

# 2003 Annual State Report on Special Education Performance



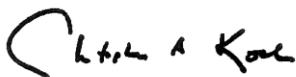
Illinois State Board of Education

## Message from the State Director

In the spring of 2003, the Illinois State Board of Education revised the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education and moved forward to develop a data system to analyze the progress of students with disabilities. This booklet represents the initial effort to share that information with you.

In order to improve results, parents, teachers, administrators, legislators and the public need to first know how we are doing in terms of progress and results. This first in a series of annual reports is provided to ensure that you are regularly informed of critical performance indicators for students with disabilities in Illinois. Further information about special education services in Illinois may be obtained by visiting our website at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net).

The Illinois State Board of Education hopes this document will be informative and useful to you. Please contact us with your comments and suggestions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher A. Koch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Christopher Koch, Ed. D.  
Director of Special Education  
Illinois State Board of Education  
August 2004

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## Background Information

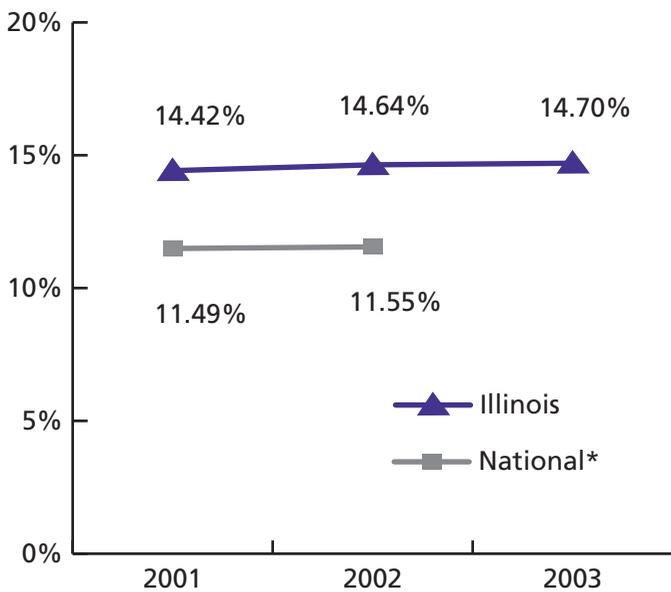
The following pages provide background information useful to understanding the status of special education in Illinois. The charts in this Background Section generally describe how many students are being served, the disabilities categories in which they are identified, and their race or ethnicity. Information is also provided concerning special education expenditures and conflict resolution.

### Observations:

- The percent of the Illinois students ages 6-21 receiving special education services has increased slightly since 2001 and continues to be higher than the national percentage.
- While the number of students in all disability areas increased during this time period, the four highest incidence disabilities have stayed the same or seen a decrease as a percent of all student receiving special education services, while Other Health Impairment and Autism have shown an increase.
- Both white and black students are slightly over represented among students receiving special education services, while Hispanic and Asian students are under represented.
- Special education expenditures per special education pupil have increased by annual rates of 10.4%, 8.3% and 7.1%, from 2000 to 2003.
- Formal disputes have decreased overall since 2001. Further, in the past two years, more conflicts have been resolved through mediation while the number of formal due process hearing decisions issued has decreased.

## What percent of Illinois students ages 6-21 are receiving special education services?

The chart below includes students, ages 6-21, in all disability categories over the past three years, as a percentage of total public school enrollment.

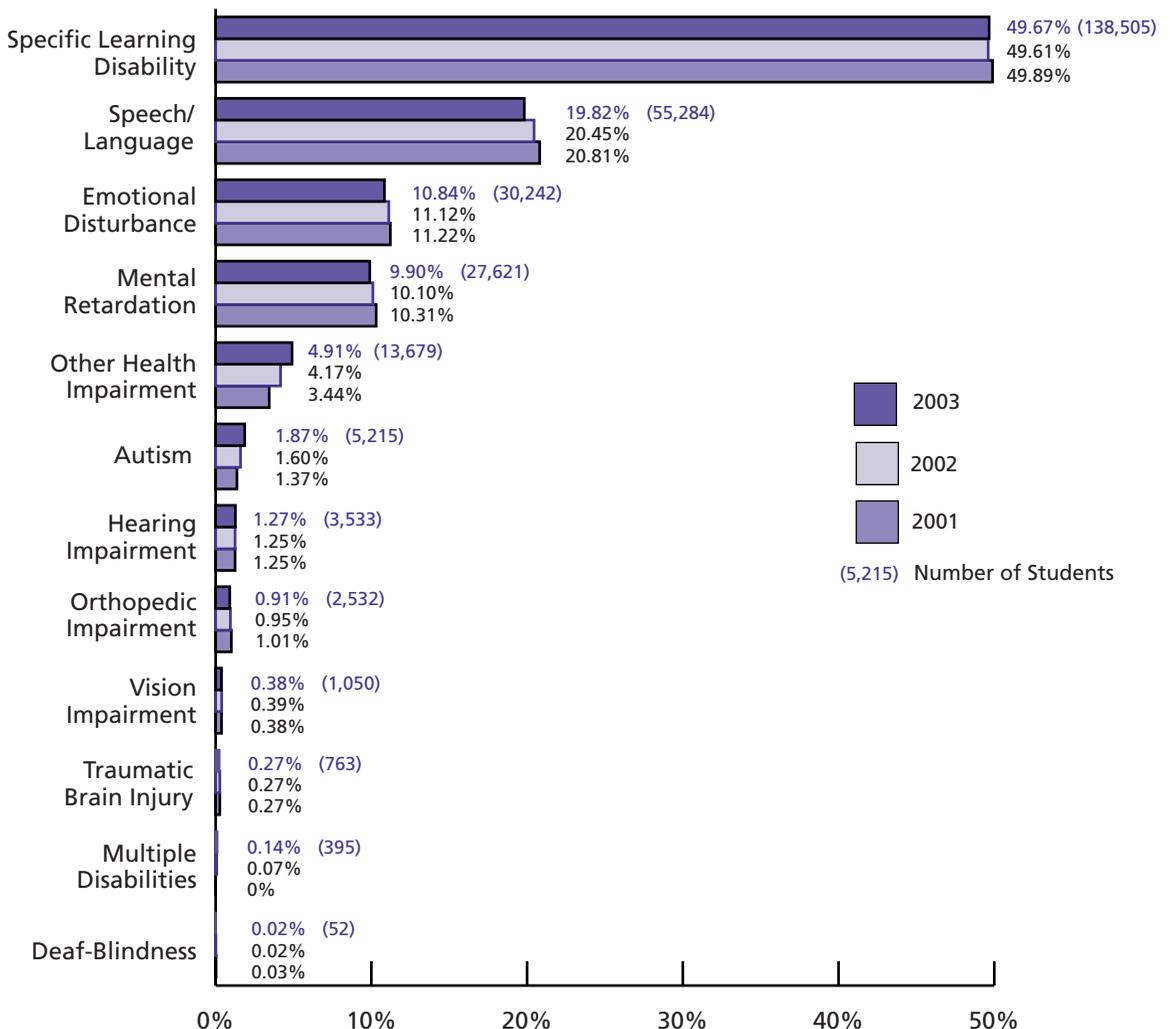


\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP provides these percentages for students ages 6-17.

The percent of Illinois students receiving special education services has increased slightly since 2001 and continues to be higher than the national percentage.

