

2004 Annual State Report on Special Education Performance



Illinois State Board of Education

Message from the Assistant Superintendent

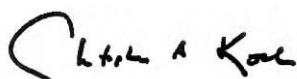
I am pleased to present the second Annual Report on Special Education Performance. This report summarizes key performance data for students with disabilities that the Illinois State Board of Education regularly reports to the U.S. Department of Education. Our intent is to publish this Report each year to ensure that parents, teachers, administrators, legislators and the public are regularly kept informed of current performance and progress in improving results for students with disabilities.

We received many positive comments and suggestions regarding our first annual report and have incorporated those for which data were available. For example, we have added information this year on parent satisfaction, following the completion of our first statewide parent survey.

In terms of performance, you will note that progress has been documented in the percentage of students with disabilities who perform at the "Meet Standards" or "Exceed Standards" levels as measured by State tests. Additionally, the gap between the graduation rates of students with and without disabilities has decreased significantly. Finally, placements in the least restrictive environment are continuing to improve as noted in the increase of the percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21 percent of the time and the decrease of the percentage of students served in more restrictive settings.

In addition to the state-level information in this report, ISBE has made longitudinal performance data available for each Illinois school district in the form of District Special Education Profiles. This information, as well as other information regarding special education, may be obtained by visiting our website at www.isbe.net/spec-ed. In addition, the *25th Annual Report to Congress* has been designed to showcase the data collected from states and the national studies that make up the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) National Assessment of the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The report may be accessed at: www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html.

The Illinois State Board of Education hopes this document will be informative and useful to you.



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Assistant Superintendent for Special Education
Illinois State Board of Education
August 2005

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Background Information

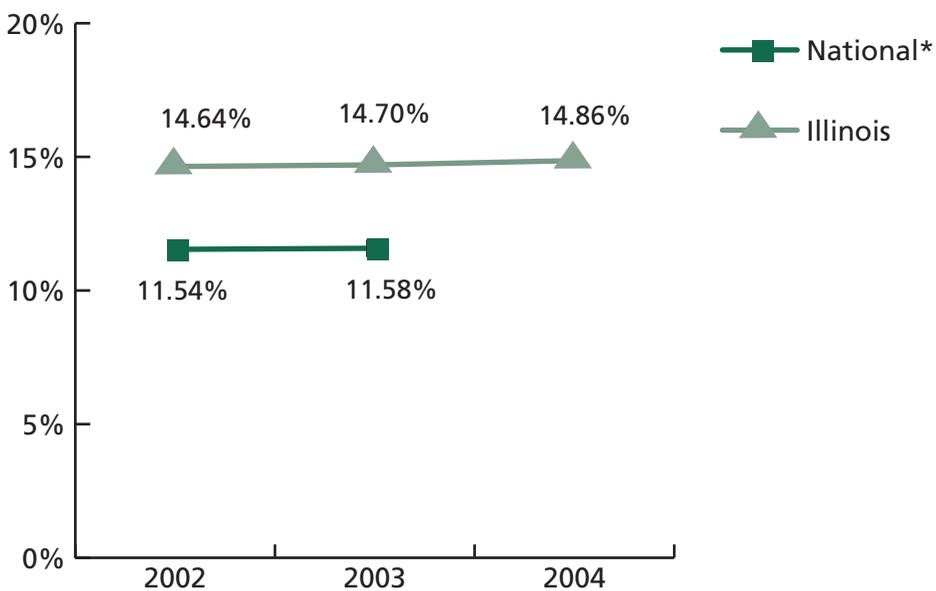
The following pages provide background information useful to understanding the status of special education in Illinois. The charts in this Background Section generally describe how many students are being served, the disability categories in which they are identified, and their race or ethnicity. Information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

Observations:

- The percent of Illinois students ages 6-21 receiving special education services has increased since 2002 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 students 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%, 7.1% and 4.7%, from 2000 to 2004.
- Formal disputes have decreased overall since 2002. During that time, more conflicts have been resolved through mediation than through formal due process hearings.
- The initial ISBE Special Education Parent Satisfaction survey reflects a high level of overall parent satisfaction with educational services provided to students with disabilities.

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.

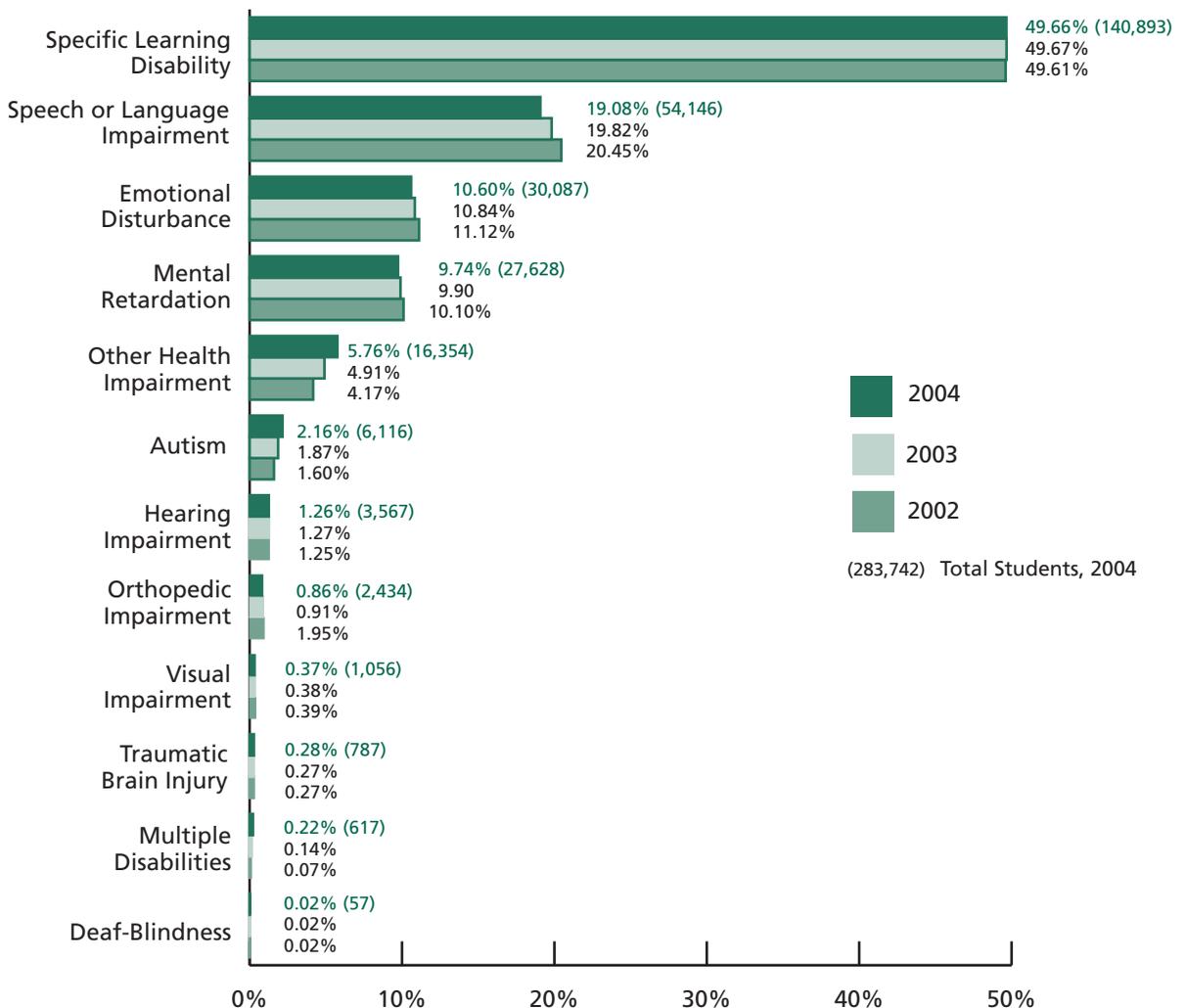


*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP provides these percentages for students ages 6-17.

