

2005-2006 Annual State Report on Special Education Performance



Illinois State Board of Education

Notation of School Year. References to years in the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance* represent *school years*, not *calendar years*. For example, 2006 refers to the 2005-2006 school year, spanning fall 2005 to spring 2006.

Special Education Categories. Although the category definitions have not changed, references to Mental Retardation and Emotional Disturbance in previous editions of the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance* have been updated to Cognitive Disability and Emotional Disability, respectively, in this edition.

Data Accuracy. The data presented in different editions of the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance* occasionally change as a result of various factors, such as identifying and correcting data errors, obtaining data that were previously unavailable and receiving new or updated local data from school districts. As such, statistics presented in this report for previous school years may occasionally be different than what was published in previous Annual State Reports. This reflects our goal to always report the most complete, current and accurate data available at the time of publication.

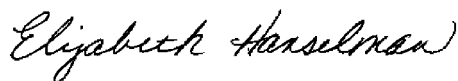
Message from the Assistant Superintendent

I am pleased to present the fourth Annual State Report on Special Education Performance. As in previous years, the 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. These performance areas include high school completion, student performance on statewide assessments and educational environments. Each of the three performance areas is introduced by providing the desired results as related to the Illinois State Performance Plan followed by overall observations. In addition, a background information section is provided to give an overall picture of students with disabilities in Illinois. Our intent is to publish this Report annually to ensure that parents, teachers, administrators, legislators and the public remain informed of the current performance and progress in improving results for students with disabilities.

After reviewing the data in this report, you will notice several critical trends in special education performance. Since 2003 the graduation rate for students with disabilities has increased, and the gap between the graduation rates of students with disabilities versus all youth has decreased. Additionally, the performance of students with disabilities on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) has steadily improved since 2003. 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 27th 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: <http://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.



Elizabeth Hanselman
Assistant Superintendent
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Illinois State Board of Education
December 2007

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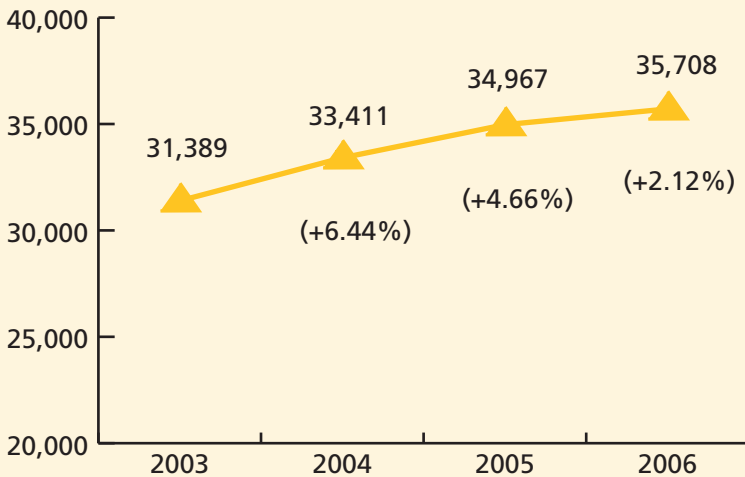
Background Information

The following pages provide background information useful to understanding the status of special education in Illinois. The charts in this Background Information 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, conflict resolution, and overall parent satisfaction.

Observations:

- The number of Illinois children ages 3-5 receiving special education services continues to increase annually as more children are identified with disabilities each year, yet the rate of increase has slowed since 2004.
- Among children ages 3-5, the identification rate of children with Developmental Delay is increasing at a greater rate than other disability categories.
- The percent of Illinois students ages 6-21 receiving special education services has decreased slightly in 2006, but continues to be higher than the national percentage.
- The four highest incidence disabilities have also decreased as a percentage of all students ages 6-21 receiving special education services, while Other Health Impairment and Autism have shown an increase.
- Caucasian and African American students remain slightly over represented among students receiving special education services, while Hispanic and Asian students are under represented.
- The annual increase in special education expenditures per special education pupil has slowed as reflected by annual rates of 10.2%, 7.9%, 7.8%, 5.0%, 2.9%, and 3.0% from 2000 to 2006.
- ISBE is adjudicating more due process requests within the 45-day timeline or a properly extended timeline, completing 90.3% of due process requests on time in 2006, compared to 63.2% in 2004.
- ISBE conducted a parent satisfaction survey in 2006, which was completed by 1,334 parents of students with disabilities across Illinois. The overall level of satisfaction was highest among parents of students with disabilities in grades pre-kindergarten through 3, while the overall level of satisfaction was lowest among parents of students with disabilities in grades 4 through 8.

How many Illinois children ages 3-5 are receiving special education services?