## What percent of students ages 6-21 receiving special education services are identified for each disability category?

This chart compares students, ages 6-21, in each disability category for the past three years, as a percentage of all students receiving special education services. (See Special Education Categories in the Glossary for a description of each disability.)

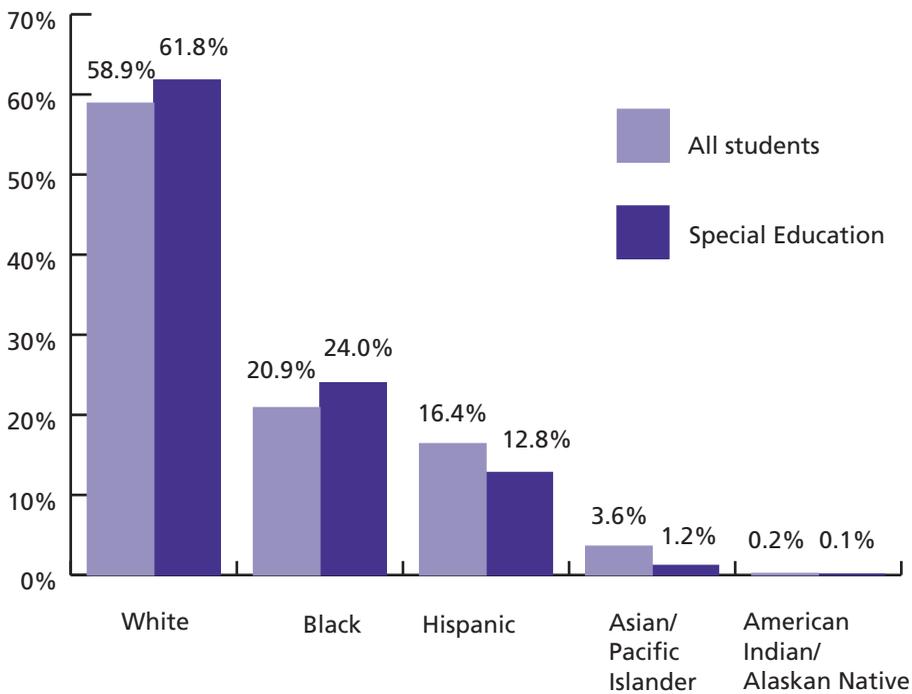


\*Illinois first started using "Multiple Disabilities" in 2002.

Since 2001, the four highest incidence disabilities have stayed the same or seen a decrease as a percent of all students receiving special education services, while Other Health Impairment and Autism have shown an increase.

## What is the race/ethnicity distribution of students ages 6-21 receiving special education services?

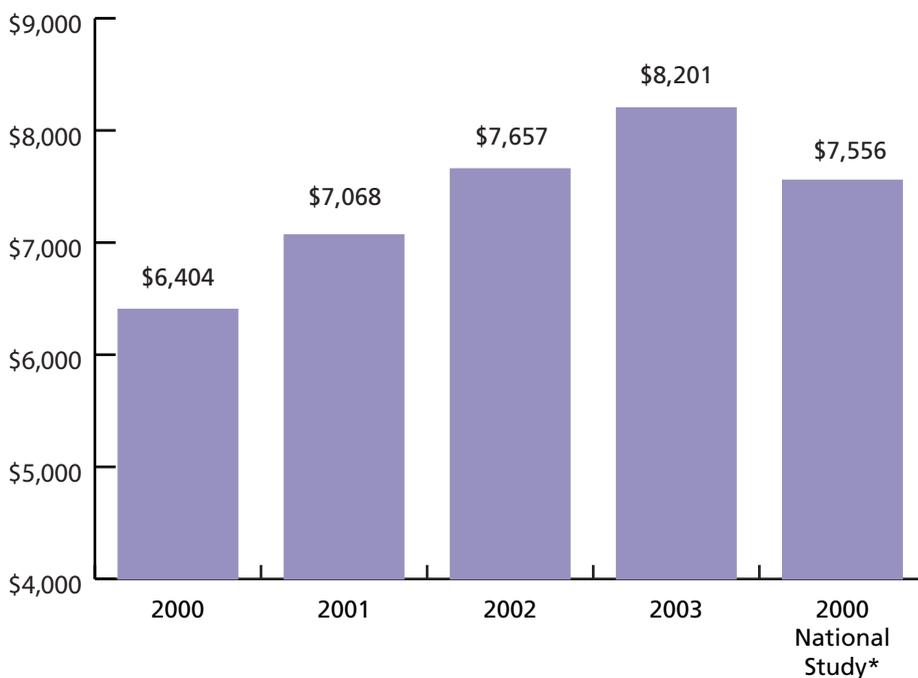
This chart displays the percentage of students receiving special education services by race/ethnicity compared to the total student population.



Both white and black students are slightly over represented among students receiving special education services, while Hispanic and Asian students are under represented.

## How much money is spent per pupil for special education services?

This chart represents special education expenditures divided by the total number of special education students. Included are specific special education expenditures as well as a pro-rated portion of certain expenditures that are both general and special education. Numbers are as reported on the Annual Financial Report (AFR).



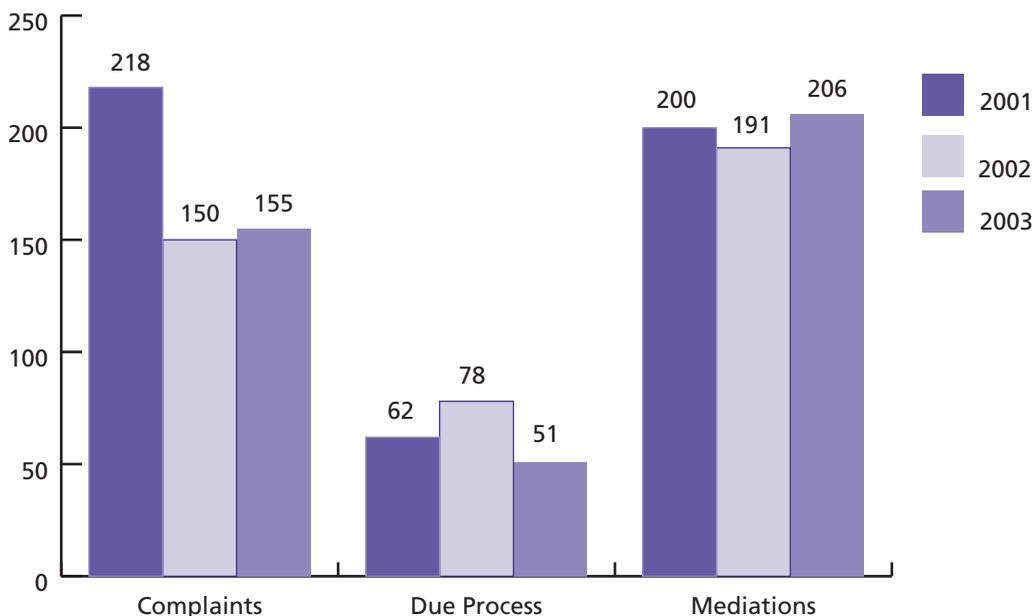
\*Special Education Expenditure Project.

Special education expenditures per special education pupil have increased by annual rates of 10.4%, 8.3% and 7.1% from 2000 to 2003.

## How many special education formal dispute resolutions does the Illinois State Board of Education process annually?

On occasion, parents and schools disagree on what kinds of special education and related services, if any, are needed for children and how and where they should be provided. When these disagreements cannot be resolved through informal means, three formal mechanisms are provided to parents and schools: state complaints, mediation and due process hearings.