The percent of Illinois students receiving special education services has increased since 2002 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?

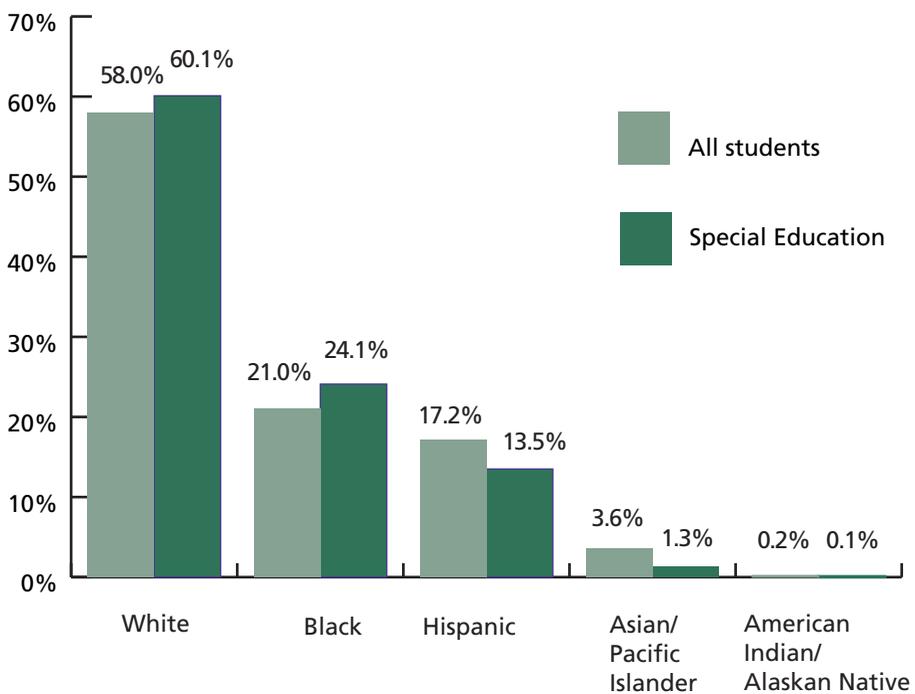
This chart compares students, ages 6-21, in each disability category for the past three years, as a percentage of all students receiving special education services. (See Special Education Categories in the Glossary for a description of each disability.)



Since 2002, the four highest incidence disabilities have stayed the same or decreased as a percent of all students receiving special education services, while Other Health Impairment and Autism have both increased.

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

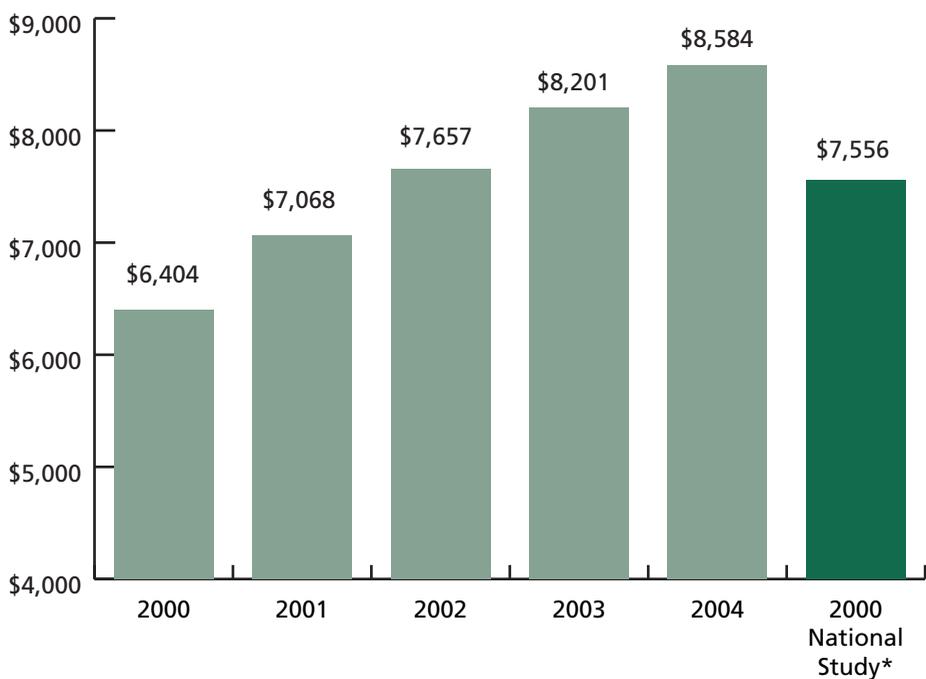
This chart displays the percent of students receiving special education services by race/ethnicity compared to the total student population. Additional information regarding disproportionality can be accessed at: www.taalliance.org/research/disprop.htm.



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 Reports (AFR).



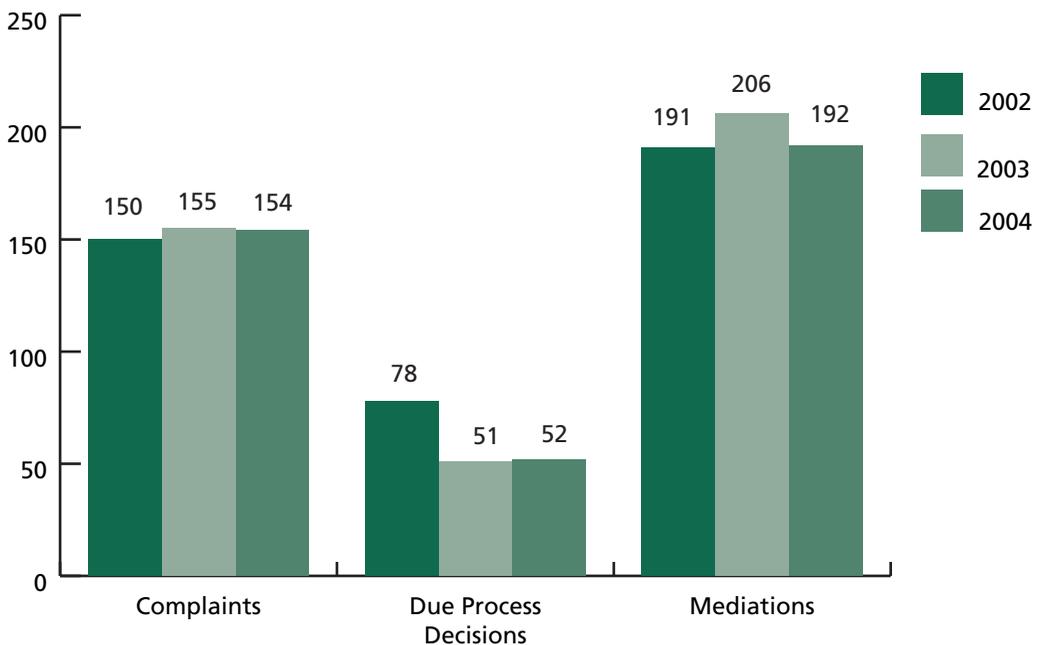
*Special Education Expenditure Project.