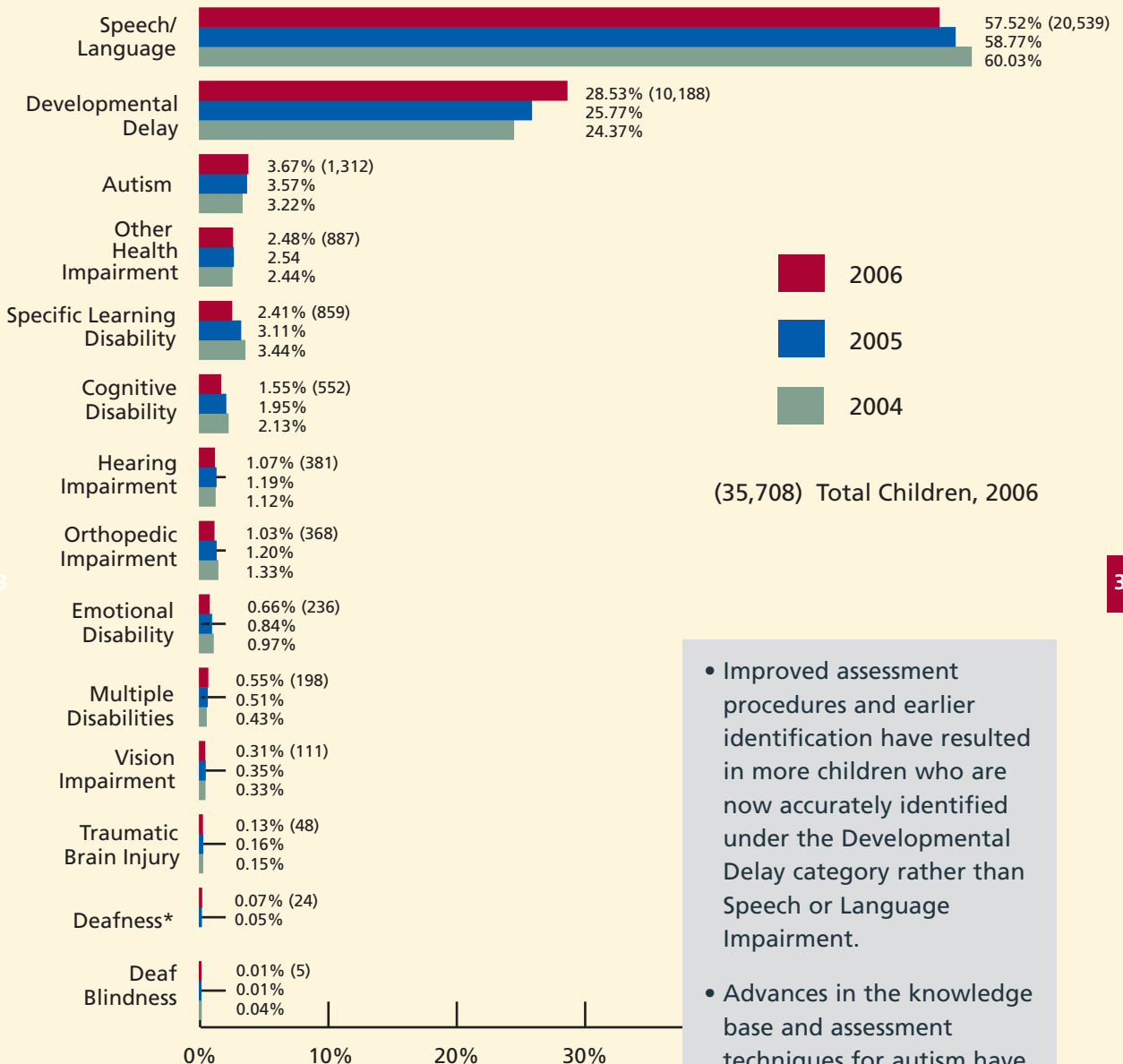


The chart above includes children, ages 3-5, in all disability categories over the past four years.

The number of children ages 3-5 receiving special education services increased by 741, or 2.12%, in 2006. This increase can be attributed to two important factors:

1. More infants and toddlers with disabilities are being identified and served at a younger age. These children then transition to early childhood special education services when they reach the age of 3.
2. Collaboration with Head Start, pre-kindergarten, and child care programs has resulted in identification of more preschool aged children who may need special education services and has provided more placement options for children with IEPs.

What percent of children ages 3-5 receiving special education services are identified for each disability category?



