Understanding Washington's Special Education Reporting Process

November 2026 Federal Child Count and Reporting Requirements

Washington school districts follow an established process for reporting special education information to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

The process begins with information maintained in districts' student information systems (SIS). Districts submit that information to the state's Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS), then review and certify their federal child count through OSPI's Education Data System (EDS).

The important distinction is that the November child count date and the deadline to submit the federal report are not the same.

How the reporting process works

November 2, 2026 — Child Count Date
The federal Special Education Child Count and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) report must reflect students' circumstances as of the first business day in November. This year, that date is November 2.

OSPI's child count application generates a list of students from the district's CEDARS data. Generally, students must meet five reporting criteria:

1. Be enrolled in the district.
2. Have an appropriate primary school designation.
3. Have a valid disability code.
4. Have a valid LRE code.
5. Have a valid special education record.

Districts review this information to confirm that eligible students are included and that the records accurately reflect the count date.

November 15 — Monthly CEDARS Submission
Districts submit student information to CEDARS throughout the school year. OSPI establishes a minimum expectation for successful CEDARS submissions by the 15th of each month, October through June. *This monthly submission requirement is separate from the federal child count certification deadline.*

Districts can continue updating and correcting CEDARS information after the monthly submission. Districts can run CEDARS daily in their student information system to send updated information to OSPI; they do not need to wait until the monthly submission point. Those updates support the accuracy of the data used for federal reporting.

December 16, 2026 — Federal Reporting Deadline

Districts must certify and submit their federal Special Education Child Count and LRE information through the Special Education November Federal Child Count application in EDS by December 16.

Between the November 2 count date and the December 16 reporting deadline, districts can review their student lists, correct information in CEDARS, resolve reporting errors, and validate their records.

The final report must accurately reflect students' circumstances on November 2, regardless of when corrections are submitted. Districts must also complete OSPI's required certification process, including submitting the signed certification page. The signed certification page does not need to be received by OSPI by the due date but should be submitted to OSPI by mid-January.

January 15, 2027 — Post-Deadline Corrections
OSPI also has an established process for correcting information after a district has certified its federal child count.

If a district identifies an error after certification, from EDS it may request that OSPI unlock its report. Once the report is unlocked, the district can make the necessary corrections, validate the updated information, and recertify its submission. A new signed certification page must also be submitted.

Student data may only be revised or removed until close of business January 15, 2027. LEAs will not have the opportunity to modify the federal child count after this deadline.

This correction process does not extend the December 16 reporting deadline. Districts are still expected to submit accurate, certified information by December 16. The subsequent correction period provides a limited opportunity to address errors identified after certification.

How information moves from IEP Online to OSPI

Special education information is documented through a district's established special education processes.

Required reporting information is maintained in the district's student information system. This information may be entered manually or transferred electronically from an IEP application through automated writeback.

The district uses its SIS information to prepare and submit CEDARS data. The federal child count application then uses that data for district review and certification.

Writeback is one way to transfer special education information into a district's SIS. It is not required to submit the federal child count to OSPI. While IEP Online 3.0 writeback remains unavailable, districts should continue their established procedures for entering, reviewing, and reconciling special education information in their SIS.

Districts remain responsible for verifying that their reported information is complete and accurate. Missing or incorrect records must be addressed through the appropriate reporting and support processes.

Where districts can get help

IEP Online 3.0 application issues
PCG Customer Support
customersupport@pcgus.com
800-356-8040, option 4

CEDARS submissions and data questions
OSPI CEDARS Data Support
AskSI@k12.wa.us
360-725-6358

Federal Special Education Child Count and LRE reporting
OSPI Special Education Data
specialeddata@k12.wa.us
360-725-6075

A distinction about state funding reports

Districts also complete monthly special education enrollment reporting for state funding purposes, including Form P-223H.

These monthly state reports are separate from the annual federal Special Education Child Count and have their own reporting requirements and timelines. Districts should continue following their established procedures for both state and federal reporting.

Additional resources

- OSPI Special Education Data Reporting and Collection
- OSPI CEDARS Data Manuals and Reporting Resources
- OSPI Enrollment Reporting

November 2026 Federal Special Education Child Count

Reporting Timeline — At a Glance

Date	What it means	What districts need to do
November 2, 2026	**Child count date** — The date the reported information must reflect.	Ensure records reflect students' eligibility, enrollment, disability, and LRE information as of November 2.
November 15, 2026	**Regular CEDARS submission checkpoint** — Part of OSPI's ongoing monthly reporting requirements.	This is not the final federal child count deadline. Submit CEDARS data and continue reviewing and correcting records as needed. Districts have the option to run CEDARS daily in their SIS to send updated information to OSPI.
December 16, 2026	**Federal child count deadline** — Districts must certify and submit their Child Count and LRE report through EDS.	Review, correct, validate, and certify the data. Complete OSPI's required signed certification process. Submit the signed certification page to OSPI by mid-January.
January 15, 2027 (*close of business*)	**Post-certification correction cutoff** — A limited opportunity to correct a report after certification.	Request an unlock from OSPI in EDS if needed, make corrections, and recertify. This does not extend the December 16 deadline.

Three things to remember

1. **November 2 is the count date, not the submission deadline.** Districts have until December 16 to certify their information, which must reflect November 2.
2. **Automated writeback is not required for federal reporting.** Districts can continue using their established SIS and CEDARS processes while writeback remains unavailable.
3. **Accuracy remains essential.** Districts must review their records, correct missing or inaccurate information, and certify their reports through OSPI's established process.

Questions or support

Topic	Contact
IEP Online 3.0 or writeback	PCG Customer Support — customersupport@pcgus.com
CEDARS data and submissions	OSPI — AskSI@k12.wa.us
Federal Child Count and LRE	OSPI — specialeddata@k12.wa.us

Source: OSPI Special Education Data Reporting and Collection