Special education expenditures per special education pupil have increased by annual rates of 10.4%, 8.3%, 7.1% and 4.7% from 2000 to 2004.

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. Additional information regarding formal dispute resolutions can be found at: www.isbe.net/spec-ed.



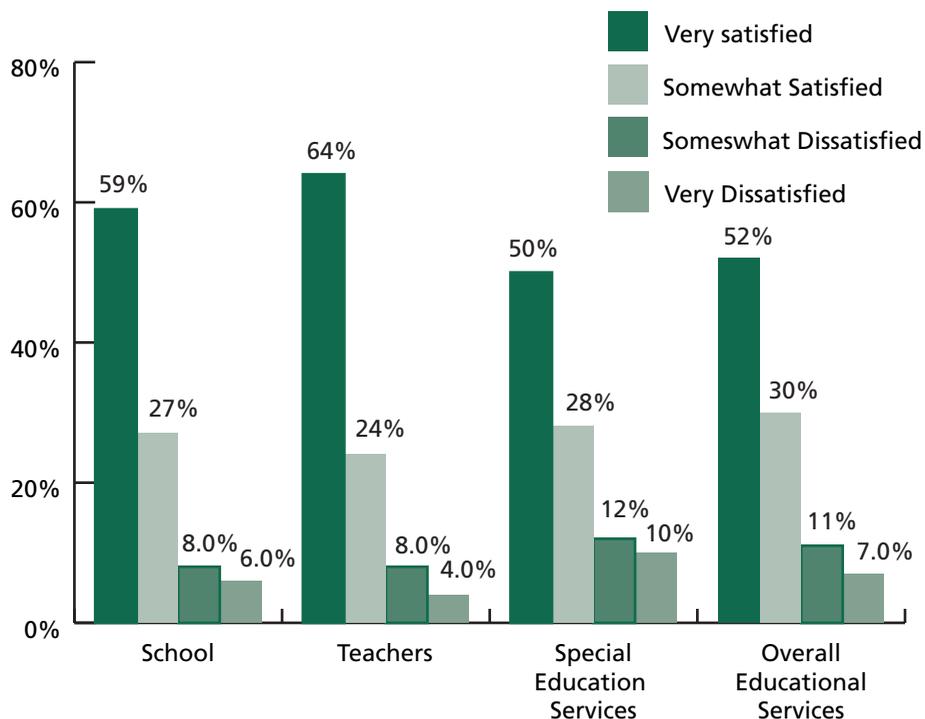
Formal disputes have decreased overall since 2002. During that time, more conflicts have been resolved through mediation than through fully decided due process hearings.

To what extent are parents of students with disabilities satisfied with the educational services their children receive?

In 2004, the first annual parent satisfaction survey was conducted by the Illinois State Board of Education, and was completed by 3,151 parents and guardians of students with disabilities. A complete report of survey results will be available in the fall of 2005 at www.isbe.net/spec-ed.

The following are results from the question, "Please rate your satisfaction with..."

- The school your child has attended this year
- The teachers your child has had this year
- The special education services your child receives
- The overall educational services or programs that your child has received this year



The initial ISBE Special Education Parent Survey reflects a high level of overall parent satisfaction with educational services provided to students with disabilities.

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:

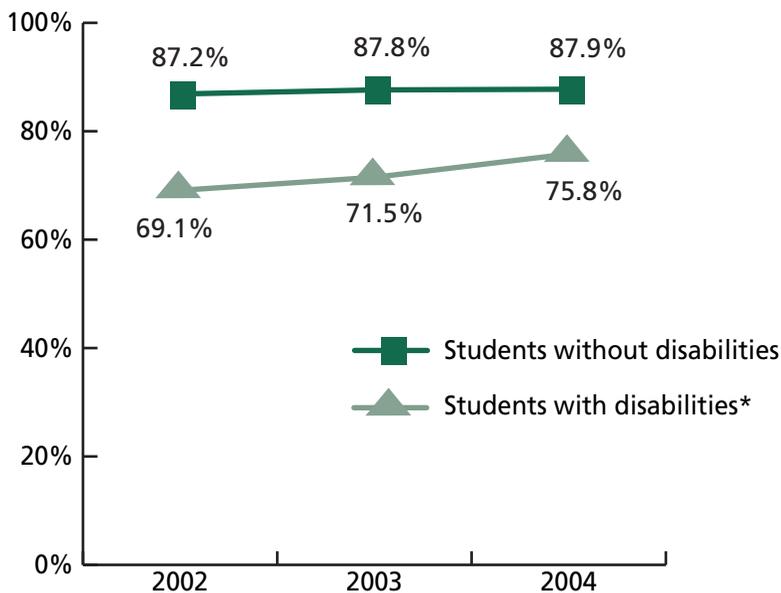
- The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan established the desired result of annually increasing, by 4.5 percentage points, the percent of youth with disabilities who graduate with a standard diploma — reaching 90% in 2007.
- The Illinois No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Accountability Plan commitment is to have an 85% graduation rate for all schools and students by 2014. The state target was 65% in 2003 and 66% in 2004.

Observations:

- The graduation rate of students with disabilities continued to improve, with 75.8% graduating in the spring of 2004.
- The gap between the graduation rates of students with and without disabilities has decreased significantly, from 18.1 percentage points in 2002 to 12.1 in 2004.

High School Graduation Rate — 2002-2004

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.



*Prior to 2004, students with disabilities includes students receiving special education services and students with a Section 504 plan.

While the graduation rate for students without disabilities has increased since 2002, the graduation rate for students with disabilities has increased significantly more. From 2002 to 2004, the gap between the graduation rates of students with and without disabilities has decreased from 18.1% to 12.1%.

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:

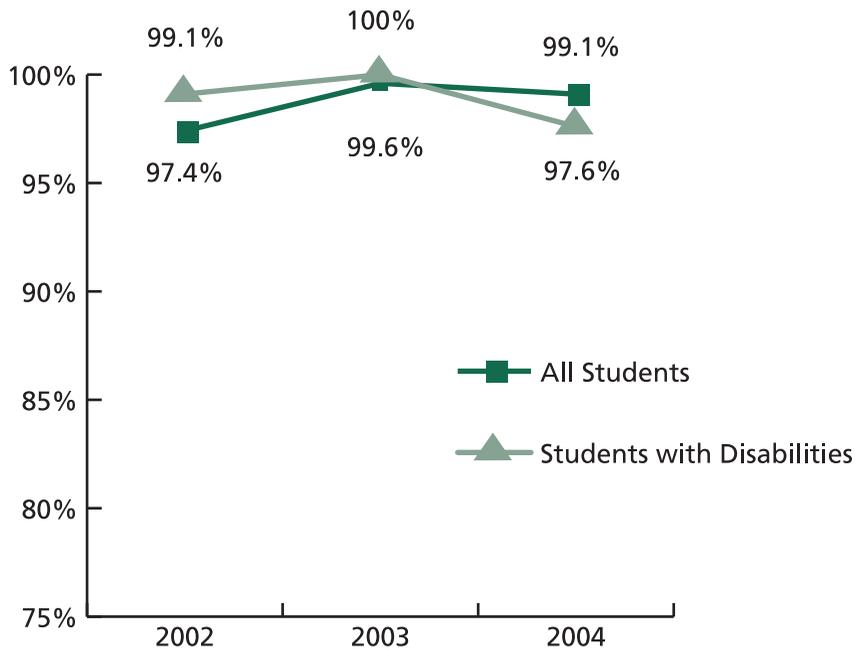
- The Illinois NCLB Accountability Plan commitment is to have a 95% participation rate of students in all measurable subgroups taking state assessments.
- The Illinois NCLB Accountability Plan commitment is to have 100% of students' reading and math scores meet or exceed standards by 2014. For 2003 and 2004 the annual state target was 40%.
- The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan established the desired result of increasing 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 assessments at a very high rate.
- In elementary school, an increased percentage of both 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 science while reading and math results showed steady gains.
- In high school, both general education students and students receiving special education services improved in their achievement relative to the Illinois Learning Standards in 2004 as measured by the Prairie State Assessment Examination (PSAE), after showing a decrease in 2003.
- With the exception of the state science assessments, the gap between the test scores of students receiving special education services and those receiving general education has not decreased significantly since 2002.