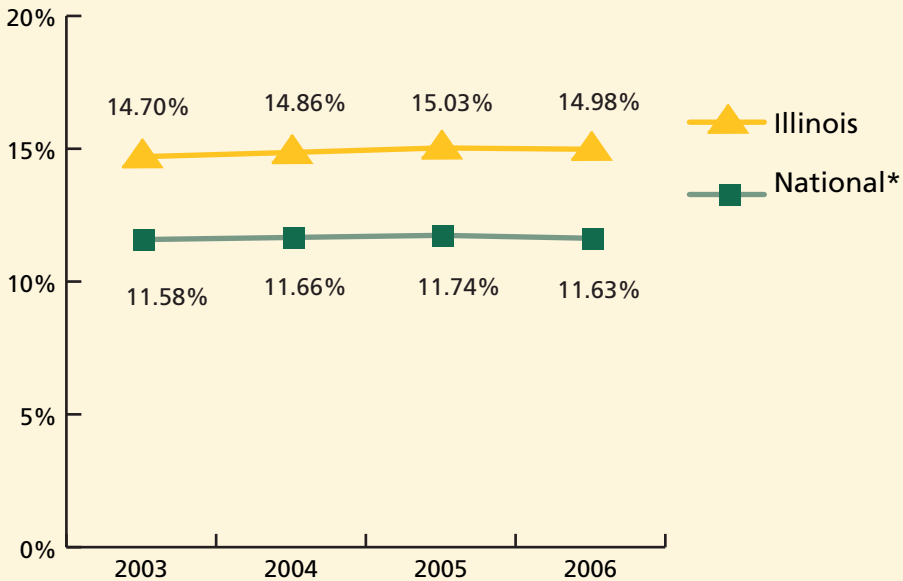
*Illinois first started reporting "Deafness" in 2005.

This chart compares children, ages 3-5, in each disability category for the past three years, as a percentage of all children ages 3-5 receiving special education services.

- Improved assessment procedures and earlier identification have resulted in more children who are now accurately identified under the Developmental Delay category rather than Speech or Language Impairment.
- Advances in the knowledge base and assessment techniques for autism have made accurate diagnoses at a younger age possible, reflected in the slight increase in the number of children identified with Autism.

(See *Special Education Categories in the Glossary* for a description of each disability.)

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



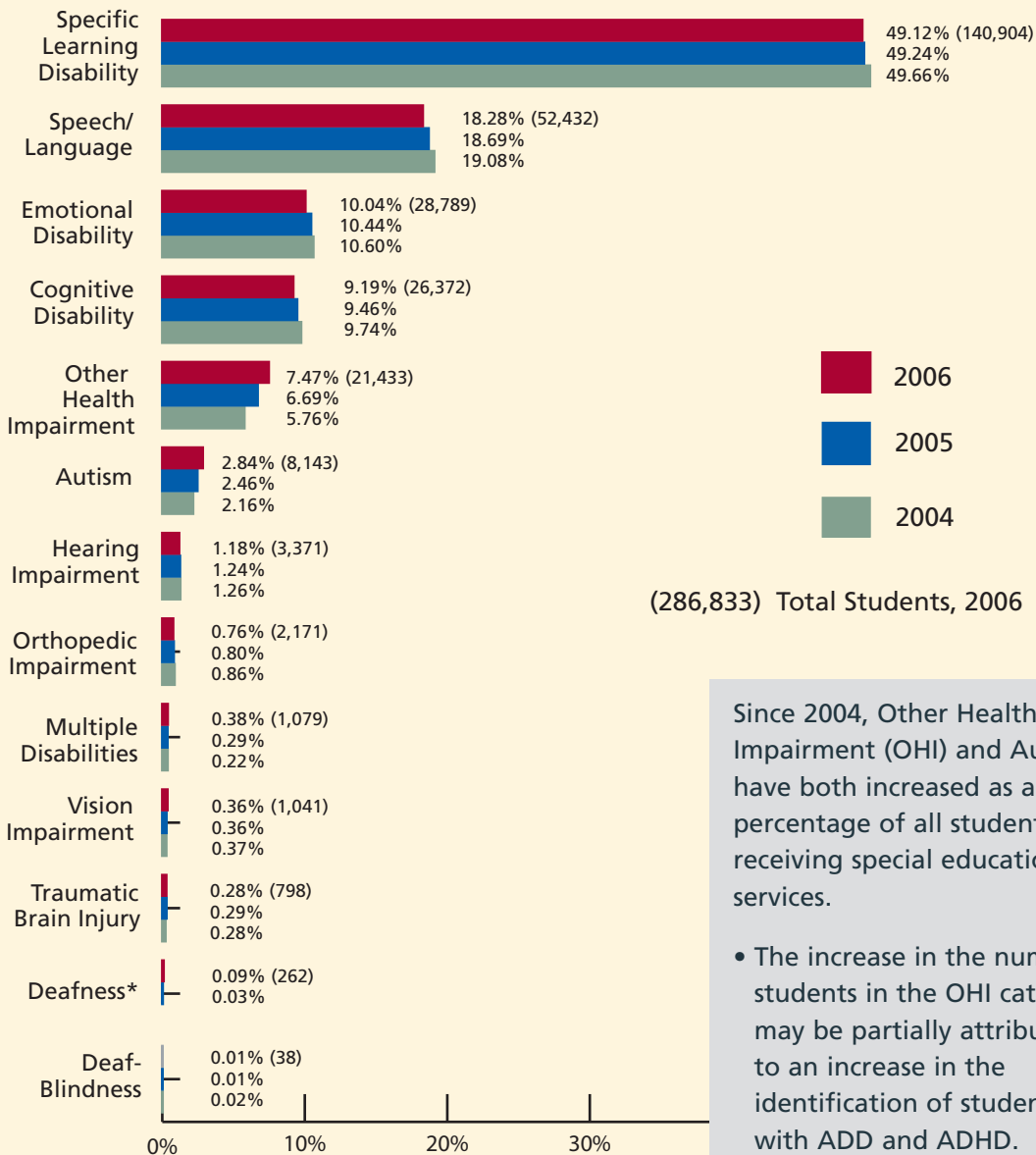
This chart includes students, ages 6-21, in all disability categories over the past four years, as a percentage of total public school enrollment, grades 1 through 12, including students over 18 who are "ungraded".*