While all three of these processes are effective in resolving disputes, mediation has been especially efficient by saving parents, districts and taxpayers the time and expense of formal due process hearings. Further, time and again, parties who have participated in mediation have cited increased understanding and improved communications as added benefits of the process.



Formal disputes have decreased overall since 2001. Further, in the past two years, more conflicts have been resolved through mediation while the number of formal due process hearing decisions issued has decreased.

## High School Completion

Progression through and completion of high school are significant in assessing the success of an educational system. Obtaining a high school diploma carries significant psychological and financial importance for students with disabilities, as it does for all students. It becomes important, therefore, to track the level at which students receiving special education services remain in school and graduate with a standard diploma. The following pages show the progress made to date with regard to the Desired Results listed below.

### Desired Results:

- Illinois will annually increase by 4.5 percentage points, the percent of youth with disabilities who graduate with a standard diploma — reaching 90% in 2007.
- Decrease the percentage of high school students with disabilities who are expelled.

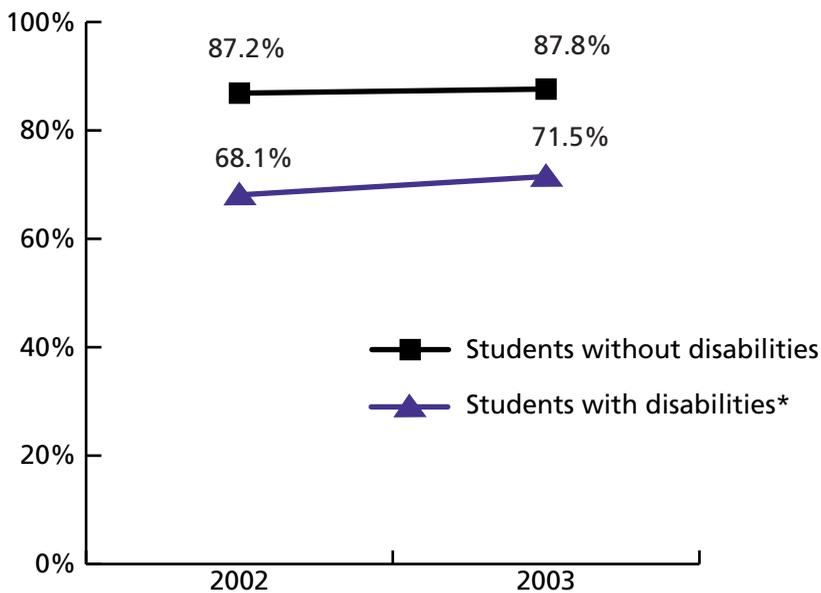
### Observations:

- The graduation rate of students with disabilities continued to improve with 71.5% graduating in the spring of 2003.
- The expulsion rate for students with disabilities remains low, but continues to be slightly higher than the general education population.

## High School Graduation Rate — 2002-2003

The **Graduation Rate** in Illinois is defined as the percent of the original freshman class who graduated with a standard diploma, adjusted for student transfers and deaths.

The 2001-2002 school year was the first year that graduation rate for students with disabilities was calculated.

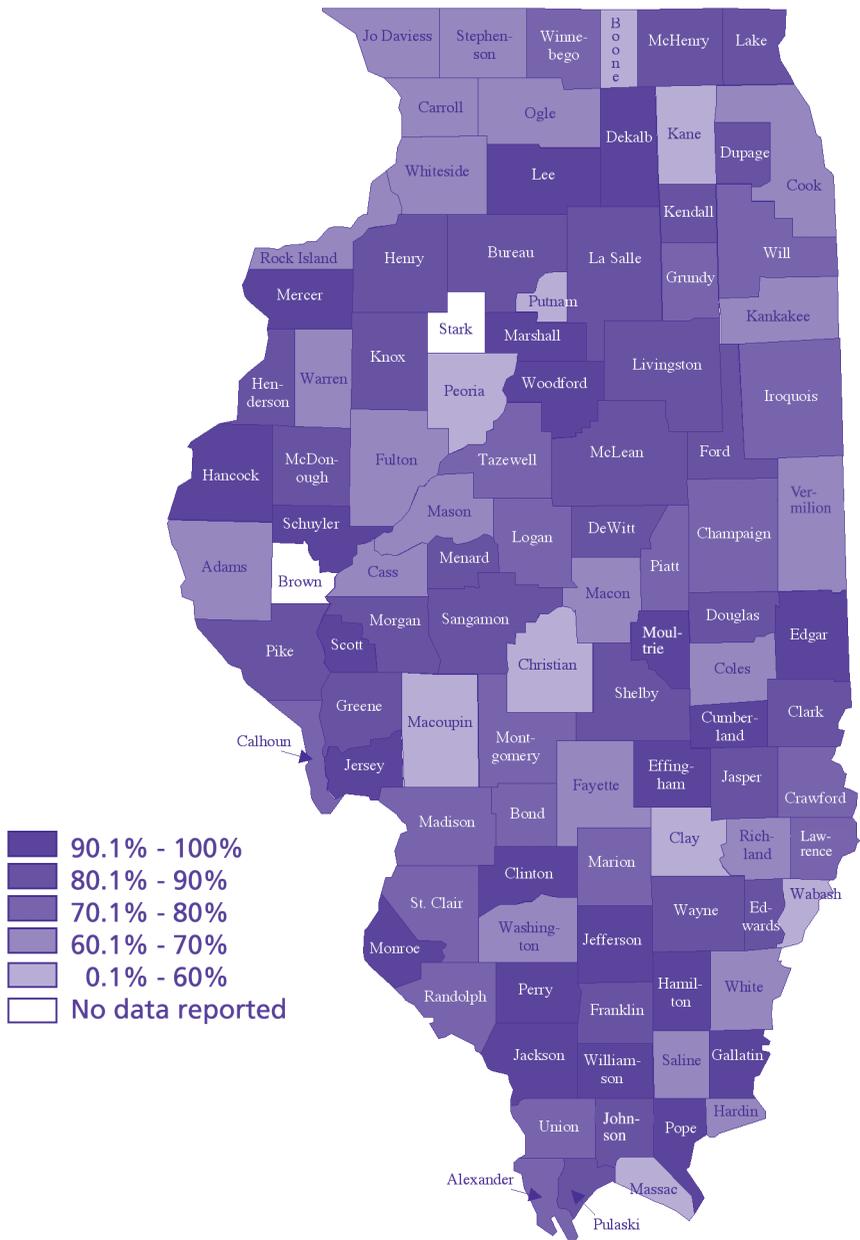


\*Students with disabilities includes students receiving special education services and students with a Section 504 plan.

The gap between graduation rate of students with and without disabilities decreased from 2002 to 2003. However, the increase of 3.4% for students with disabilities was less than the 4.5% goal as stated in the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Students with Disabilities.

