

Overview of IDEA-DA 2025

Background

One of the most important responsibilities of a state education agency (SEA) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is to ensure that each local education agency (LEA) provides students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that responds to their unique needs and supports them to be successful in future educational, employment, and/or independent living pursuits (34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 300.1). States must have in place a system of general supervision that monitors LEAs' implementation of IDEA and provision of FAPE (34 C.F.R. § 300.600).

Iowa Administrative Code:

41.600(2) Primary focus of monitoring activity. The primary focus of the state's monitoring activities must be on the following:

- A. Improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and*
- B. ensuring that public agencies meet the program requirements under Part B of the Act, with a particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.*

IDEA-DA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-Differentiated Accountability) is a continuous monitoring cycle that includes compliance and results elements aligned with federal and state requirements for special education programs. IDEA-DA maintains a primary focus on improving educational results and functional outcomes for all students with disabilities and ensuring compliance with Part B, with particular emphasis on those requirements most closely related to improving educational results for students with disabilities. Different data sources and methods are used to monitor LEAs annually. The information collected is reviewed, verified and publicly reported annually in the Annual Performance Report (APR). Specific State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators require a review of data for all LEAs each year with follow-up reviews for LEAs below the state targets.

Three Year Cycle Activities

There are five main steps that occur over a three-year cycle:

1. Assignment of level of support through the Implementation Support Rubric (ISR)
2. Data Review Protocol (DRP) process
3. Development of an Implementation Plan
4. Engagement in system continuous improvement and professional learning activities
5. Report Progress

The first cycle of IDEA-DA occurred during the 2022-23, 23-24 and 24-25 school years, with Districts finishing implementation plans in the 2025-26 school year, as applicable. This second cycle of IDEA-DA will include school years 2025-26, 26-27 and 27-28.

Assignment of Level of Support

Iowa has designed three differentiated levels of support to meet the needs of the LEAs to improve educational results and functional outcomes for all students with disabilities. Iowa recognizes that its area education agencies (AEAs) and LEAs have work to do to meet the standards set forth in the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and Iowa Administrative Code 281-41.600(2). With this in mind, The Department, in collaboration with stakeholders, developed three levels of support that all require actions that translate into system steps toward improved outcomes for students with disabilities. IDEA-DA's levels of support represent the intensity of resources needed for special education program improvement to meet the needs of students with disabilities and improved outcomes. The lowest 10% of districts are assigned to Level 3 supports. An Area of Focus (Academic Success-Literacy or Secondary Transition) is also assigned to LEAs with a Level 2 or 3 assignment through consideration of measures in the lowest quartile of performance in the state.

In addition to an assignment of Level 1, 2 or 3, this cycle will also include a designation of "Extended" when a district was identified as Level 2 or 3 in the first cycle and continues to be Level 2 or 3 in the same Area of Focus for this second cycle.

Implementation Support Rubric

The Implementation Support Rubric (ISR) incorporates a selection of measures of student outcomes and opportunity across four focus areas based on primary foundations of IDEA: Secondary Transition, Child Find, Academic Success and Social Emotional Behavior. IDEA-DA aggregates across these 26 measures to create one summative score for each LEA which is used to categorize it into a support level. Each measure is assigned a weight that reflects its level of importance toward overall student success. Each of the four focus areas make up an equal (25%) portion of the overall index weight. The majority of the measures combine the three most recent years of data. A measure will not be used (will be redacted) for a district when there is data for fewer than five students. If a district does not have enough data for the measures making up at least 50% of the total index weight, that district will not receive a score and will be categorized for support through alternative methods. Most measures are rates (a numerator divided by a denominator) and are standardized (mean set to 50, standard deviation set to 10) in order to put all measures on a common scale prior to combining into a total index score; this standard score is multiplied by the measures' weight to calculate each measure's contribution to the LEA's overall index score. The [IDEA-DA Data Elements Guide](#) provides additional information for each data element.

Data Review Protocol Process

The IDEA-DA Data Review Protocol (DRP) process is designed to support teams in understanding the IDEA-DA data sources and to begin interpretation, prioritization and implementation planning around the data. Data Review Protocols (DRP) exist for each of the two assigned focus areas: Academic Success-Literacy and Secondary Transition. Additional voluntary DRPs are available for the areas of Social Emotional Behavior and Academic Success-Mathematics. All DRPs are procedurally structured in the same manner, however questions may vary depending on the data. Data in each DRP were selected because of their relevance to evidence-based practices to assist districts to select the most effective improvement strategies.

The DRP is completed in ACHIEVE, with exception to the Mathematics DRP, which will be provided in an alternate format.

All Districts will be required to complete a DRP. Level 2 and 3 Districts will participate in a DRP process facilitated by the Department. Level 1 Districts will complete DRPs locally. The Department will provide materials and resources to support completion of the DRP in ACHIEVE on the [IDEA-DA website](#).