Participation Rate for State Reading Tests — 2002-2004

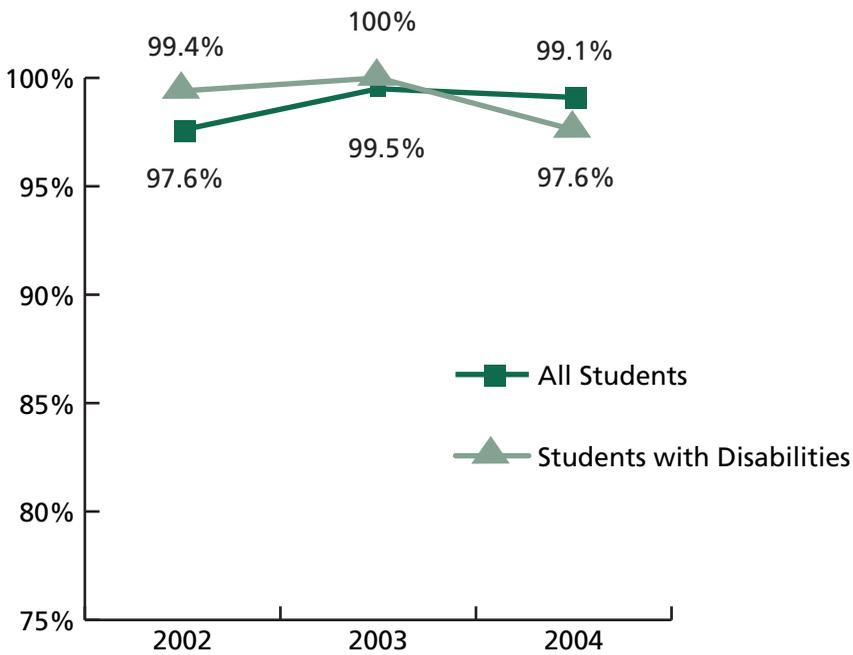
Participation rate is the percent of students who take the ISAT, PSAE, IMAGE or IAA reading assessments, as reported on the Illinois State Report Card.



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

Participation Rate for State Math Tests — 2002-2004

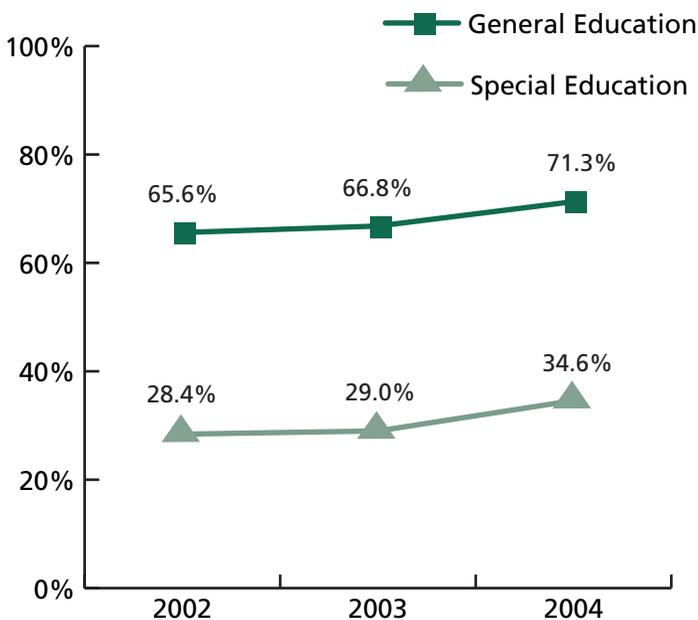
Participation rate is the percent of students who take the ISAT, PSAE, IMAGE or IAA math assessments, as reported on the Illinois State Report Card.



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

Performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) — 2002-2004

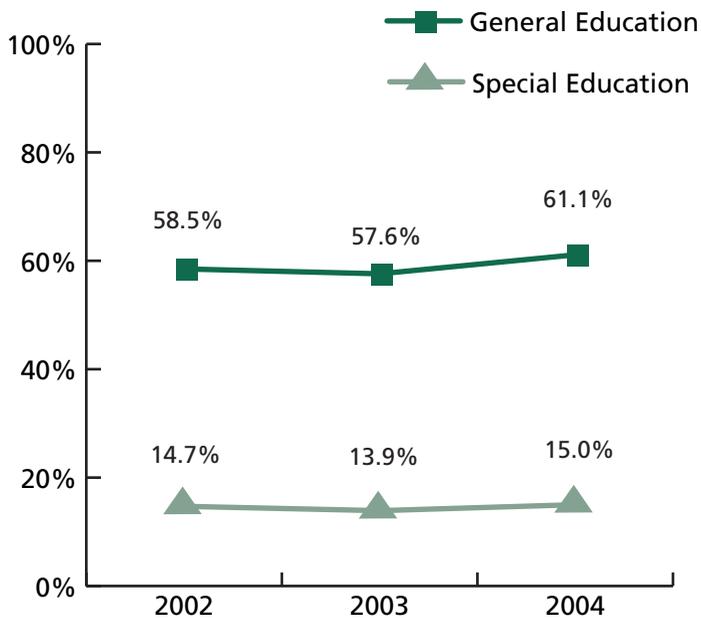
The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) measures the performance of students in grades 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. This chart illustrates the percent of test scores at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies; all grades tested.



ISAT performance for students receiving special education services has steadily improved since 2002, and the gap between special education and general education performance has decreased slightly.