*Note: Illinois' NCLB Accountability Plan commitment is to have an 85% graduation rate for all schools and students by 2014.*

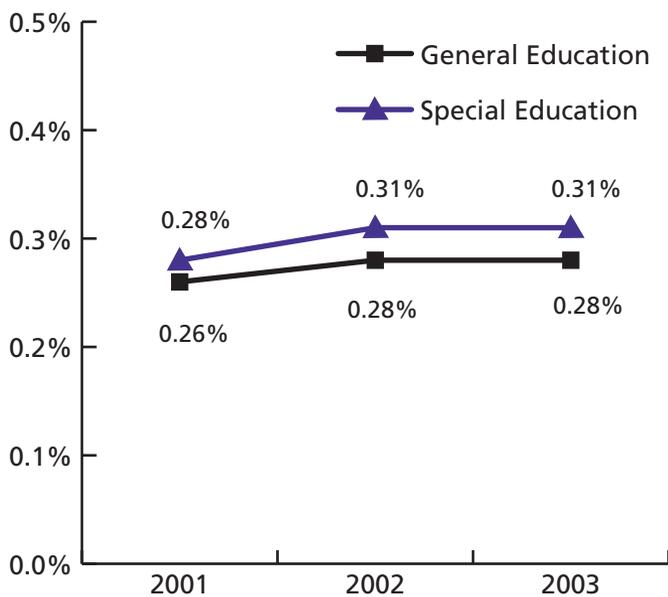
## High School Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities\* by County — 2003



\*Students with disabilities includes students receiving special education services and students with a Section 504 plan.

## High School Expulsion Rate — 2001-2003

**Expulsion Rate** is calculated as the number of expulsions for high school students divided by the total number of high school students.



Students receiving special education services have been expelled at a slightly higher rate than that of their general education peers for the last three reported school years.

## Student Performance

Assessing the success of an educational system for students with disabilities goes beyond gaining access to educational opportunities. It must move toward a systematic evaluation of how well students receiving special education services are actually learning. In Illinois, state tests are used to measure the performance of students against the Illinois Learning Standards. The statements below summarize the goals and status of increased learning while the charts in this Student Performance Section display the progress and challenges that remain for students receiving special education services as reflected by the various Illinois tests.

### Desired Results:

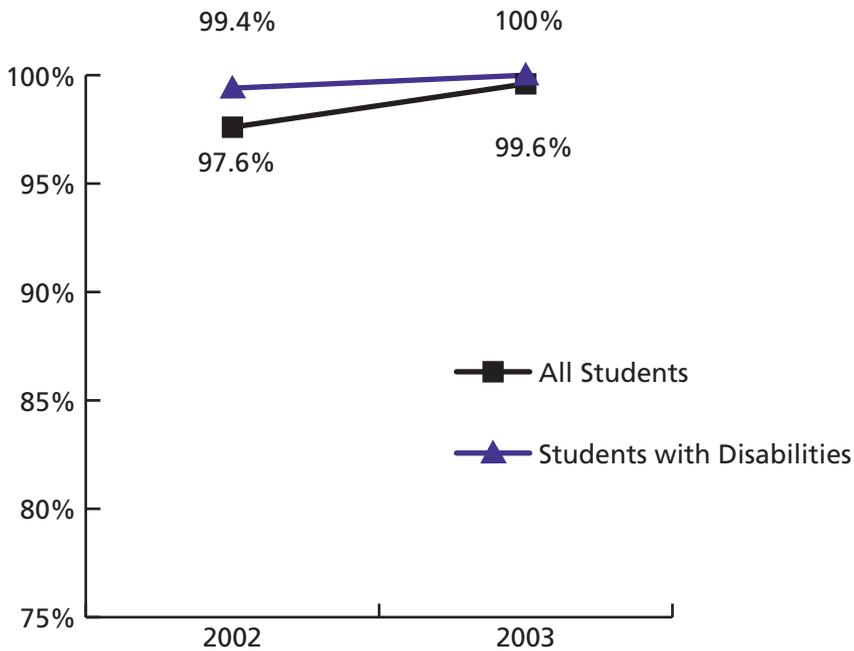
- Increase to 95% the rate of students with disabilities who participate in the State assessments.
- Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who perform at the “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” levels as measured by State tests.

### Observations:

- Students receiving special education services continue to participate in state sponsored assessments at a very high rate.
- In elementary school, an increased percentage of both the general education students and students receiving special education services continued to meet and exceed Illinois Learning Standards as measured by the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The major increases for students receiving special education services came in math while reading results remained stable.
- In high school, both general education students and students receiving special educational services declined in their knowledge of Illinois Learning Standards from 2002 to 2003 as measured by the Prairie State Achievement Examination.

## Participation Rate for State Reading or Math Tests — 2002-2003

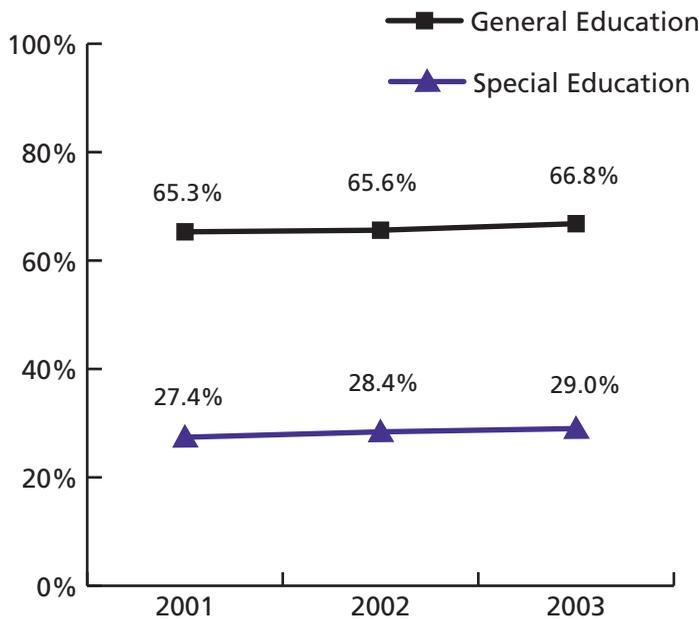
Participation rate includes students who take the ISAT, PSAE, IMAGE or IAA assessments, as reported on the Illinois State Report Card. The 2002 school year was the first year that participation rate was recorded for students with disabilities.



Illinois continues to have extremely high participation rates in the state assessments for both students with and without disabilities.

## Performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) — 2001-2003

The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) measures the performance of students in grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science & Social Studies, all grades tested

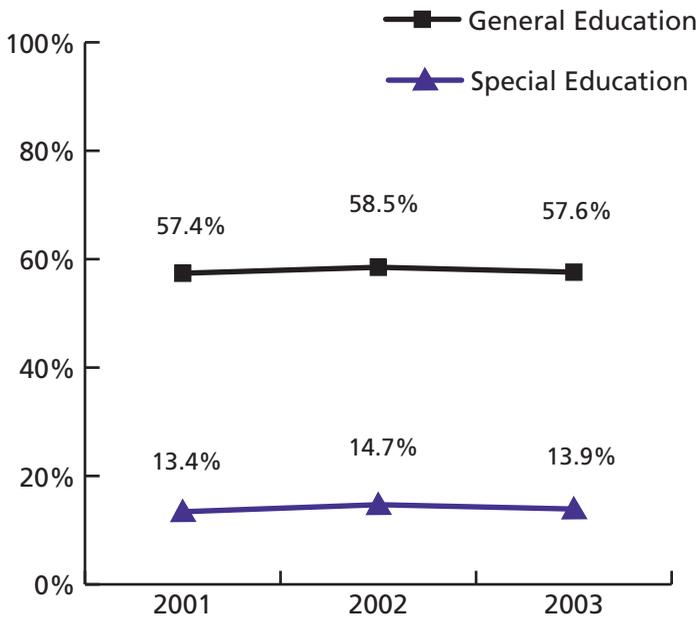


ISAT performance for students receiving special education services has steadily improved since 2001, while the gap between special education and general education performance has remained about the same.