The percent of Illinois students ages 6-21 receiving special education services has decreased slightly in 2006, but continues to be higher than the national percentage. The disability categories that have increased the most significantly in Illinois since 2003 are:

- Other Health Impairment (+7,754 students)
- Autism (+2,928 students)

*U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) calculates national figures using students with IEPs ages 6-17 divided by all students in grades pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. As such, national percentages are lower than those calculated at the State level.

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



*Illinois first started reporting "Deafness" in 2005.

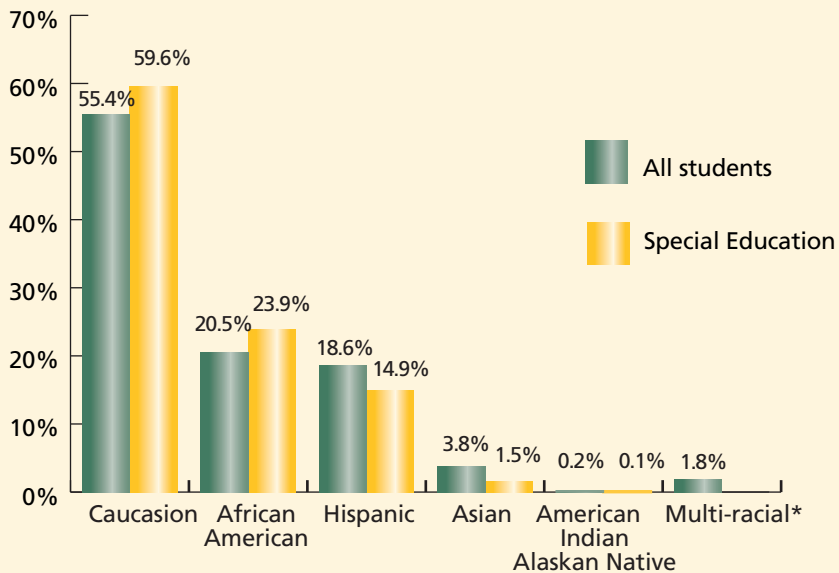
This chart compares students, ages 6-21, in each disability category for the past three years, as a percentage of all students receiving special education services.

(See *Special Education Categories in the Glossary* for a description of each disability.)

Since 2004, Other Health Impairment (OHI) and Autism have both increased as a percentage of all students receiving special education services.

- The increase in the number of students in the OHI category may be partially attributable to an increase in the identification of students with ADD and ADHD.
- Advances in the knowledge base and assessment techniques for autism have resulted in an increase in the number of students identified with Autism.

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

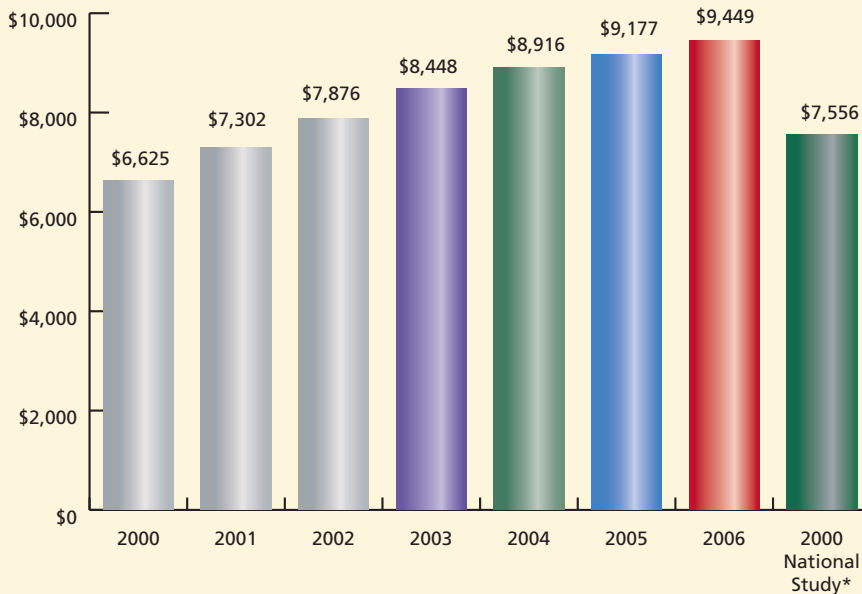


**Data for students receiving special education services who are multi-racial are not currently available.*

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

Both Caucasian and African American students are slightly over represented among students receiving special education services when compared to the composition of the total student population. Likewise, Hispanic and Asian students are under represented.

