

# State Performance Plan

## Indicator 1: Graduation Rate



### Description of Stakeholder Engagement Activities & Results:

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is currently developing the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) for the new six-year cycle for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2020-2025. NYSED obtained stakeholder input using two central approaches:

- Broad public engagement and input through online surveys between October and November 2021; and
- Virtual meetings with stakeholder groups in November 2021.

The Office of Special Education (OSE) created a [Stakeholder Involvement](#) webpage with SPP/APR resources to promote feedback and engagement. This included a message from New York State Board of Regent member, Regent Cea, about the [SPP Stakeholder Meetings](#), an [SPP Stakeholder Invitation Letter](#), [At-a-Glance State Performance Plan Summary of Indicators 1-17](#), [Getting to Know New York's SPP/APR Handout](#), and SPP/APR FFY 2020-2025: [General Overview Presentation](#).

For Indicator 1, the OSE created the following resources designed to engage stakeholders and build capacity in data analysis, evaluating progress in meeting New York State targets, the consideration of existing improvement activities, and the development of potential new improvement activities:

#### Resource Links

##### [Indicator 1: Graduation Rate Handout](#)

*A summary of the new calculation used to measure this Indicator, as well as the definition of a regular high school diploma and its requirements in New York State.*

##### [Introduction and Measurement Description](#)

*An overview of frequently used terms and explanation of the Indicator 1 measurement.*

##### [Statewide Data Trends and Comparisons](#)

*Past trend data to evaluate New York State's progress in this Indicator and graduation rate data for selected subgroups of students with disabilities.*

##### [Improvement Strategies](#)

*An explanation of existing improvement activities and presentation of potential new activities to promote outcomes in this Indicator.*

##### [Target Setting](#)

*Presentation of NYSED's proposed Indicator 1 targets and methodology used to establish targets.*

##### [Closing](#)

*Additional resources to provide feedback and to access school district performance on this Indicator.*

# Soliciting Public Input

## *Virtual Stakeholder Meetings*

Five virtual stakeholder meetings were held for Indicator 1. Meetings occurred both during the day and in the evening to accommodate different schedules. A total of 93 stakeholders participated in the meetings, including 12 parents. The meetings included an overview of the SPP/APR and viewing of the pre-recorded webinar modules. Each session sought stakeholder feedback on what stood out to them about the trend data and how to use this data to set targets and develop or strengthen improvement activities addressing graduation rates, whether the proposed SPP targets for Indicator 1 were rigorous but attainable and any other feedback participants had regarding Indicator 1.

## *Online Survey*

Between October to November 2021, a total of 82 stakeholders completed the online survey for Indicator 1. The Indicator 1 online survey sought stakeholder feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of existing improvement activities in making progress toward graduation rate outcomes, whether participants supported potential new improvement activities, and whether the proposed SPP targets for Indicator 1 were rigorous but attainable.

Themes of the stakeholder feedback received in the virtual meetings and online surveys on Indicator 1 included:

- Providing additional support to students with disabilities with an Emotional Disturbance classification and those in the juvenile justice system.
- Creating more and better graduation options for students with disabilities.
- Considering the impact of COVID-19 on graduation rates for students with disabilities.
- Removing the requirements to pass the Regents examinations to earn a high school diploma.

Following the collection of stakeholder feedback from the online survey and virtual meetings, internal workgroups comprised of NYSED OSE and Information and Reporting Services reviewed stakeholder responses to identify where recommendations for target-setting and/or improvement strategies could be amended to better align with the input received from parents, school administrators, educators, advocacy organizations, community members and other interested parties. The results of the OSE's incorporation of stakeholder feedback and evaluation of Indicator 1 progress with stakeholders are reflected in NYSED's 2020-2025 SPP/APR targets and OSE's development of improvement strategies as summarized further in this report.

