-rehabilitation/locations?_page=1) office. Sharing these kinds of resources will improve the reputation of the survey and may encourage other exiters to contact you.
* Consider publicizing the survey effort via public-access television, website, flyers, etc.
* Some students may need assistive technology, translation, or other support. Make plans to ensure that these students can successfully participate in the survey. This year, the Indicator 14 survey is available online or on paper in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole.

**10. What additional resources are available to assist districts with data collection?**

Several documents designed to assist you are available [on our website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/indicators/indicator14/):

1. FFY 2023 Indicator 14 Step-by-Step Instructions and Guidance (TA1)
2. Sample Script for Telephone Contact – Technical Assistance 2
3. Translated Outreach Letter Technical Assistance 3
4. Printable versions of the Massachusetts After High School Survey in six languages

**11. What happens after the collection of Indicator 14 data?**

After the data collection period ends, DESE begins work on analyzing and reporting the data to the federal Office of Special Education Programs in the yearly SPP/APR submission. Public Reporting data is typically available in May after submission. Starting in 2024, DESE began issuing district reports. These provide not only a high-level overview of how each district performed in their response rate and the post-school engagement of their exiters, but also disaggregated data broken down into various demographics and categories. These reports will be available in the Indicator 14 Dropbox on the Security Portal in late winter or early spring. More information will be released from DESE about these reports, their availability, and training opportunities for how to read them.

**12. Where can districts request Indicator 14 assistance?**

1. For questions about the online survey (e.g., how to access it or whether your district’s exiters have completed it), **please contact PIAR representative Patrick Cerio at** [**piarmass14@potsdam.edu**](mailto:ceriopg@potsdam.edu)**, 888-419-2697, or 315-267-2718.** Patrick has clearance to discuss individual exiter information with school staff, should schools wish to know whether specific exiters have responded to the survey.
2. For all other Indicator 14 questions, please contact Martha Daigle, [Martha.S.Daigle@mass.gov](mailto:Martha.S.Daigle@mass.gov) or 781-338-3366.

Remember that Massachusetts has transitioned to statewide Indicator 14 data collection, so your district will continue to collect Indicator 14 data every year from now on. We encourage you to collect contact information from your 2023-2024 exiters so that you can be ready for the 2025 data collection.

Thank you for your assistance with Indicator 14 data collection and for the work you do on behalf of children and youth with disabilities in the Commonwealth. I look forward to working with you on this project.

Best regards,

Jamie L. Camacho

Acting State Director of Special Education

1. The MA Part B SPP and APR are available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/spp/maspp.html>. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. District level reporting is available at <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)