Performance on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) — 2002-2004

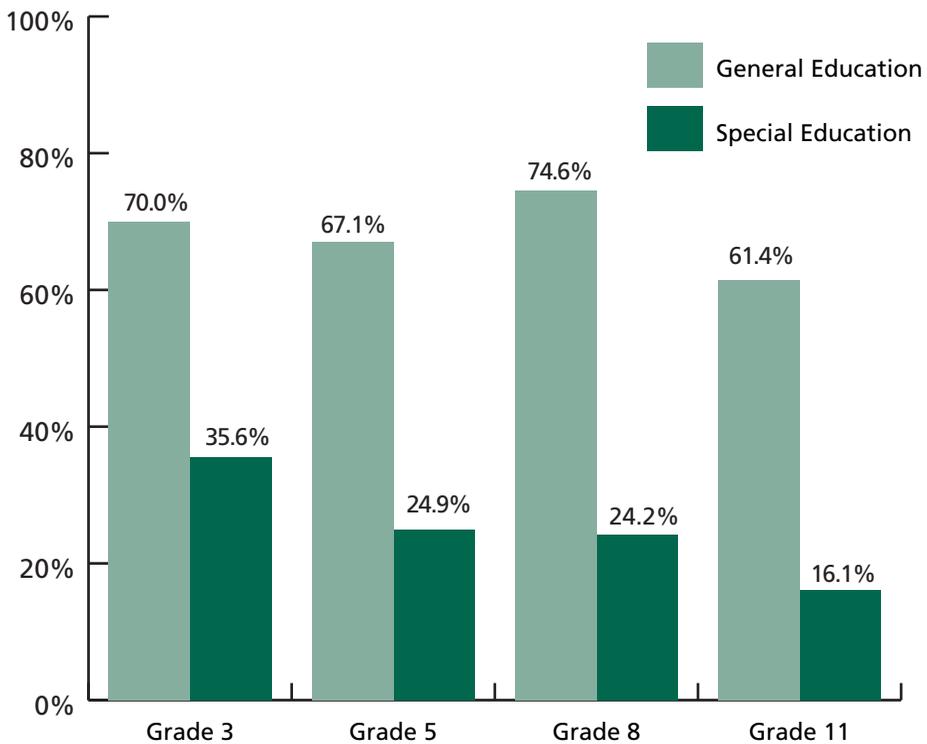
The Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) measures the performance of students in the 11th grade. This chart illustrates the percent of test scores at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.



PSAE performance for students receiving special education services has improved slightly since 2002. However, the gap between special education and general education performance has increased.

Performance on the State Reading Tests* — 2004

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

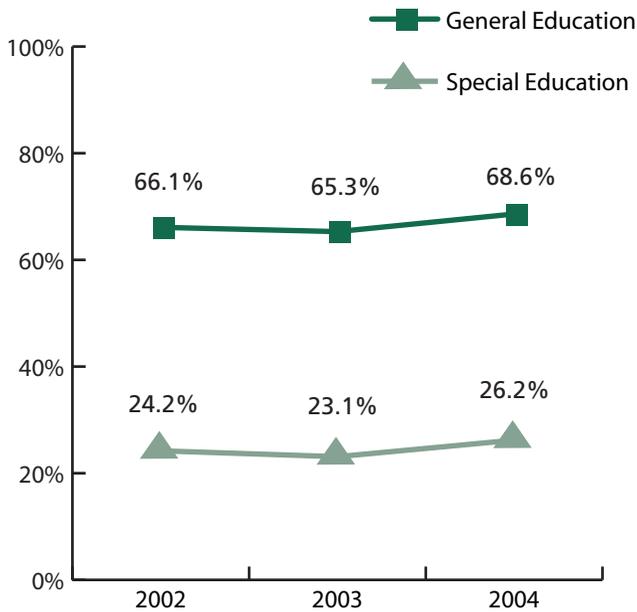


*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in reading test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 8th grade level. Gaps at grades 3, 5 and 11 remain significant.

Performance on State Reading Tests* — 2002-2004

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.

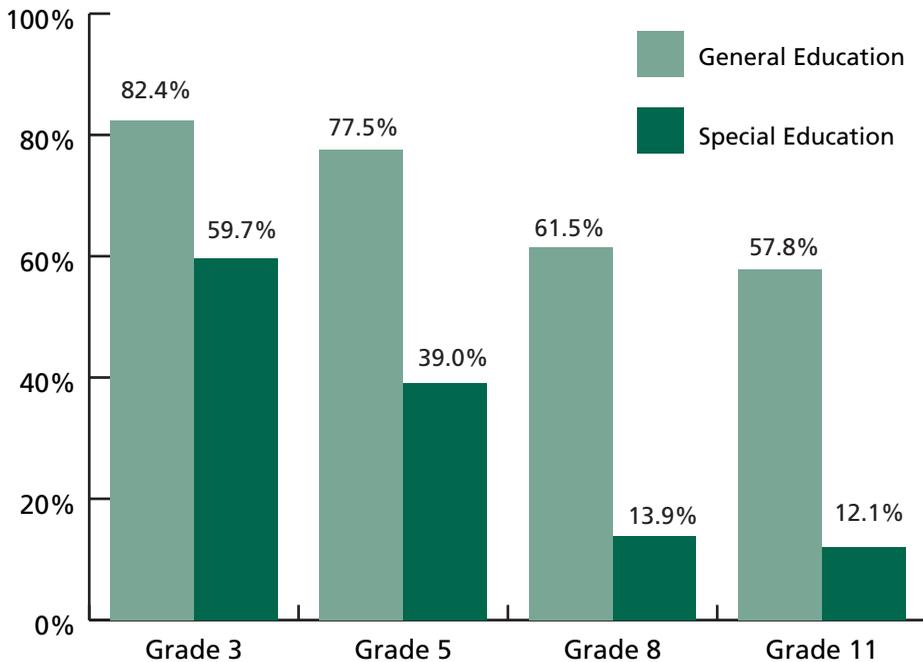


*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Reading test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education has improved since 2002, while the gap between the two has increased slightly.

Performance on State Mathematics Tests* — 2004

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

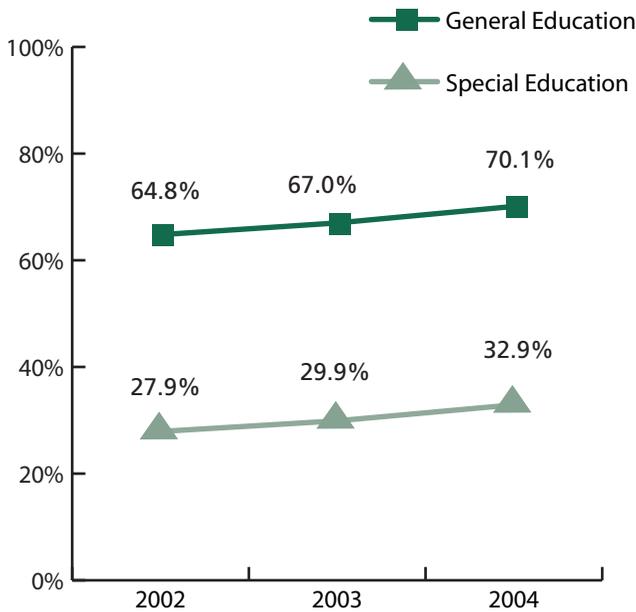


*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in mathematics test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 8th grade level. Gaps at grades 3, 5 and 11 remain significant.

Performance on State Mathematics Tests* — 2002-2004

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.