*Note: Some researchers state that the combination of these scores across grades and subject areas provides the most valid indicator of overall academic status of a school. Linn, R. L., & Haug, C. (2002). "Stability of School-Building Accountability Scores and Gains." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. Spring 2002, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 29-36.*

## Performance on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) — 2001-2003

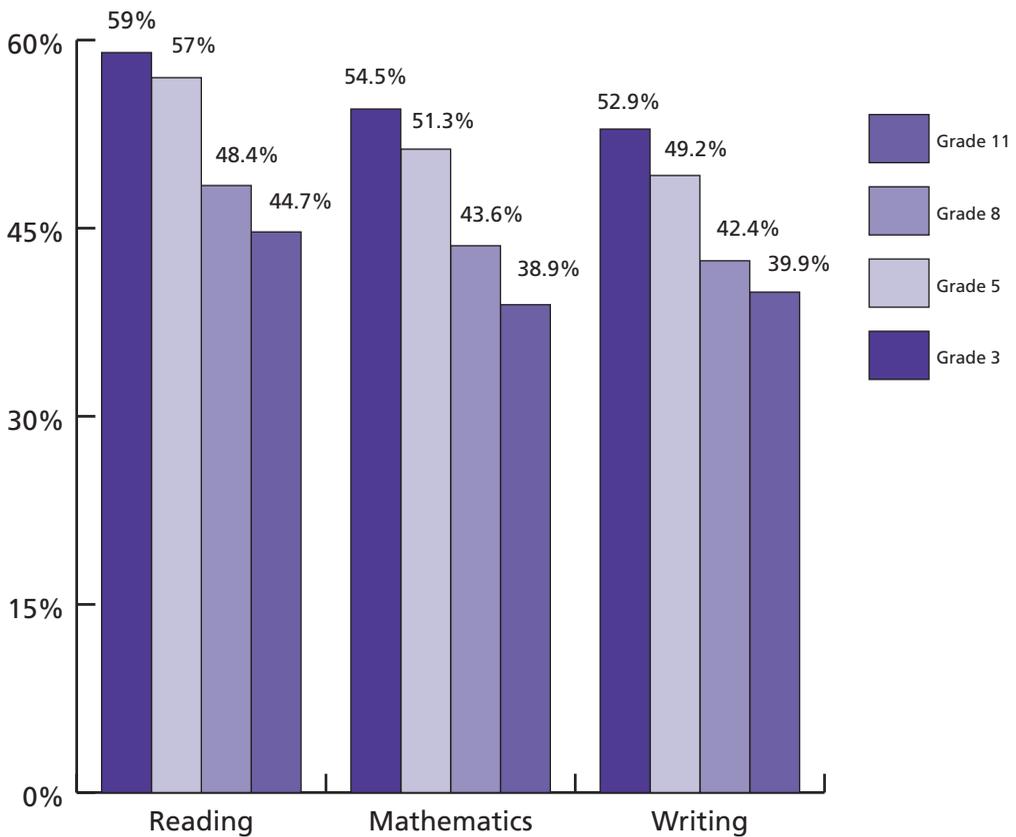
The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures the performance of students in the 11th grade. This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies



PSAE performance for students receiving special education services has slightly improved since 2001, with a decrease from 2002 to 2003, while the gap between special education and general education performance has remained about the same.

## Performance on the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) — 2003

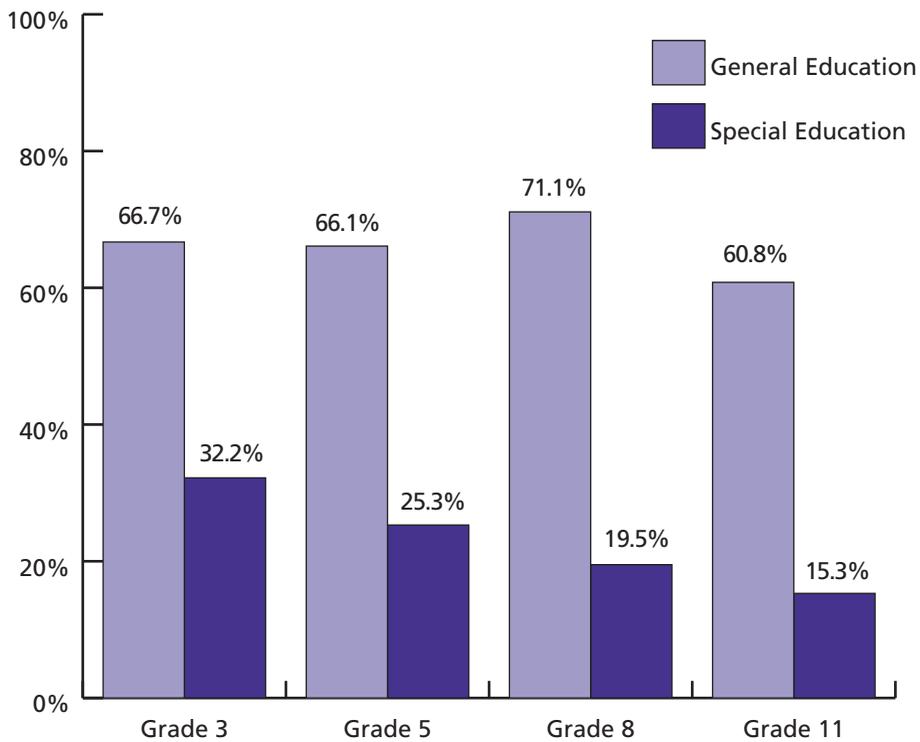
This chart shows the percent of students receiving special education services who perform at the “Progressing” or “Attaining” levels.



The current alternate assessment portfolio process, implemented for the 2002-2003 school year, reflects a decrease in the percentage of students at the “Progressing” or “Attaining” levels in the later grades, 8 and 11. This trend is consistent in all three subject areas.

## Performance on the State Reading Tests\* — 2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at the “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”.

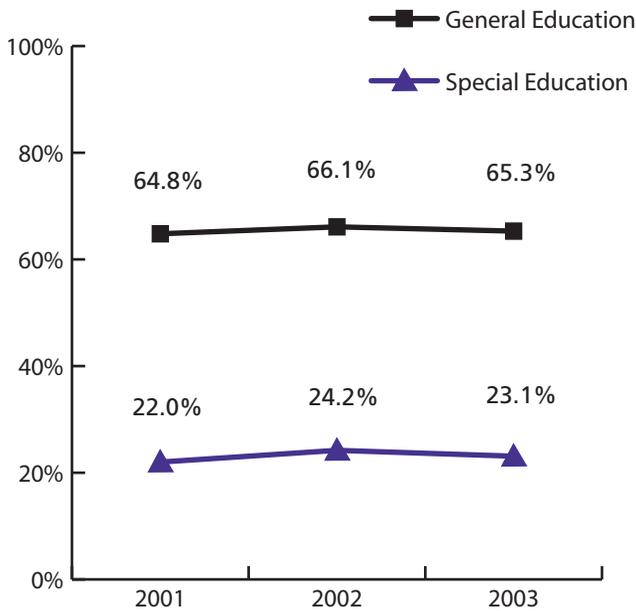


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in reading test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 8th grade level.

## Performance on State Reading Tests\* — 2001-2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” in Reading for the past three years. Combined scores for grades 3, 5, 8 and 11.

