

[eBook]

The Guide to Using Student Data to Increase Equity in K-12 Schools



Areas of Focus:

- Federal Equity Laws and K-12 Accountability
- Leveraging Disaggregated Data to Identify Disproportionate Outcomes
- Acting on Data Insights to Improve Equity in your district



This comprehensive guide delves into federal laws designed to increase equity in K-12 schools. It demonstrates how how disaggregated student data¹ not only aids districts in meeting federal accountability requirements but also empowers district leaders to assess the impact of their policies and programs on specific subgroups within their student populations.



1. **Disaggregated data** refers to data that has been segmented into specific sub-categories such as marginalized groups, genders, schools, or grade levels. This type of data can uncover disparities that may not be fully apparent when looking at data in its aggregated form.



Using Data to Move Toward a More Equitable K-12

Key Insights:

- Federal legislation dating back to 1965 have held schools accountable for tracking and reporting data related to equity.
- Disproportionalities in K-12 schools persist in areas like discipline, chronic absenteeism, special education placement, and academic achievement.
- Disaggregated student data can help districts identify disproportionalities and intervene.

“With this bill, we reaffirm that fundamentally American ideal – that every child, regardless of race, income, background, the zip code where they live, deserves the chance to make of their lives what they will.”

-President Barack Obama Every Student Succeeds Act



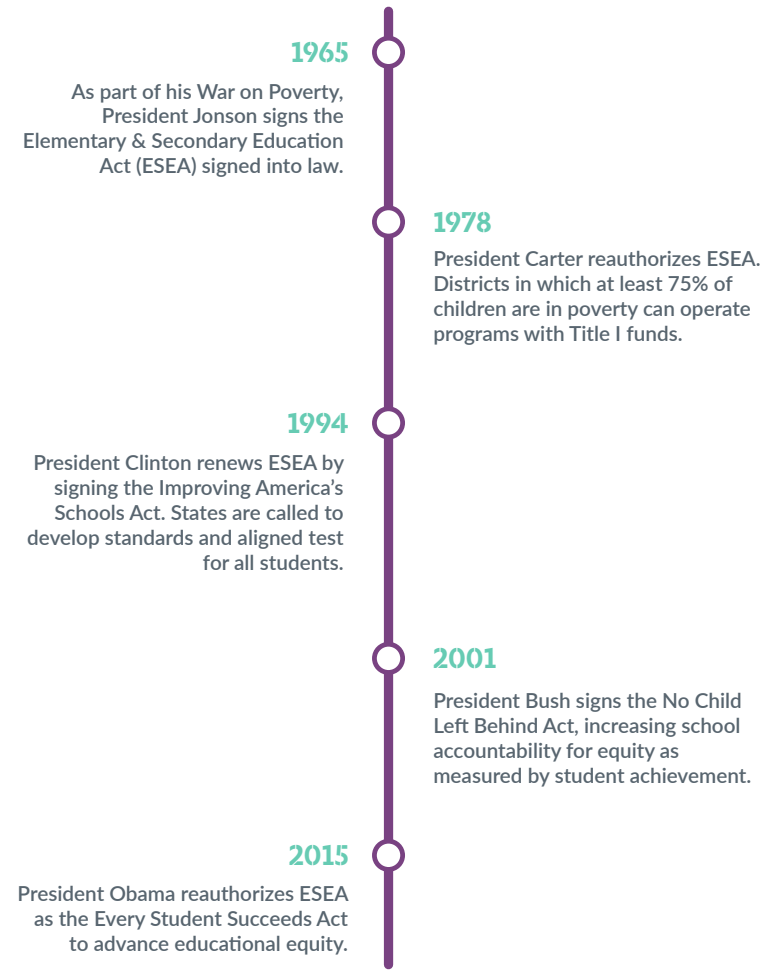
State Accountability for Increasing Educational Equality for All Students

At the height of the Civil Rights Movement, President Lyndon Johnson, signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) with the goal of providing every child with a “Full Educational Opportunity.” The law has since been reauthorized six times, each with varying strategies for increasing educational equity in America’s schools.