Implementation Plan

At the end of the Data Review Protocol process, Districts will identify the action steps they will take over the three-year cycle to address improvement areas identified through the data review. All districts will complete an Implementation Plan that outlines the professional learning, coaching and other systemic actions aligned to those areas of improvement. The Implementation Plan is completed in ACHIEVE, automatically uploaded to CASA and can be revised and updated at any time.

The Department will facilitate completion of the Implementation Plan with Level 2 and 3 Districts. Level 1 Districts will complete the Implementation Plan locally. The Department will provide materials and resources to support completion of the Implementation Plan in ACHIEVE on the [IDEA-DA website](#).

System Improvement and Professional Learning Activities

Across the three-year cycle, Districts will engage in the identified actions in the implementation plan. Level 2 and 3 Districts participate in one of the professional learning and coaching packages that is available statewide: SDI K-6 Literacy, SDI Preschool, SDI Significant Disabilities or SDI Secondary Transition.

Additional required components for Level 2 and 3 Districts include practice coaching, systems check-ins, and completion of the SDI Framework Implementation Tool (FIT) and Coaching Self-Assessment (CSA). Level 1 Districts may choose their professional learning as aligned to their identified needs in the DRP.

Starting in 2026, additional professional learning will be available in the areas of social emotional behavior and mathematics. More information will be provided at a later date regarding how districts may engage with these new areas of focus.

The professional learning and coaching activities will occur for the full three years of the cycle. Districts may need to continue beyond the three years to ensure all staff have received the full supports.

Progress Report

All districts are required to report on the progress made through implementation of their plan by completing an IDEA-DA Progress Report at the end of years 2 and 3 in the cycle. The progress report will be located in ACHIEVE and materials to support completion of the progress report will be provided at a later date.

Extended Levels of Support

Starting with cycle 2 of IDEA-DA, Districts will receive an additional assignment of “Extended” if they were identified as Level 2 or 3 in the first cycle and continue to be Level 2 or 3 in the same Area of Focus for this second cycle. Additional requirements for Extended Districts will include:

- Additional systems check-ins
- Completion of fidelity checks
- Completion of a needs assessment
- Completion of coaching logs
- Coaching community of practice
- Administrator participation in Special Education Administrator Network

Required Activities and Timelines

IDEA-DA Activities	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Data Review Protocol (DRP)	Required, completed locally <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>	Required, facilitated by the DE <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>	Required, facilitated by the DE <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>
Implementation Plan	Required, completed locally <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>	Required, facilitated by the DE <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>	Required, facilitated by the DE <i>Due: March 13, 2026</i>
Professional Learning	Required, focus is district-determined, aligned to needs identified in DRP <i>Due: Ongoing across the three years, must begin by Fall 2026</i>	Required, must be one of the state packages and aligned to area of focus <i>Due: Ongoing across the three years, must begin by Fall 2026</i>	Required, must be one of the state packages and aligned to area of focus <i>Due: Ongoing across the three years, must begin by Fall 2026</i>
Practice Coaching	Recommended <i>Due: Locally determined</i>	Required <i>Due: 1x/month minimum</i>	Required <i>Due: 2x/month minimum</i>
Systems Coaching	Recommended <i>Due: Locally determined</i>	Required <i>Due: Every other month</i>	Required <i>Due: Monthly</i>
Self-Assessment (SDI FIT and SDI CSA)	Recommended for participating teachers and coaches <i>Due: Annually, Fall and Spring</i>	Required for all participating teachers and coaches <i>Due: Annually, Fall and Spring</i>	Required for all participating teachers and coaches <i>Due: Annually, Fall and Spring</i>
Annual Progress Report	Required <i>Due: End of Years 2 and 3</i>	Required <i>Due: End of Years 2 and 3</i>	Required <i>Due: End of Years 2 and 3</i>

Additional Requirements for Extended Districts

IDEA-DA Activities	Not Applicable to Level 1	Extended Level 2	Extended Level 3
Extended Needs Assessment and Observations	N/A	Completion Facilitated by DE with District Leadership Team <i>Due: Before completing Implementation Plan</i>	Completion Facilitated by DE with District Leadership Team <i>Due: Before completing Implementation Plan</i>
Practice Coaching	N/A	1:1 with each participant for at least one of two sessions per month Coaching logs-completion will be determined by the Regional Special Education Director <i>Due: Minimum 2x/month</i>	1:1 with each participant Coaching logs must be completed <i>Due: Minimum 2x/month</i>
Practice Coach Community of Practice	N/A	Practice coaches must attend a monthly community of practice <i>Due: Monthly starting in Fall 2026</i>	Practice coaches must attend a monthly community of practice <i>Due: Monthly starting in Fall 2026</i>

IDEA-DA Activities	Not Applicable to Level 1	Extended Level 2	Extended Level 3
Systems Coaching	N/A	Additional intensification activities to include observations, fidelity checks, resource development, data analysis, etc. as determined by the Regional Special Education Director	Additional intensification activities to include observations, fidelity checks, resource development, data analysis, etc. as determined by the Regional Special Education Director
SDI Administrator Network	N/A	District administrators must attend a quarterly network <i>Due: Quarterly</i>	District administrators must attend a quarterly network <i>Due: Quarterly</i>