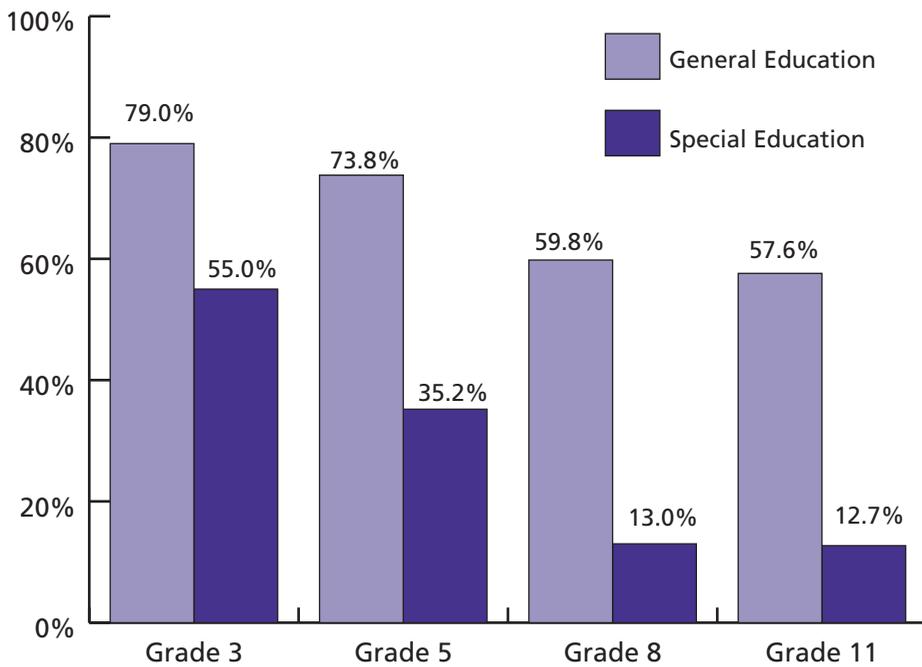


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Reading test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education declined slightly from 2002 to 2003, while the gap between the two has stayed fairly consistent.

## Performance on the State Mathematics Tests\* — 2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”.

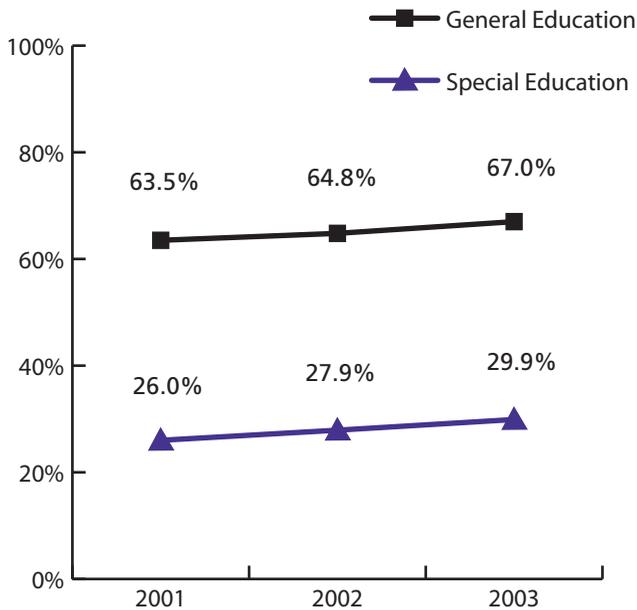


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in mathematics test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 8th grade level.

## Performance on State Mathematics Tests\* — 2001-2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” in Mathematics for the past three years. Combined scores for grades 3, 5, 8, and 11.

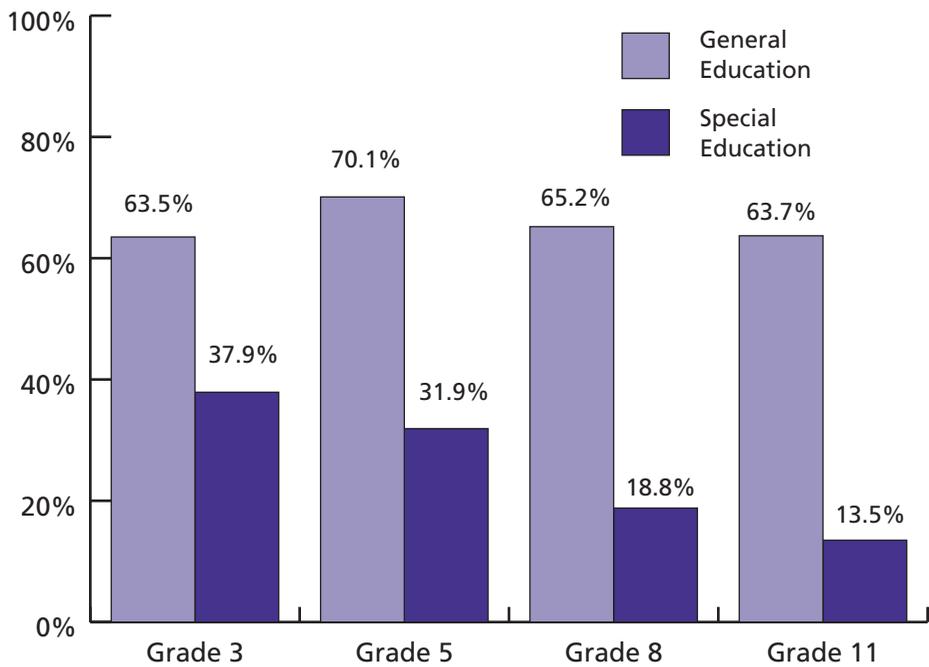


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Mathematics test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education improved from 2001 to 2003, while the gap between the two has stayed fairly consistent.

## Performance on the State Writing Tests\* — 2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”.

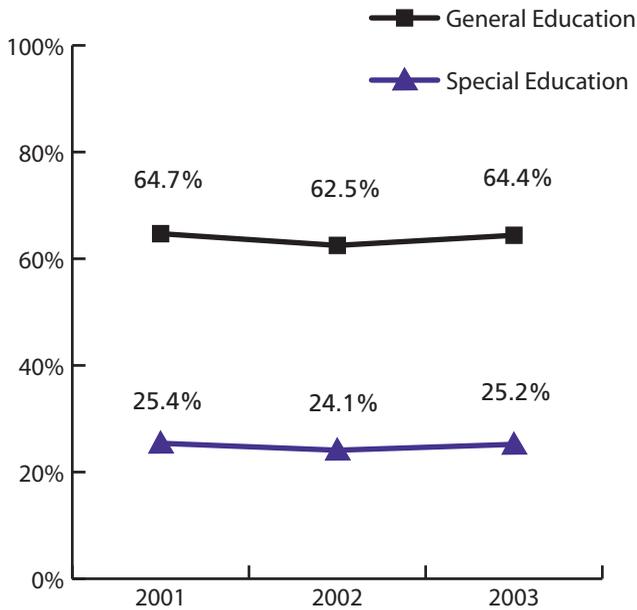


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in writing test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 11th grade level.

## Performance on State Writing Tests\* — 2001-2003

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” in writing for the past three years. \*Combined score for grades 3, 5, 8 and 11.



\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Writing test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education improved since 2002, while the gap between the two has stayed fairly consistent.



## Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in classes or schools with their non-disabled peers. Research\* has shown that students with disabilities who are educated in the least restrictive environment show increased motivation, higher self-esteem, improved communication and socialization skills, and greater academic achievement than those students in a more restrictive, or segregated, environment.