Section 1111 of the current iteration, The Every Student Succeeds Act, mandates that states and districts develop accountability frameworks to collect and report data on indicators of student opportunity, access, and achievement.

These include:

- Academic performance
- Student growth
- Graduation rates
- English language proficiency
- Indicators of school quality
- Indicators of student success





Assessing Data to Identify Attendance Barriers

Are there significant differences in the rates of students who are chronically absent?

Many states incorporate **chronic absenteeism** as a significant indicator within their accountability frameworks. See a comparison of all 50 states' school accountability frameworks [here](#), including the data points and indicators each tracks. With disaggregated data, districts can identify disparities in rates of chronic absenteeism by:

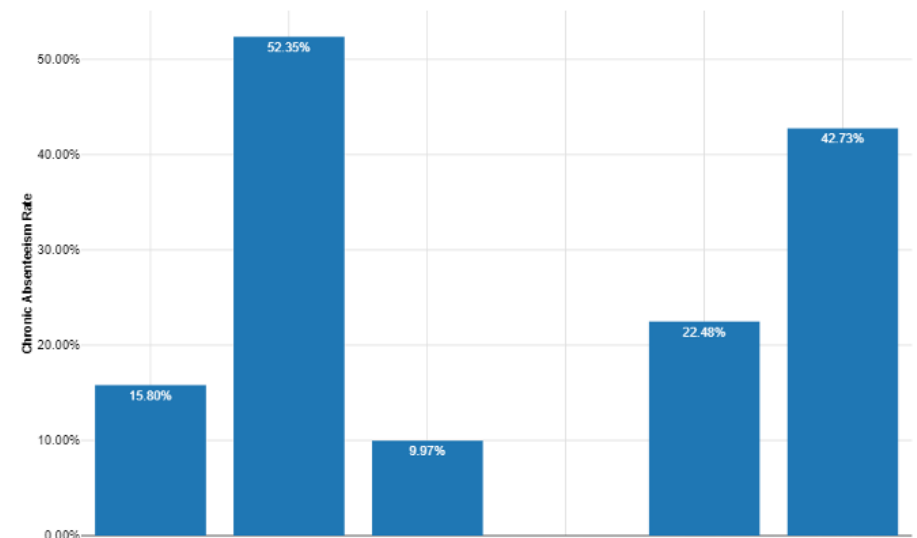
- School
- Grade level
- Gender
- Racial or ethnic group
- IEP or LEP status



Key Takeaway

Visualizing disaggregated chronic absenteeism data enables districts to identify schools with greater rates of chronically absent students. From there, districts can evaluate school transportation routes, programming, caregiver communication, or policy to identify potential solutions.

Rate of Chronically Absent Students Across District Schools



The chart above shows the rate of chronically absent students in a district's six schools. Two schools emerge as outliers with 52% and 42% of students qualifying as chronically absent.



Determining Disciplinary Disparities

Is discipline distributed evenly across sub-groups?

In addition to academic performance metrics, ESSA requires states to report discipline-related data, such as:

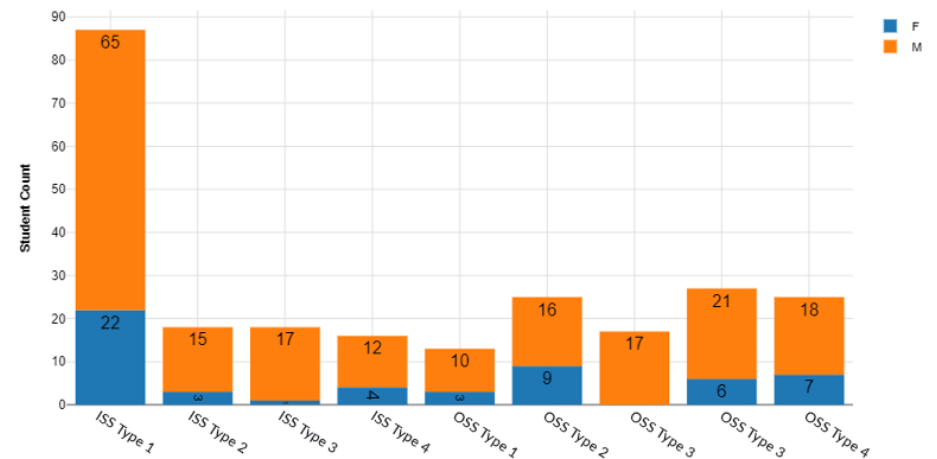
- In-school suspensions
- Out-of-school suspensions
- Expulsions

