Significant Discrepancy
Definitions and Calculation Methodology

What is significant discrepancy?

Significant discrepancy is part of the state Annual Performance Report (APR) calculations (Indicators 4A and 4B). At its core, significant discrepancy addresses the rate of students with disabilities (SWDs) being suspended and/or expelled for more than 10 days in a given school year, predicated on students' disability status and/or students' race/ethnicity. Being identified with significant discrepancy does not inherently mean that a district is disproportionate or inappropriately disciplining students based on them having a disability and/or their race/ethnicity. Instead, it is used as a flag to further investigate policies and practices within the district to ensure appropriate discipline procedures are in place. Calculations and thresholds for districts to be flagged with significant discrepancy are state-determined.

Indicator 4A looks specifically at the rate of students being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days by virtue of having a disability. States are permitted to choose one of the two comparison groups outlined below to evaluate the rate of SWDs being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days:

- The first option is to compare district-level rates for SWDs suspended/expelled for more than 10 days to statewide rates for SWDs suspended/expelled for more than 10 days.
- The second option is to compare the rate of SWDs suspended/expelled for more than 10 days to the rate of non-SWDs suspended/expelled for more than 10 days.

Indicator 4B looks at the rate of SWDs being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days predicated on race/ethnicity. States are permitted to choose one of the two options for comparison groups outlined above to evaluate the rate of SWDs being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days.

How is significant discrepancy defined in Tennessee?

To better align with some of the metrics in the revised calculations for significant disproportionality, a new methodology will be used to evaluate significant discrepancy starting with the 2016-17 school year discipline data. To qualify for significant discrepancy, the following criteria must be met for Indicators 4A and 4B:
- Indicator 4A
    - Minimum of five SWDs must be suspended/expelled for more than 10 days in the school year.
    - Rate ratio must be 2.0 or greater.

- Rate ratios are generated by dividing the rate of SWDs in a district being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days by the rate of SWDs in the state being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days.
- Example: there are 50 SWDs total in District A, and five of these SWDs in District A are suspended/expelled for more than 10 days. There are 10,000 SWDs overall in State X, and 500 of these SWDs in State X are suspended/expelled for more than 10 days. The rate of SWDs being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days in District A is 5/50, or 0.10 (10 percent). The rate of SWDs being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days in State X is 500/10,000, or 0.05 (5 percent). The rate ratio is 2.0.

- Indicator 4B
  - Minimum of five SWDs must be suspended/expelled for more than 10 days in a particular racial/ethnic group during the school year.
  - Rate ratio must be 2.0 or greater for at least one racial/ethnic group.
    - Rate ratios are generated by dividing the rate of SWDs in a district being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days for a particular race/ethnicity by the rate of SWDs in the state being suspended/expelled for more than 10 days.

Is significant discrepancy the same as significant disproportionality?
No. The calculation methodology and areas evaluated for significant disproportionality are different than those employed for identifying significant discrepancy. While some aspects of significant discrepancy are similar to significant disproportionality (both address disciplinary actions and similar data elements), the two are not the same. For more information on significant disproportionality, see the document outlining calculations and definitions.