Educational environments can be generally classified into four settings:

1. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general classroom less than 21% of the time.
2. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general classroom 21% to 60% of the time.
3. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general classroom more than 60% of the time, and
4. Students receiving special education or related services in a separate educational facility.

The charts in this Educational Environment Section show the shift in student placement that is gradually taking place in Illinois. The charts also illustrate these findings by disability and by race.

### Desired Result:

- Increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the number of students with disabilities who receive special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time.

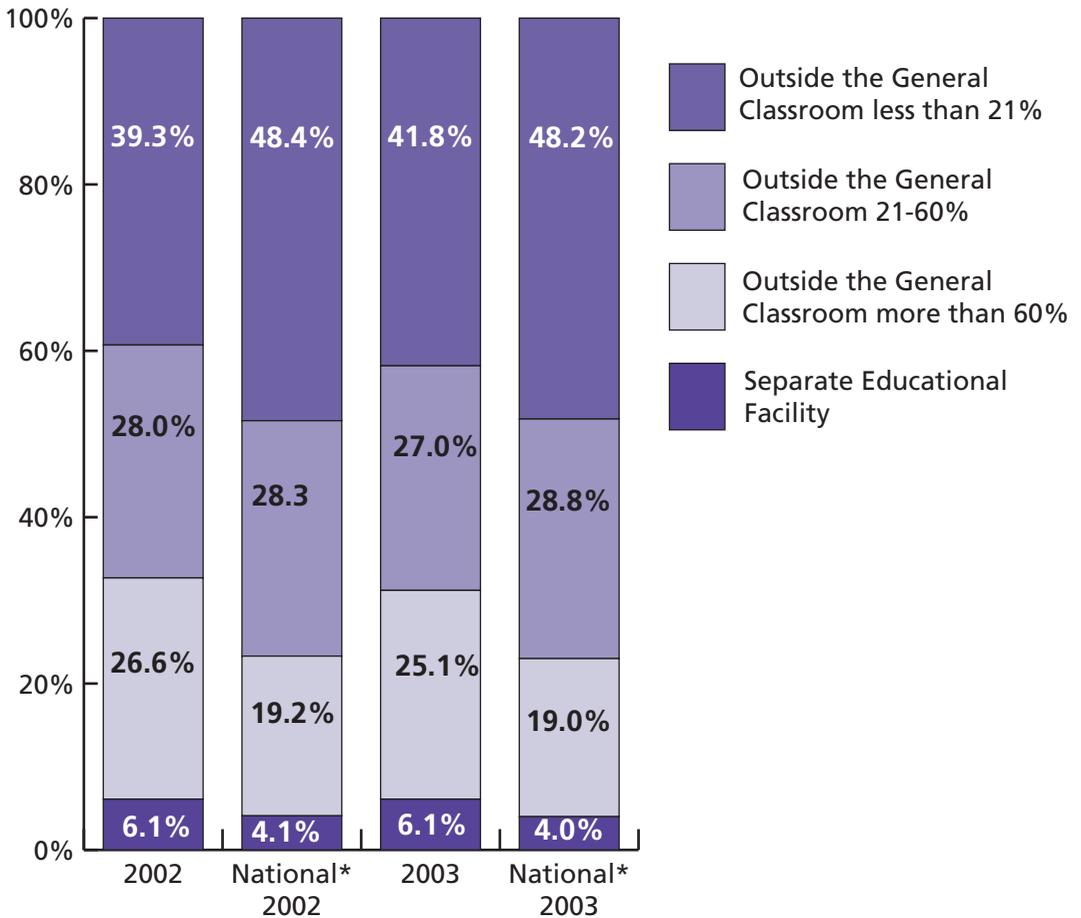
### Observations:

- The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased in 2003, while the percent of students with disabilities receiving special education services in a separate educational facility has remained the same.
- Almost one third (31%) of students identified with Emotional Disturbance received special education services in a separate educational facility in 2003.
- Over 80% of students with mental retardation (MR) are either served outside of a regular classroom more than 60% of the time or are in a separate facility.
- Black students receive special education services in less integrated settings than any other race/ethnic group.

\*see End Notes following the Glossary

## Placement in a Variety of Educational Environments, ages 6-21 — 2002 and 2003

The 2001-2002 school year was the first year that educational environment was recorded using the current categories.

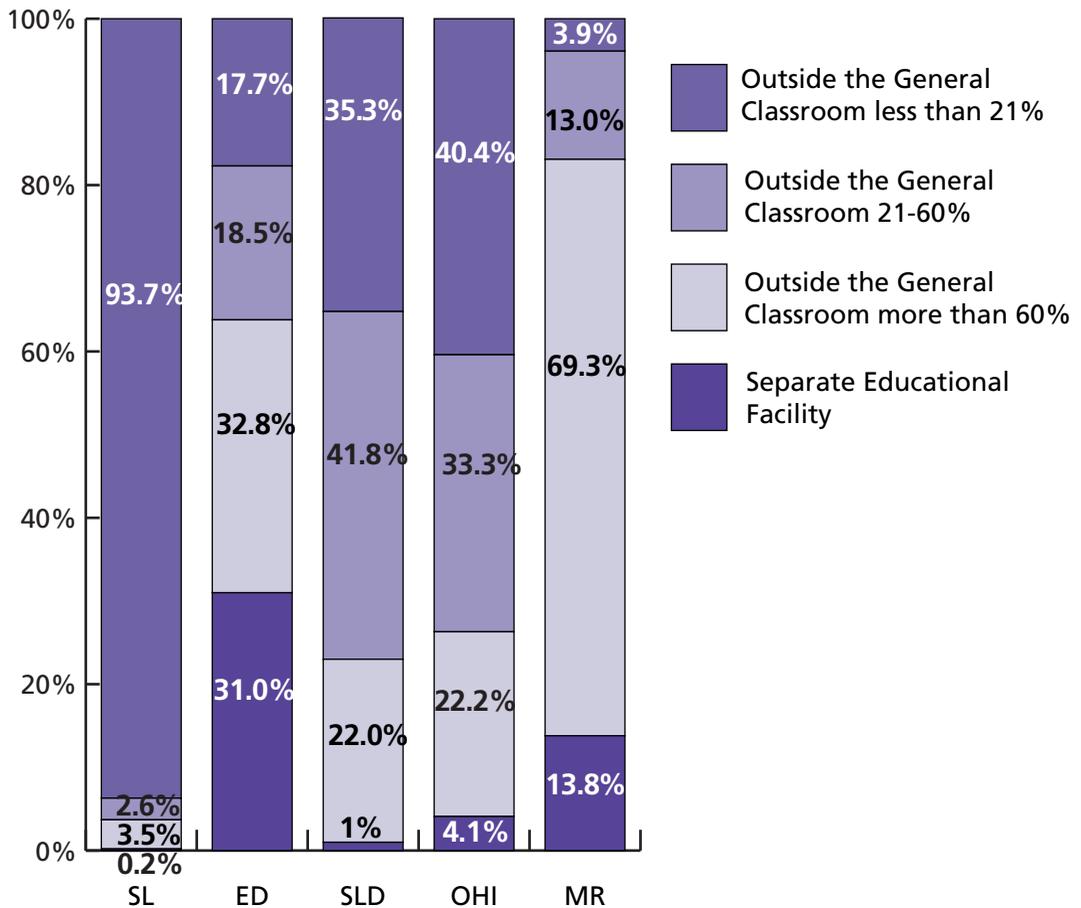


The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased in 2003, while the percent of students with disabilities served in a separate facility has remained the same.

