

Guiding Questions for Disproportionate Chronic Absenteeism, Part 1: Problem Identification

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recommends that multiple measures are used to identify disproportionate discipline in schools. The following recommendations are based on the FLPBIS and PS/RtI Project’s work with schools around the state, and allow schools to identify disproportionality across two dimensions: a) in terms of the number of *students* involved; and b) in terms of the amount of *chronic absenteeism* among students from different groups.

All of these metrics are calculated automatically in the *Equity Profile* Excel template.

	Guiding Question	Helpful Metrics to Answer the Questions
Problem Identification	1. a) Are outcomes equitable for all groups of students? <i>1b). If not, which groups experience disproportionate discipline?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Composition. The “Student Composition” cell on your PS/RtI & FLPBIS Equity Profile will turn red if the proportion of students chronically absent who belong to a specific group is higher than expected at your school. This is based on the “E-formula,” which runs in the background of your Excel file. The E-formula can identify disproportionality for any size group, even groups that have a small number of students. • The Chronic Absenteeism Ratio. Values of than 1.2 or more mean that the group’s chronic absenteeism rate is at least 20% higher than the chronic absenteeism rate for all other students. “Chronic Absenteeism Rate” refers to the number of student chronically absent in a target group, divided by the number of target group students enrolled at your school (e.g., “absences per student”). • The “Difference in Student Composition” and “Difference in Chronic Absenteeism Composition” metrics can also be used to identify disproportionate outcomes. They are described below.
	2. If disproportionate outcomes exist, how big are the disparities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Risk Ratio. Values higher than 1.2 mean that the group’s risk for being chronically absent is more than 20% higher than the risk for all other students. Risk ratios are reliable when at least 15 students are involved. • Difference in Chronic Absenteeism Composition: The Chronic Absenteeism Composition for a specific group should be approximately the same as the group’s enrollment percentage. Larger differences suggest disproportionality. • Difference in Student Composition (optional): If fewer than 15 students are involved in the attendance outcome of interest, this measure may be used instead of the risk ratio. The Student Composition for a specific group should be approximately the same as the group’s enrollment percentage. Larger differences suggest greater disproportionality. • Difference in Chronic Absenteeism Composition (optional): If the chronic absenteeism ratio is not available, this measure may be used in its place. The Chronic Absenteeism Composition for a specific group should be approximately the same as the group’s enrollment percentage. Larger differences suggest greater disproportionality.
	3. How much of your target group is affected by disproportionate chronic absenteeism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk. This measure will tell you the percentage of your target group that is chronically absent. Larger values mean that more students from that group are chronically absent.