## Stakeholder Meetings & Online Survey

Five virtual stakeholder meetings were held to discuss Indicator 1

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> 1:00 – 3:30 PM

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> 1:00 – 3:30 PM

Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> 6:00 – 8:30 PM

Nov. 19<sup>th</sup> 9:00 – 11:30 AM

A total of 93 stakeholders participated in the meetings, including 12 parents.

An online survey was published to collect stakeholder feedback over a six-week period.

A total of 82 stakeholders completed an online survey, including 29 parents.

NYSED values its partnership with parents and other key stakeholders in our ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities throughout New York State. Thank you to all who participated in a meeting or survey.

# Feedback on Improvement Strategies

Following the evaluation of Indicator 1 trend data (past targets and performance), stakeholder presentations included a description of improvement strategies with requested feedback on what activities should be considered, maintained, or strengthened to address improvements in high school graduation rates. The presented information and solicited feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including parents and educators, is intended to increase capacity to support activities around improving student outcomes and meeting the objectives of Indicator 1.

## Improvement Strategies Presented:

*Existing Improvement Activities to Improve Indicator 1 Outcomes:* The OSE presentation included a description of Coordinated Intervention District (CID) and Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) reviews (both self and, in New York City, collaborative) on secondary transition, the safety net and superintendent determination options, multiple pathways to graduation and the OSE Educational Partnership targeted professional development resources to improve graduation rates in New York State.

*Potential New Improvement Strategies to Improve Indicator 1 Outcomes:* The OSE presented three potential improvement activities for stakeholder consideration, i.e., conducting educational workshops for families on topics such as diploma and credential options, transition, etc.; conducting a SEQA Review focusing on implementation of the coordinated set of transition activities/services on students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and conducting additional outreach to parent groups (e.g., Requiring schools monthly informational zoom meetings or newsletters on these and other topics).

## **Stakeholder Feedback on Improvement Strategies:**

Participants of the online survey were asked to rate the effectiveness of the existing improvement activities to improve Indicator 1 outcomes. When asked to rate effectiveness on a scale of 1 – 5, a majority of participants rated “5” or highly effective both the safety net and superintendent determination options and 4+1 pathways to graduation, “3” or moderately effective the CID and secondary transition self reviews and the OSE Educational Partnership, with mixed results for the collaborative secondary transition review conducted by the New York City Regional Office of SEQA. Feedback provided during the meetings included multiple comments on professional development, career development opportunities and provision of specially designed instruction.

Both online survey participants and virtual meeting participants were asked whether they support the OSE potential new improvement activities to improve graduation rates and the online survey allowed participants to rank them in order of preference. The survey results indicate conducting educational workshops for families was ranked as most important. Comments submitted during the meetings included that schools and districts with higher graduation rates should provide exemplars for struggling schools and districts and the amount of time provided for direct instruction should be increased.

In addition to the improvement activities presented, stakeholders suggested the following for consideration:

- Provide Specially Designed Instructional opportunities.
- Inclusion in general education and expanded graduation pathways for all students with disabilities.
- Remove Regents exam requirements to receive a high school diploma.
- Encourage alternative education, when appropriate.
- Provide professional development to professionals working with students with intellectual disabilities to improve education and post-secondary goals.
- More focus on identifying students at risk in Pre-K and kindergarten.

**Stakeholder responses will be used by the OSE to identify priority areas for improvement and assist in the development of the strategies that will be implemented to promote preschool inclusion and meet performance objectives for Indicator 1 in the 2020-2025 SPP/APR.**

## Responses on Indicator 1 Targets:

The Indicator 1 informational webinar provided stakeholders with general information about the target setting process, NYSED's methodology for establishing the following proposed targets for Indicator 1 for stakeholder feedback:

Baseline SY 2018-19	SY	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
69.33%	Target >=	70.00%	71.00%	72.00%	73.00%	74.00%	75.00%

In response to the Indicator 1 targets, the option that received the most responses was “just right” followed by “too low” and then “too high”. **The New York State 2020-2025 SPP/APR will reflect the proposed Indicator 1 targets as the final targets.**