Moving beyond federal legislation compliance.

These data points and the insights districts can gain from analyzing disaggregated data in relation to them, can provide critical insights into school climate and potential inequities in disciplinary practices.

The chart below displays one district's data on disciplinary consequences disaggregated by gender. It shows that male students receive more consequences across the board.

Share of Male and Female Students Who Received Disciplinary Consequences



Why are male students receiving more disciplinary consequences than female students?

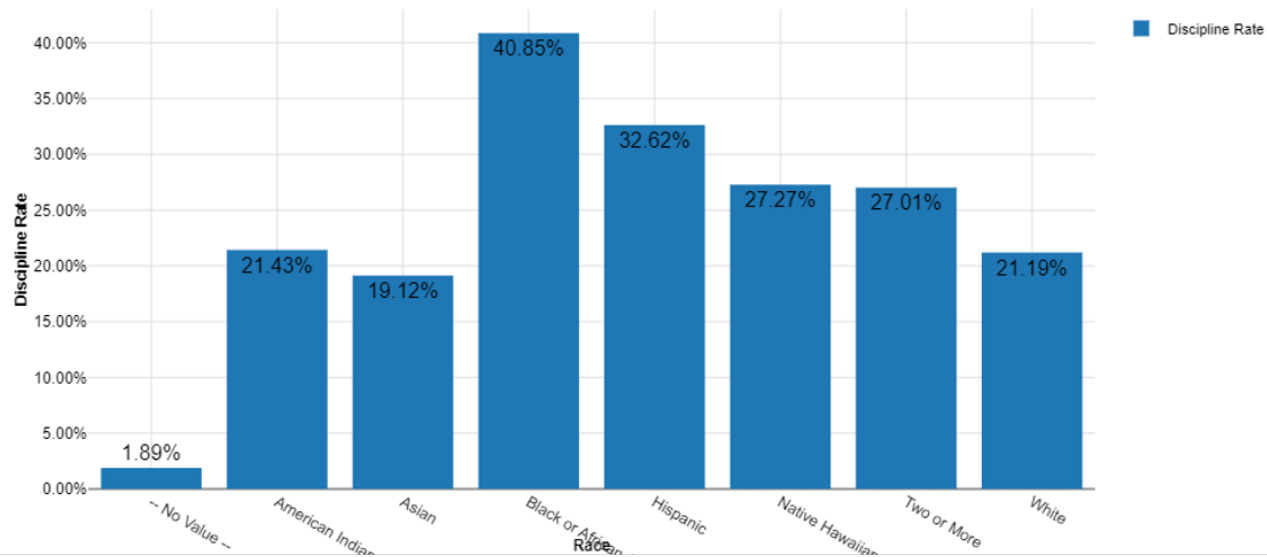
Strategies for Moving From Data to Action

- Assess discipline policies and curricula for gender biases.
- Re-engage male students with more equitable policies and curricula.
- Provide staff with training to recognize gender bias.



Using Data to Identify Racial Disparities in K-12 Discipline

Similarly, the chart below displays the breakdown of total students who received each consequence by race. Disaggregating data by race allows districts to identify sub-groups of students who may disproportionately receive disciplinary consequences. The chart below shows that 45% of all students who identify as Black or African American received a disciplinary consequence. That's 20% more than the share of white students who received a disciplinary consequence.