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



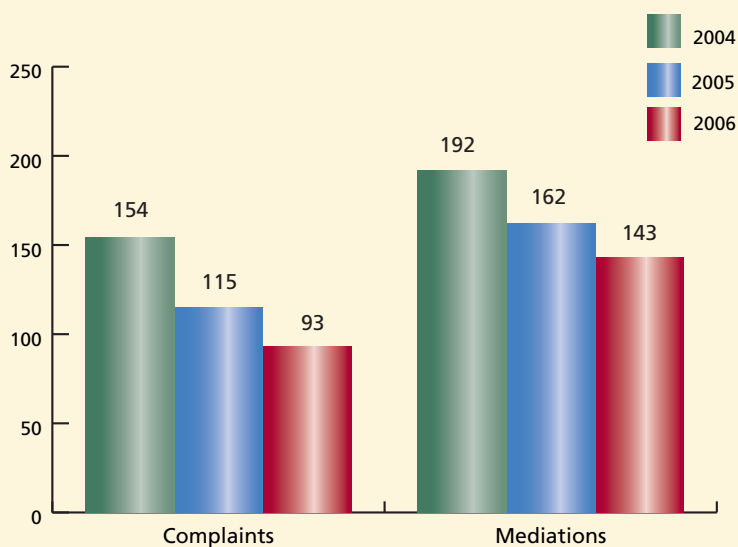
This chart represents special education expenditures divided by the total number of special education students. Included are specific special education expenditures as well as a prorated portion of certain expenditures that are both general and special education. Numbers are as reported on the Annual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

The annual rate of increase for expenditures per special education pupil in Illinois has slowed, with annual rates of 10.2%, 7.9%, 7.8%, 5.0%, 2.9%, and 3.0% from 2000 to 2006.

** National data are provided by the Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP), a study conducted by the Center for Special Education Finance. SEEP is the most recently available national study of its kind and is the first comprehensive, nationally representative study of special education spending to be undertaken in more than a decade. CSEF/SEEP staff are currently analyzing the data and disseminating findings through a series of reports posted on their Web site, www.csef-air.org.*

Per PA 95-0555, the reporting of special education expenditures per pupil will change in future Annual State Reports to align reporting of these data in Illinois.

How many formal special education complaints and mediations are processed annually by the Illinois State Board of Education ?

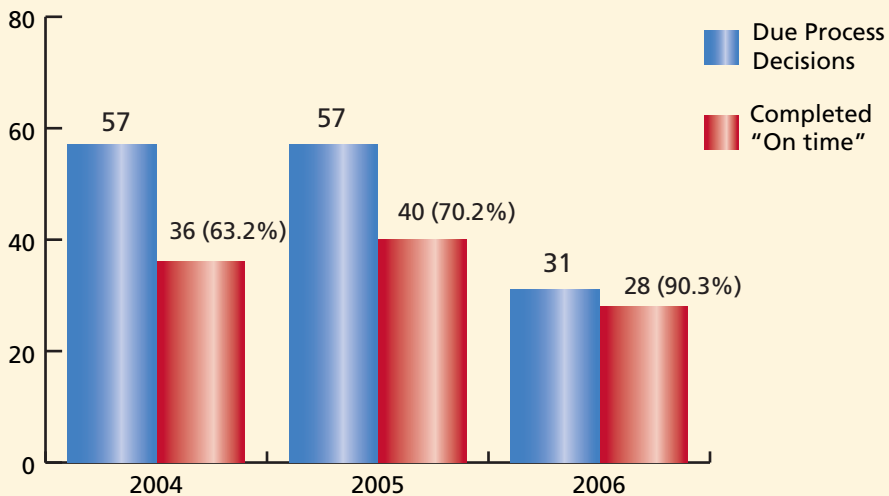


Additional information regarding complaints and mediations can be found at: <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed>

On occasion, parents and schools disagree on what types of special education and related services, if any, are needed for children and how and where these services should be provided. When these disagreements cannot be resolved through informal means, three formal mechanisms are provided to parents and schools: **complaint investigations, 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.

How many special education due process cases does the Illinois State Board of Education resolve annually?



Additional information regarding due process requests can be found at: <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed>.