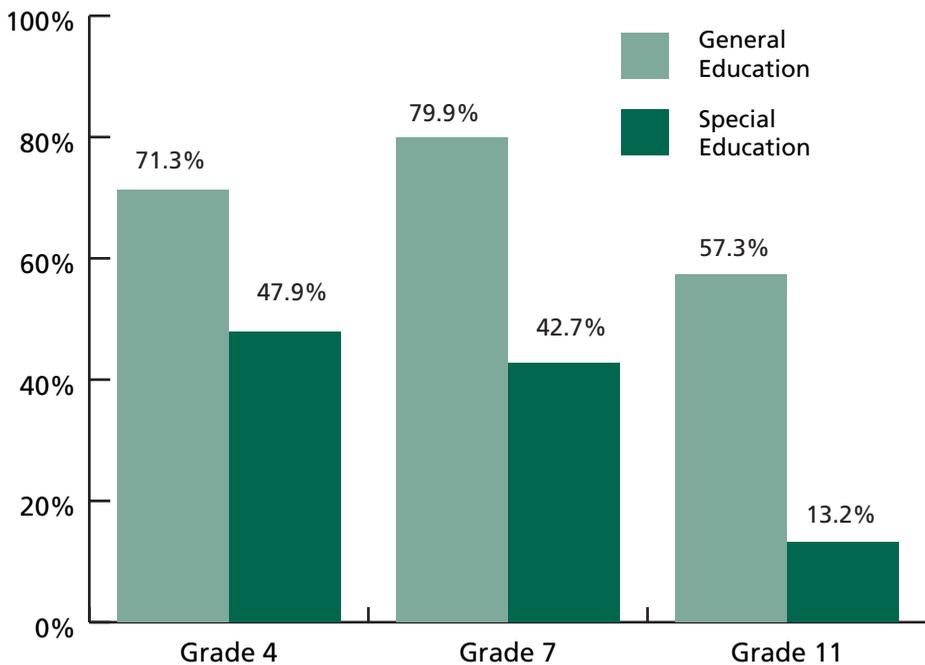


*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Mathematics test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education has improved steadily from 2002 to 2004, while the gap between the two has increased slightly.

Performance on the State Science Tests* – 2004

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

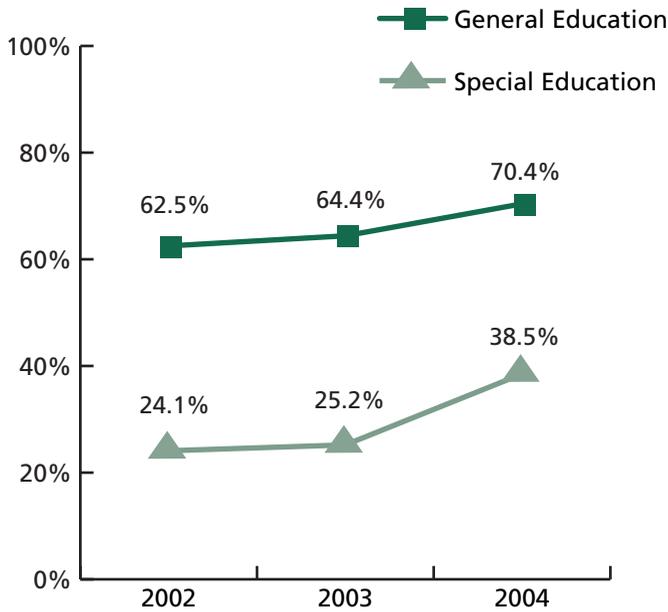


*ISAT for grades 4 and 7; PSAE for grade 11

The gap in science test performance between students receiving special education services and those in general education is greatest at the 11th grade level. Gaps at grades 4 and 7 remain significant.

Performance on State Science Tests* – 2003-2004

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” in Science for the past three years. Combined scores for grades 4, 7 and 11.

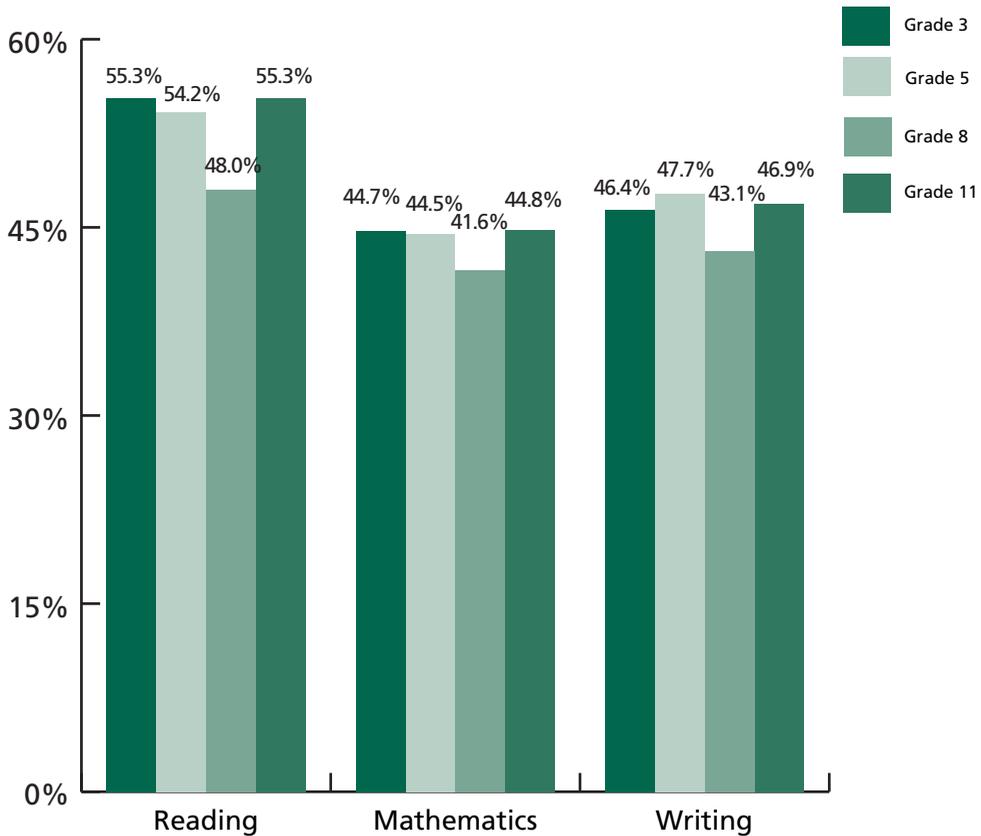


*ISAT for grades 4 and 7; PSAE for grade 11

2004 science test performance for students receiving special education services improved significantly more than for students in general education. As a result, the gap between the two decreased from 39.2 to 31.9 percentage points.

Performance on the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) - 2004

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



The 2004 alternate assessment portfolio process reflects an increase in the percentage of students at the "Progressing" or "Attaining" levels from the 8th to 11th grade. This trend is consistent in all three reported subject areas.

Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in natural environments, 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 for students receiving special education or related services can be generally classified into four settings:

1. Outside the general education classroom less than 21% of the time,
2. Outside the general education classroom 21% to 60% of the time,
3. Outside the general education classroom more than 60% of the time, and
4. In a separate educational setting.

The charts in this 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:

- The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan established the desired result of increasing 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.