\*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

## Educational Environments for Specific Disabilities, ages 6-21 — 2003

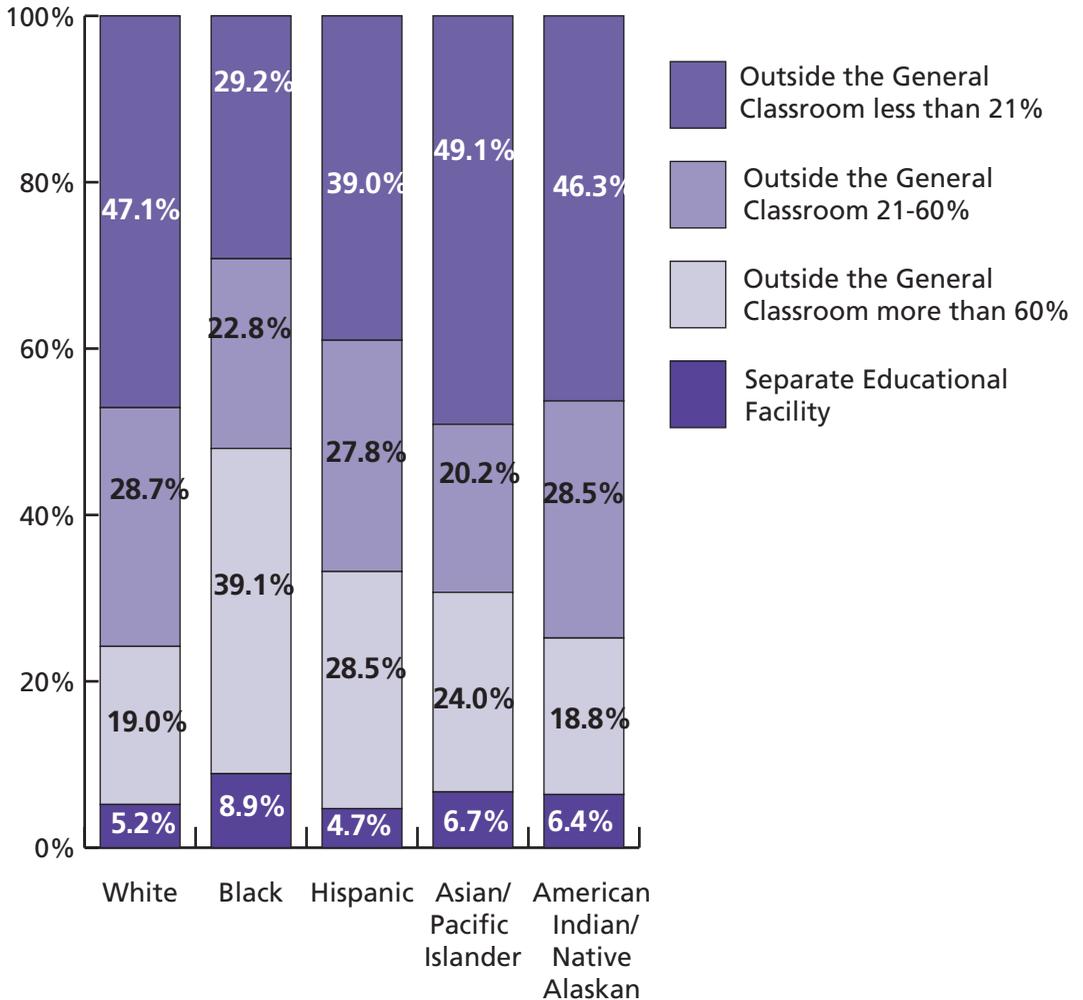
This chart displays student settings by the following five highest incidence disability categories: Speech/Language (SL), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Other Health Impaired (OHI) and Mental Retardation (MR).



Students identified with Speech/Language Impairment overwhelmingly receive services outside of the general classroom less than 21% of the time. Almost one third of students identified with Emotional Disturbance receive special education services in a separate educational facility. And, students identified with Mental Retardation are likely to spend most of their time outside of the general classroom.

## Educational Environment by Race/Ethnicity, ages 6-21 — 2003

This chart displays student placement for the five race/ethnicity categories.



Black students receive special education services in less integrated settings than any other race/ethnic group, and are more likely to receive those services in a separate educational facility than other groups. Hispanic students are less likely to receive special education services in separate educational facilities than any other race/ethnic group.

## Glossary

**AYP — Adequate Yearly Progress.** To meet the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, Illinois has defined what adequate yearly progress should be for all Illinois students, including students with disabilities. This is the measure of yearly progress of all public schools and school districts as they attempt to meet the State's Learning and Performance Standard. For example, the Illinois State Accountability Plan requires that at least 40% of all students in a school meet and exceed the State's Learning Standards in reading and mathematics as a result of the April 2003 State testing.

**Complaints.** A complaint is a formal disagreement that can be filed with the Illinois State Board of Education if it is believed that the local school district has not complied with the law or that a child's educational rights have been violated.

**Due Process Hearing.** A due process hearing is an administrative hearing held to resolve disagreements between the parent and the school district. Due process hearings may be requested by either the parent (or the child at age of majority) or the school district.

**IAA —** The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is the instrument the state uses to measure the learning of students with significant disabilities. The IAA reflects students' progress in achieving the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn via a portfolio of student work and other materials. Students with severe disabilities participate in the IAA if their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) indicate that the participation in the state's regular assessments, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) or the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), is not appropriate.

**IDEA —** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is federal legislation that ensures all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs.

**IEP —** The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with the provisions of IDEA

**IMAGE —** The Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) is the instrument the State uses to measure the progress of students with limited English proficiency (LEP) in attaining the English-language reading and writing skills needed to achieve the Illinois Learning Standards.

**ISAT — Illinois Standards Achievement Test.** The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) is the instrument the State uses to measure individual student achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards.

**Mediation.** Mediation is a voluntary process in which parents and school district personnel are brought together to resolve disputes with the help of a trained mediator. Mediation is designed to resolve issues without going to the often more expensive and more formal due process hearing.

**PSAE — Prairie State Achievement Examination.** The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) is the instrument the State uses to measure achievement of grade 11 students relative to the Illinois Learning Standards for reading, mathematics writing, science and social science.

## Special Education Categories

**Autism.** A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movement, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.

**Deaf-Blindness.** Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

**Emotional Disturbance.** (includes schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance) A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- A general pervasive mood of anxiety or unhappiness or depression; or

- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

**Hearing Impairment.** An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness.

**Mental Retardation.** Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Multiple Disabilities.** Concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

**Orthopedic Impairment.** A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., clubfoot, absence or some member, etc.), and impairments caused by disease (e.g., Poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, and fractures or burns that cause contratures).

**Other Health Impairment.** Limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened sensitivity to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that

- is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, or sickle cell anemia; and
- adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Specific Learning Disability.** A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations, including such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Speech or Language Impairment.** A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

**Traumatic Brain Injury.** An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psycho social behavior; psychosocial functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

**Visual Impairment.** An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's education performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

## End Notes

### Educational Environment

For summaries of research on educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, see the following:

Moore, C. & Gilbreath, D. (1998) Educating students with disabilities in general education classrooms: A summary of the research. Western Regional Resource Center, <http://interact.uoregon.edu/wrrc/AKIInclusion.html>

The United States Department of Education's 21st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (April, 2000) III-21 — III-27, <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/1999/index.html>

**Illinois State Board of Education**  
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State Superintendent of Education

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