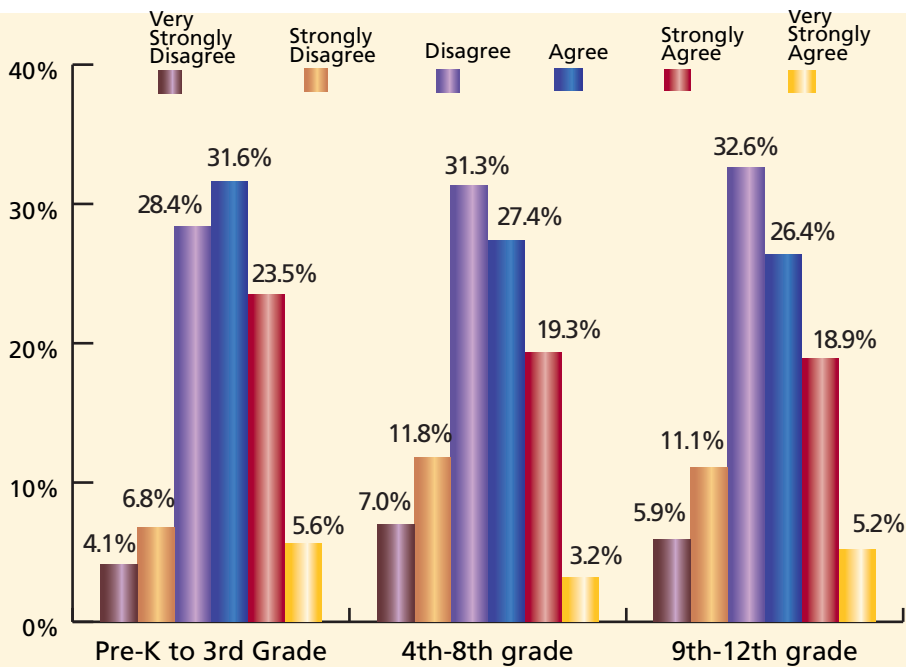
Parents and school districts are permitted to file due process requests in response to disputes over the identification, evaluation and educational placement of students with disabilities. Due process hearings in Illinois are officiated by individual hearing officers who guide all proceedings and render legally-binding decisions upon the parties. Parties are afforded the opportunity to appeal hearing decisions either to State or Federal court.

Per the requirements of IDEA, hearing decisions must be

ISBE has taken several measures to improve the number of fully adjudicated due process requests that are within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended. As a result, 90.3% of due process requests were processed on time in 2006, compared with 63.2% in 2004.

rendered within 45 days of the initiation of the hearing timeline. However, the hearing timeline may be extended at the joint request of both parties to the hearing, or at the discretion of the hearing officer in response to a single-party request.

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



Additional information regarding this survey can be found in the Illinois State Performance Plan at www.isbe.net/spec-ed.

This chart compares the overall level of satisfaction of parents of students with disabilities statewide. These data are based on the 2005-2006 Illinois Parent Satisfaction Survey, which was completed by 1,334 parents of students with disabilities across Illinois. The chart above presents the results of this survey by grade level groupings.

The overall level of satisfaction (including Agree, Strongly Agree and Very Strongly Agree) was highest among parents of students with disabilities in grades pre-kindergarten through 3 at 60.7%.

The overall level of satisfaction (including Disagree, Strongly Disagree and Very Strongly Disagree) was lowest among parents of students with disabilities in grades 4 through 8 at 50.1%.

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:

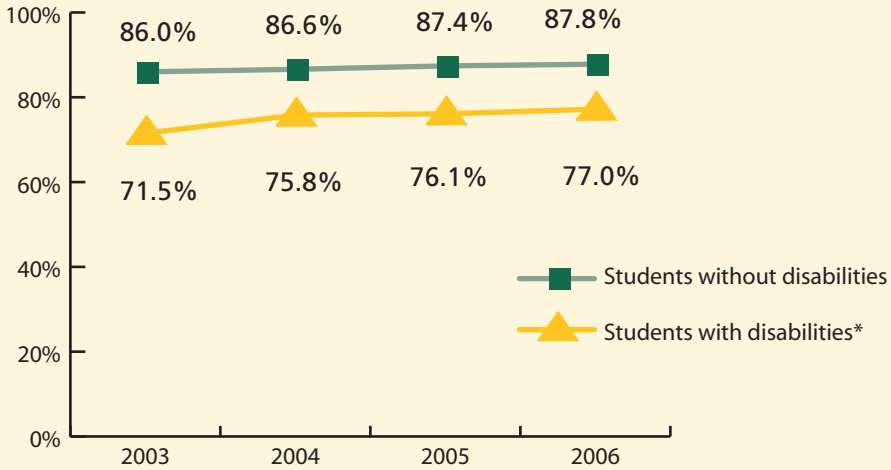
The following targets were defined in the Illinois State Performance Plan for the 2005-2006 school year.

- Illinois State Performance Plan defines a goal of decreasing the gap between the percent of youth with IEPs as compared to the percent of all youth graduating with a regular diploma by 0.33 percentage points per year.
- Further, the Illinois State Performance Plan defines a goal of decreasing the gap between the percent of youth with IEPs as compared to the percent of all youth dropping out to 1.0 percentage point by 2011.

Observations:

- While the graduation rate for all students has increased since 2003, the graduation rate for students with disabilities has increased more during the same time period.
- The gap between the graduation rates of students with disabilities as compared to all youth has decreased significantly since 2003, from 14.5 percentage points to 10.8 in 2006.
- In 2006, the dropout rate for students with disabilities, 6.2%, was higher than for all students, 3.9%.
- The gap between the dropout rates of students with disabilities as compared to all youth has increased from 1.6 percentage points in 2005 to 2.3 percentage points in 2006.

