

## Clarification on Calculating LRE for Students in Community Settings, including Off-campus 18–21 Programs

Per a 2012 [OSEP regulatory guidance letter](#), time spent in community settings that include individuals with and without disabilities should be counted as time inside the regular classroom. This could have an impact on the calculation of LRE codes for students who spend time in the community.

### Self-contained Special Education Programs

Many students placed in self-contained special education classrooms are reported by districts under LRE Code 3 (less than 40% of the day in the regular class). Based on a review of LRE data submitted in November 2020, it appears that districts may not have considered time spent in community settings when calculating LRE codes.

If the student is participating in community outings, work placements, job shadowing, or other activities in the community where individuals with and without disabilities are present, this would be considered a regular education setting. Examples could include, but are not limited to:

- Learning to grocery shop
- Learning money management skills in the community
- Learning to use public transportation
- Job shadowing
- Community work placements
- Work placements on a public-school campus where individuals without disabilities are present
- Visits to local businesses
- Visits to college/community college campuses
- Bowling, swimming, or other recreational activities in the community
- Learning community safety skills (e.g., crossing the street, asking for help, reading signs, self-advocacy)
- Orientation and mobility training (navigating the community)

Time spent in the community on these types of activities should be counted as time spent in a regular classroom when calculating the LRE code for the student. The LRE code would be calculated using the percent of time that the student spends in regular classrooms/community settings:

$$\frac{\text{Total amount of time student spends in regular class/community settings} \div}{\text{Total amount of time (i.e., regular class/community time plus time in special education setting)}}$$



## 18–21 Programs

Based on a review of LRE data submitted by districts in November 2020, some students attending district-run, community-based 18–21 programs are being reported by districts under LRE Code 4 (public separate day school). If students are attending an off-campus 18–21 program that includes only students with disabilities, this does not automatically mean the setting is LRE Code 4. If the off-campus facility is a site where individuals with and without disabilities are present, then the facility would not be considered a separate day school. In addition, if the student is in a “regular classroom” (which includes community settings, work placements, job shadowing, community outings, or other activities in the community where individuals with and without disabilities are present, such as the bulleted list above) for at least 50% of the day, then LRE Code 4 would not be the correct code.

For students in regular classroom/community settings for 50% or more of the day, the LRE code would be calculated using the percent of time that the student spends in regular classrooms/community settings (which will typically result in LRE Codes 1, 2, or 3):

$$\frac{\text{Total amount of time student spends in regular class/community settings} \div}{\text{Total amount of time (i.e., regular class/community time plus time in special education class/school)}}$$

LRE Code 4 would only be for those students who spend 51% or more of the day in a separate school facility that is solely for individuals with disabilities (i.e., not in the community/work placement or regular classroom).

### Here is an example:

- Kai is 20 years old and attends an off-campus transition program.
- From 8:30–11:30 am, Kai (along with other students with IEPs) receives specially designed instruction in independent living skills and functional academics in a classroom located in a site that is intended only for individuals with disabilities.
- Three days per week, Kai eats lunch from 11:30 am–12 pm, and then travels to his worksite with a paraeducator who is helping him learn to use public transportation. From 12:30–3 pm, three days per week, Kai is engaged in work-based learning at a local shoe store learning to stock shelves and assist with inventory.
- One afternoon per week (12–3 pm), Kai goes on a recreational outing with other students with IEPs in his program. The recreational outings include activities such as bowling, swimming, and yoga and aerobics classes at the local YMCA/YWCA.
- One afternoon per week (12–3 pm), Kai assists in the dog biscuit business that is run by the students in the 18–21 program. Kai assists in making the biscuits and selling them to customers that come in to the shop.

## How to calculate Kai's LRE code:

1. Kai's total instructional program is 1,800 minutes per week (8:30 am–3:00 pm, minus 30 minutes for lunch).
2. In the mornings, Kai spends 900 total minutes in a special education setting (more than 50% individuals with IEPs) located in a separate school intended only for individuals with disabilities.
3. In the afternoons, Kai spends 900 total minutes in a "regular" setting (i.e., a setting that includes individuals with and without disabilities). Kai's activities that are considered to be "time spent in a regular setting" include learning to use public transportation, working in the shoe store, working in the dog biscuit shop, and recreational outings (local pool, bowling alley, YMCA/YWCA).
4. Since Kai spends 50% of his time (900 of 1,800 minutes) in a "regular setting", LRE Code 4 (separate day school) is not appropriate. Rather, the LRE code calculation would be based on the percent of Kai's time that is spent in the "regular setting":

$$\frac{\text{Total amount of time Kai spends in regular class/community settings} \div}{\text{Total time Kai is in the program (i.e., time in "regular setting" plus time in special education class/school)}}$$

$$= 900 \div 1,800 \text{ (or 50\%), which would be LRE Code 2 (40-79\% of the day in a regular setting)}$$

## Next Steps for Districts

The next round of LRE data will be submitted in December 2021, based on students receiving special education services on November 1, 2021. If students are not currently coded correctly in CEDARS, districts should prioritize correcting the LRE codes within their district's information system so that the November 2021 child count accurately reflects student placements. If the only thing that needs to be corrected is the LRE code, it would not be necessary to amend or redo the IEPs since LRE codes/calculations are not required components of an IEP. Instead, the changes could be made within the district's information system, and then applied to the IEP, as necessary, when the annual IEP is completed.

If you have questions, please contact the [Special Education Data team](#).