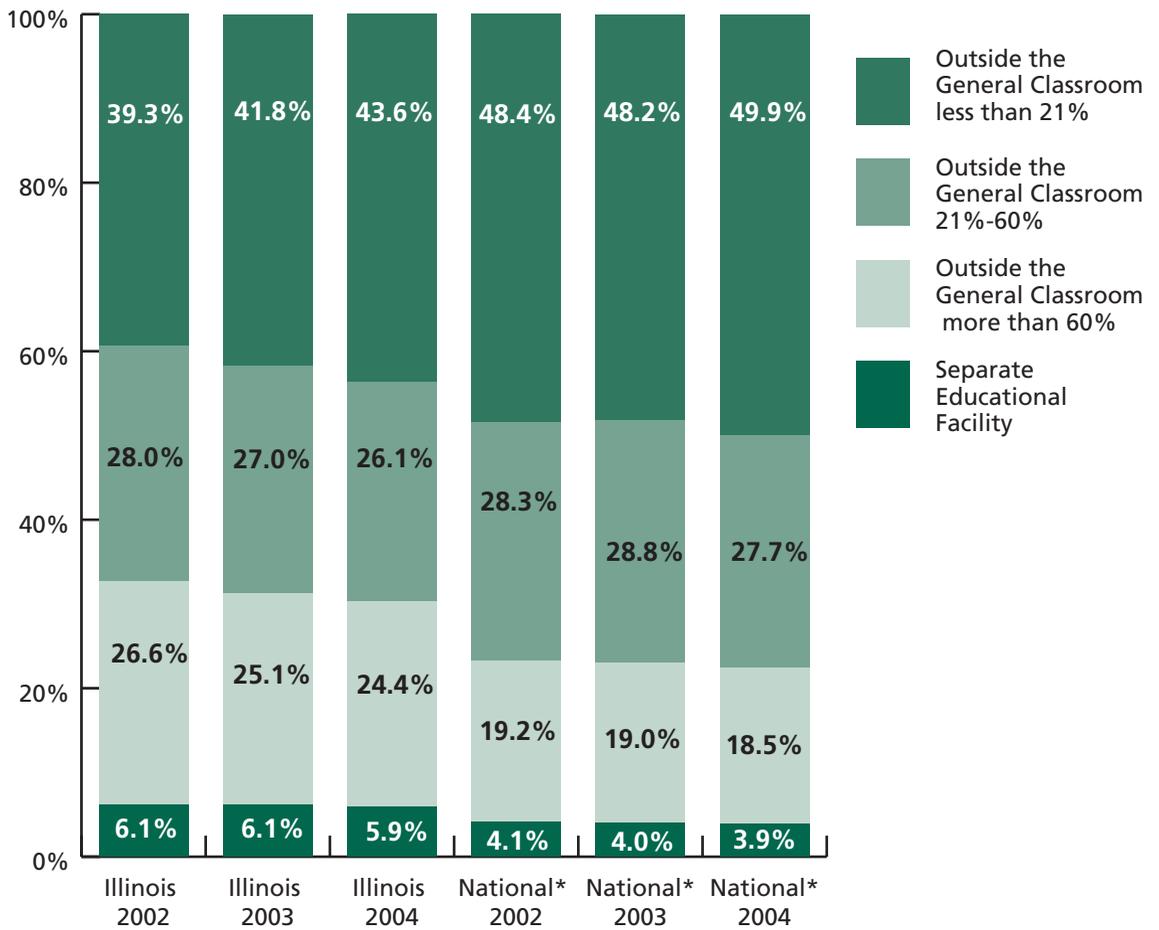
Observations:

- The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased in both 2003 and 2004, while the percent of students with disabilities served in more restrictive settings has decreased slightly during that time.
- Black students receive special education services in less integrated settings than any other race/ethnic group.
- Almost one third (30.3%) of students identified with Emotional Disturbance received special education services in a separate educational facility in 2004.
- 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.
- Illinois places students in less inclusive settings than the national averages for all of the six highest incidence disabilities except Speech/Language Impairment.

*see End Notes following the Glossary

Placement in a Variety of Educational Environments, Ages 6-21 – 2002-2004

This chart displays the percent of Illinois students with disabilities receiving services in various educational environments for the past three years, compared to national statistics for the same time period.

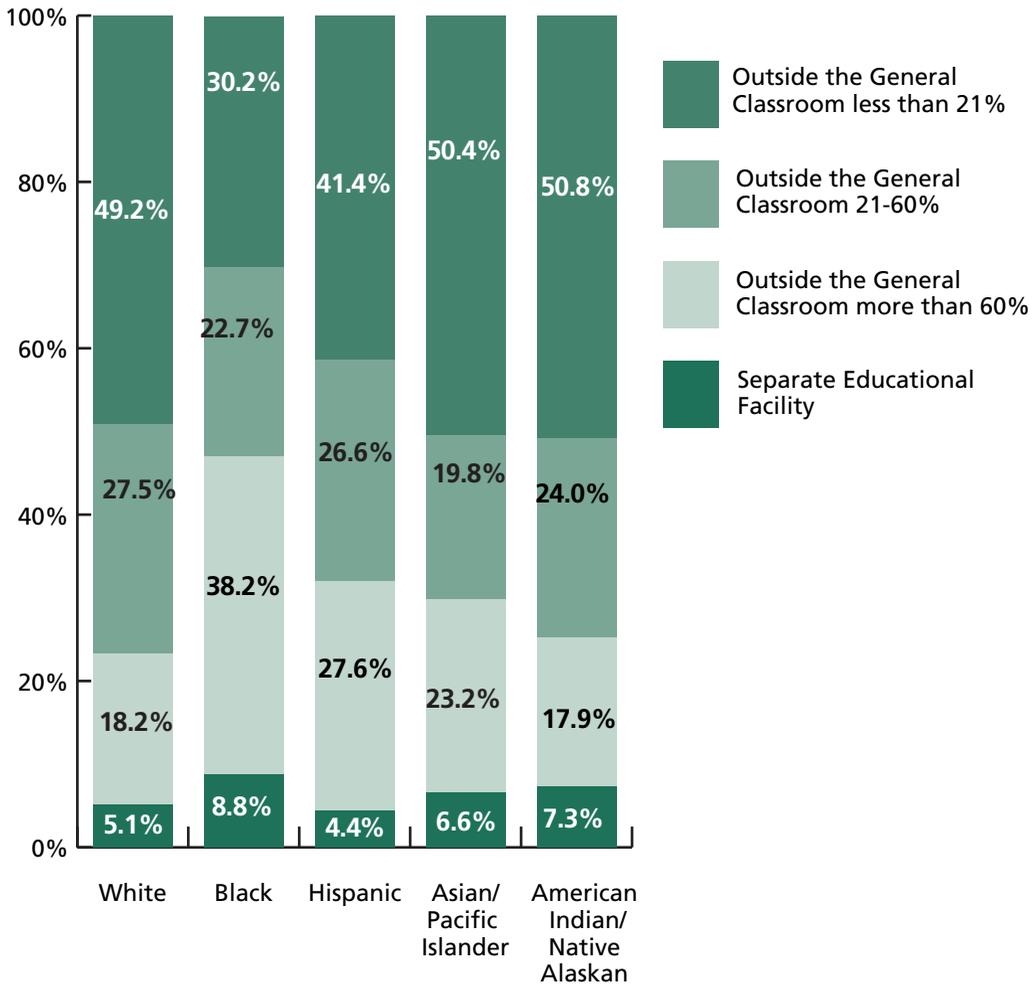


*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased in both 2003 and 2004, while the percent of students with disabilities served in more restrictive settings has decreased slightly during that time.

Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 6-21 – 2004

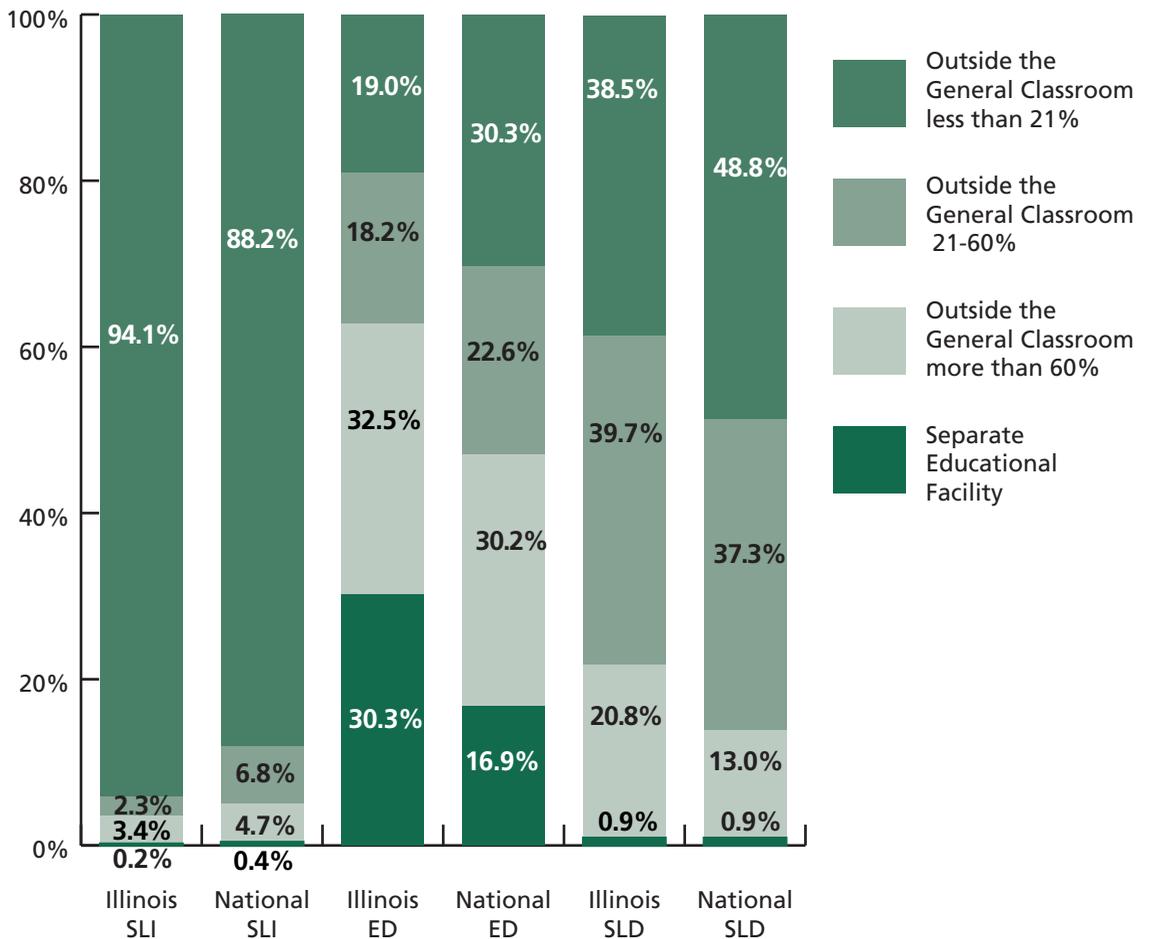
This chart displays settings for the five race/ethnicity categories.



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.

Educational Environments for Specific Disabilities, Ages 6-21 – 2004

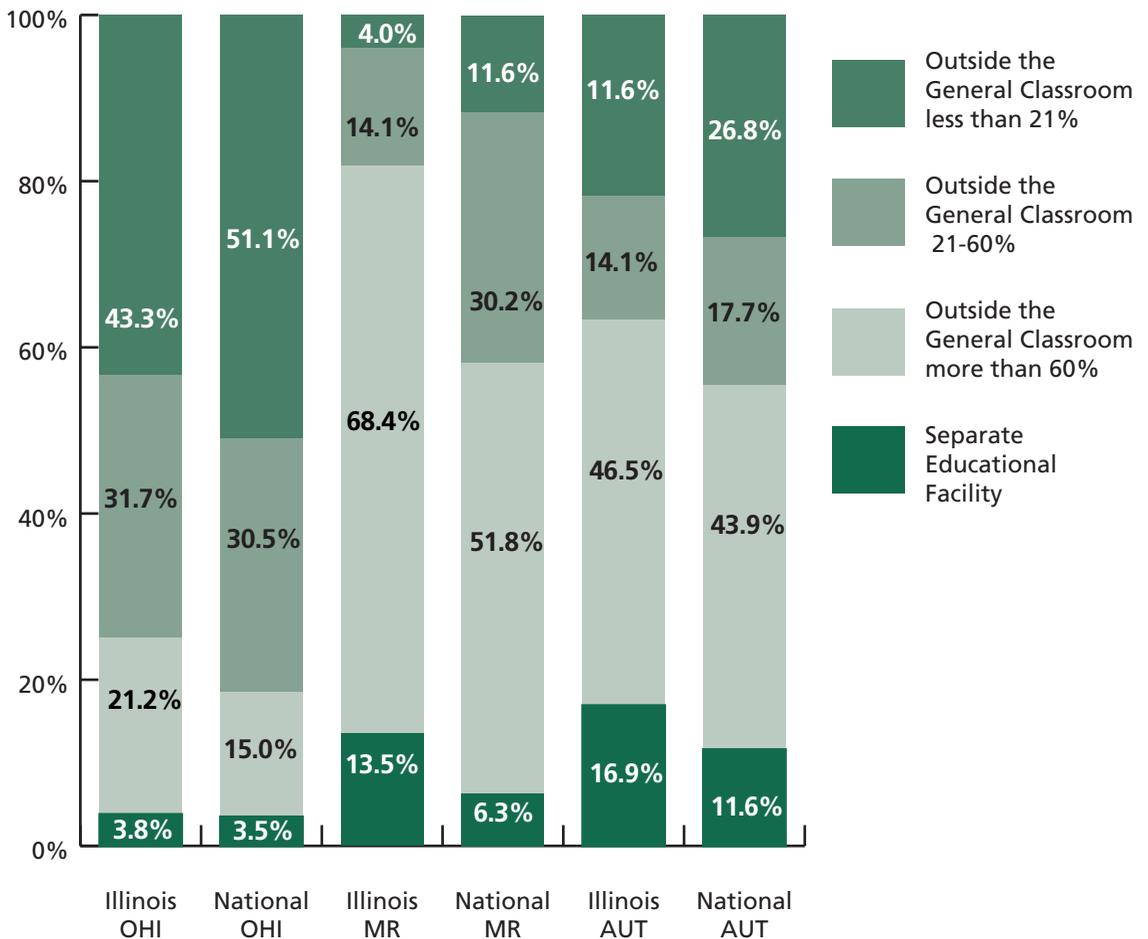
This chart compares Illinois student settings to National student settings in the following disability categories: Speech or Language Impairment (SLI), Emotional Disturbance (ED) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD).



Illinois places students in less inclusive settings than the national averages for both Emotional Disturbance and Specific Learning Disability. Almost one third of students identified with Emotional Disturbance receive special education services in a separate educational facility.

Educational Environments for Specific Disabilities, Ages 6-21 – 2004

This chart compares Illinois student settings to National student settings in the following disability categories: Other Health Impaired (OHI), Mental Retardation (MR) and Autism (AUT).



Illinois places students in less inclusive settings than the national averages for Other Health Impairment, Mental Retardation and Autism. Students identified with Mental Retardation are likely to spend most of their time outside of the general education classroom.

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 — Illinois Alternate Assessment. 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 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. 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 — Individualized Education Program. 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 — Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English. 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 movements, 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.

Deafness. A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

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 of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

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; psychosocial 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 educational 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>

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