Using Data to Ensure Equal Educational Opportunity for Students with Disabilities

In 1975, ten years after ESEA was signed into action, Congress enacted Public Law 94-142, the predecessor of The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Like ESEA, the goal was to support states and local education agencies in meeting the needs of students with disabilities in the school setting.

The law grants states financial assistance if they submit a plan showing that they are prepared to meet twenty-five conditions, one of which includes **overidentification and disproportionality**:

The State has in effect, consistent with the purposes of this chapter and with section 1418(d) of this title, policies and procedures designed to prevent the inappropriate overidentification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities, including children with disabilities with a particular impairment described in section 1401 of this title.

Like ESSA, IDEA emphasizes the importance of data in ensuring appropriate support for students with disabilities. IDEA requires districts to monitor for significant disproportionality in three key areas:

1. Special education identification
2. Special education placement
3. Disciplinary action

“All children with disabilities have a right to education, and to establish a process by which State and local educational agencies may be held accountable for providing educational services for all handicapped children.”

-The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975



Using Disaggregated Data to Reveal Special Education Inequities

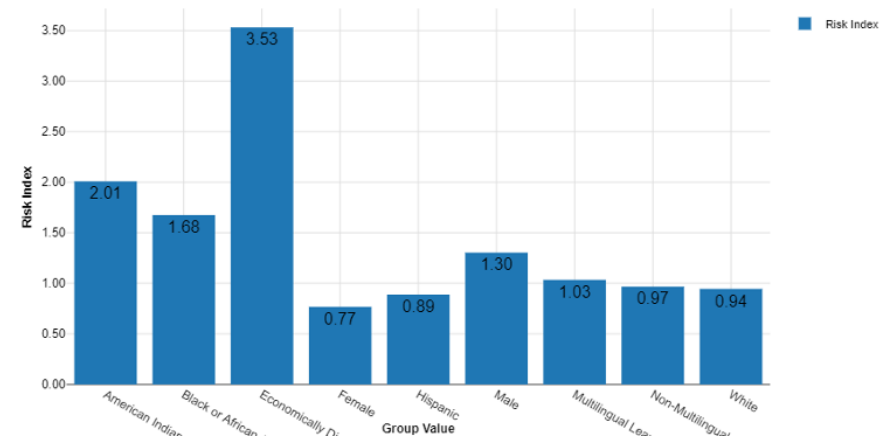
By closely tracking special education and IEP data, districts can quickly determine whether their special education identification and placement procedures are equitable for students across demographic groups. Doing so enables districts to ensure that all students receive the support they need while avoiding overidentification of certain groups.

“Students from low-income families are more often placed in substantially separate classrooms where expectations for success tend to be worse, and stigma associated with special education is higher.”²

2. Schifter, Grindal, Schwartz, & Hehir (2019). Student from Low-Income Families and Special Education

For instance, the chart below shows that economically disadvantaged students are three and a half times more likely to be placed in special education than students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Special Education Placement by Demographic Factors



— READY TO OPTIMIZE YOUR DATA?

The power of disaggregated data extends beyond complying to federal laws. It can empower districts to identify inequities, pinpoint potential causes, and make smarter decisions to elevate education for all students.

Explore Frontline's Student Analytics Lab, a single platform that joins and disaggregates your student data enabling you to point and click your way to a more equitable K-12.

FrontlineEducation.com/analytics-software/student-performance-data/ →

About Frontline Education

Frontline Education is a leading provider of school administration software, connecting solutions for student and special programs, business operations and human capital management with powerful data and analytics to empower educators. Frontline partners with school systems to deliver tools, data and insights that support greater efficiency and productivity, enabling school leaders to spend more time and resources executing strategies that drive educator effectiveness, student success and district excellence. Frontline's broad portfolio includes solutions for proactive recruiting and hiring, absence and time management, professional growth, student information systems, special education, special programs, Medicaid reimbursement, school health management, inventory control and asset management, payroll, benefits, and financial management. Over 9,500 school districts representing millions of educators, administrators and support personnel have partnered with Frontline Education in their efforts to develop the next generation of learners.