High School Graduation Rate — 2003-2006

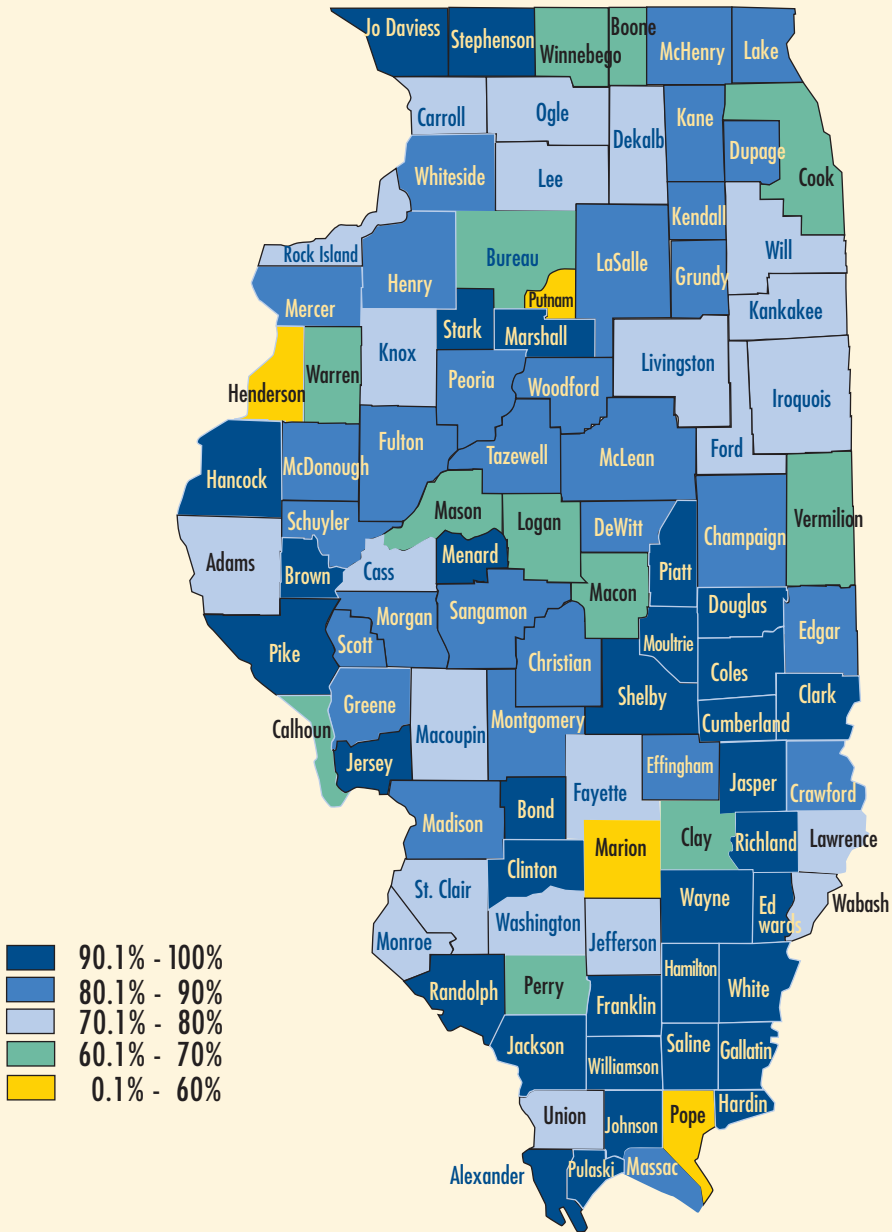


**Prior to 2004, students with disabilities included students receiving special education services and students with a Section 504 plan.*

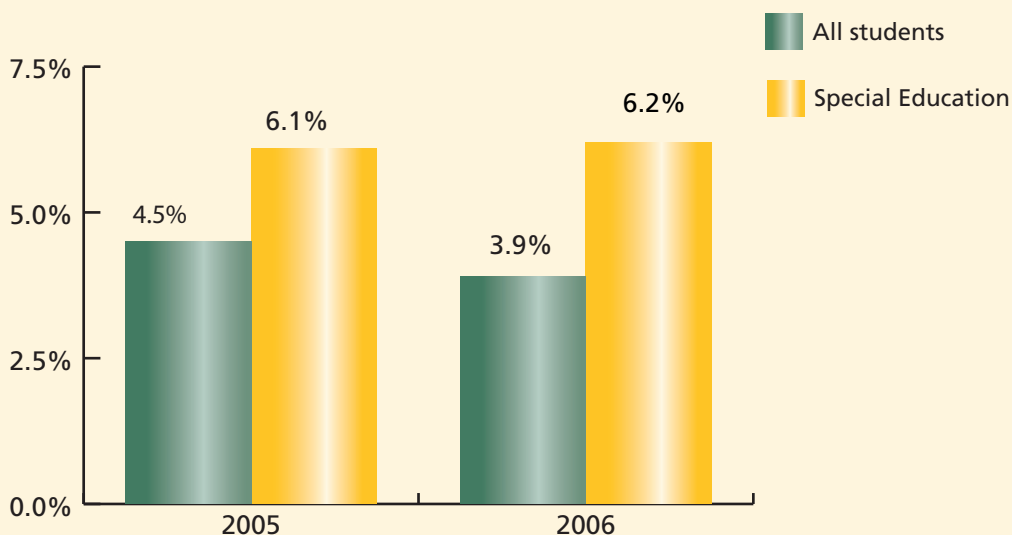
The **Graduation Rate** in Illinois is defined as the percent of the original freshman class who graduated with a standard diploma, adjusted for student transfers and deaths.

