Significant Disproportionality
Proposed Recommendation
September 25, 2024

Many of the standards, policies, and procedures suggested in the Workgroup's previous recommendations are also essential for addressing, reducing, and ultimately eliminating significant disproportionality in identification/eligibility, placement, and discipline. These previous recommendations include:

- Achievement of grade-level standards by all students with disabilities, [1] establishing the legal requirements of the IEP process, and holding LEAs accountable for implementation (Rec 1, 2, and 8)
  - <Note> [1] Students who are eligible for participation in the alternate assessment must have meaningful access to and make progress in grade-level content standards and meet alternate academic achievement standards.
- Increased resources (Rec 10–12)
- Standards related to: evidence-based specially designed instruction (Rec 4), staffing plans and service delivery models allocations (Rec 9), and positions like paraprofessionals and IEP chairs (Rec 9)
- Direct support and coaching of IEP teams and LEAs from MSDE (Rec 5)
- Ensuring educators and administrators have the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise through EPPs, professional learning, and licensure requirements (Rec7)

In addition, the Workgroup recommends that:

MSDE should develop a plan for a plan with specific tasks and timelines for reducing and eliminating significant disproportionality in identification/eligibility, placement, and discipline. The plan should involve the development of a statewide approach with standards and guidance, stakeholder feedback, TA and professional development, and monitoring, and should include:

- Review of Maryland's methodology for determining significant disproportionality with attention to data timeliness, flexibility currently afforded to LEAs with decreasing risk ratios, and the different standards for general and special education.
- Development of standardized eligibility determination checklists for all disability categories.
- Models for innovative uses of CCEIS funds.
- Identification of root causes including structural causes and explicit and implicit bias in tools and staff.
- Development of standards and guidance about responding to behavior in ways that address underlying student needs, review local codes of conduct, and consider alternative approaches including Restorative Practices.