



Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-4906

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Jeffrey C. Riley
Commissioner

August 21, 2019

Dear Superintendents, Special Education Directors, and District Business Leaders:

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“the Department”) and local education agencies (LEAs) across the Commonwealth have made it their priority to increase educational access and equity for our most marginalized students, especially students with disabilities. This priority necessitates that we identify significant disproportionality in special education and respond to it. In alignment with this work, annually, the Department is required to analyze data from LEAs to identify and report to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) significant disproportionality in special education of racial and ethnic groups. This analysis is conducted pursuant to requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), [34 CFR §§ 300.646-300.647](#).

The Department has reviewed your LEA’s Student Information Management System (SIMS) and the Student Safety and Discipline Report (SSDR) data from three prior school years, and **has not identified significant disproportionality** by race or ethnicity in special education identification, placement or discipline.

A more detailed letter along with a data snapshot showing your district’s data is available in your district’s Special Education State Performance Plan DropBox in the [security portal](#). The information in the DropBox also includes the [memorandum](#) about the IDEA’s significant disproportionality requirements that I sent to LEAs on June 21, 2019. If you do not have access or need extra assistance finding this DropBox, please be in contact with your [district’s directory administrator](#).

I encourage you to review this information, as well as additional resources specified in the memorandum. Please contact Brian Coonley of the Department’s Special Education Planning & Policy Office at 781-338-3374 or brian.coonley@doe.mass.edu with questions. He will be your primary point of contact on this matter.

Thank you for your shared attention to this important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell Johnston".

Russell D. Johnston, PhD
Senior Associate Commissioner

cc: Brian Coonley, Data and Student Outcomes Specialist