While the graduation rate for all students has increased since 2003, the graduation rate for students with disabilities has increased more. From 2003 to 2006, the gap between the graduation rates of students with disabilities and all students has decreased from 14.5 to 10.8 percentage points.

High School Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities by County — 2006



High School Dropout Rate — 2005-2006



The **High School Dropout Rate** in Illinois is defined as the number of dropouts in grades 9-12 divided by the enrollment in grades 9-12.

2005 is the first year that dropout data for students with disabilities were available for comparison with dropout data for all students.

In 2006, the dropout rate for students with IEPs shows a slight increase over the dropout rate for 2005.

Further, the gap in dropout rate between students with disabilities and all students has increased during this period.

Student Performance

Assessing the success of an educational system for students with disabilities goes beyond gaining access to educational opportunities. It must involve 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. Access to the general education curriculum increases the potential for success on state tests because it provides opportunities for students to learn the content and skills being tested.

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 following targets were defined in the Illinois State Performance Plan for the 2005-2006 school year.

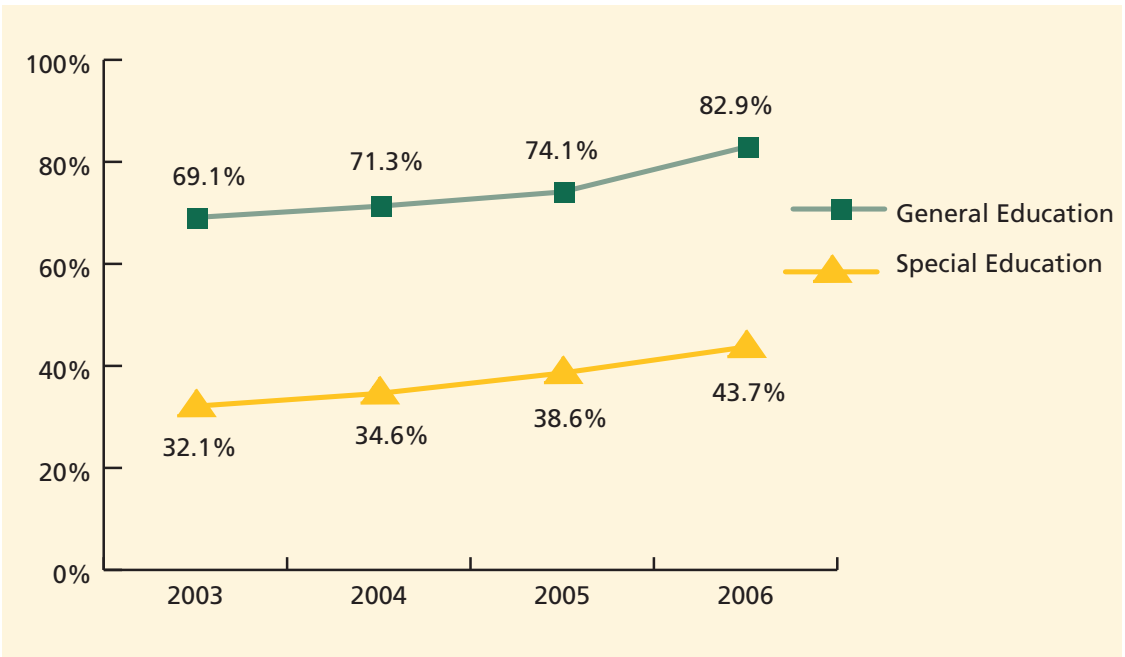
- At least 95% of students with disabilities participate in the state assessments.
- At least 32% of students with disabilities perform at the “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards” levels as measured by State Reading tests.
- At least 35% of students with disabilities perform at the “Meet

Standards” or “Exceed Standards” levels as measured by State Math tests.

Observations:

- Almost ninety-nine percent (98.9%) of students receiving special education services participated in state sponsored assessments in 2006.
- 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 mathematics while reading and science results showed steady gains.
- In high school, general education students were less proficient in their knowledge of Illinois Learning Standards in 2006, while students receiving special education services were slightly more proficient, as compared to the 2005 Prairie State Assessment Examination (PSAE).
- With the exception of the state reading assessments, the gap between the test scores of students receiving special education services and those receiving general education has slightly decreased since 2003.

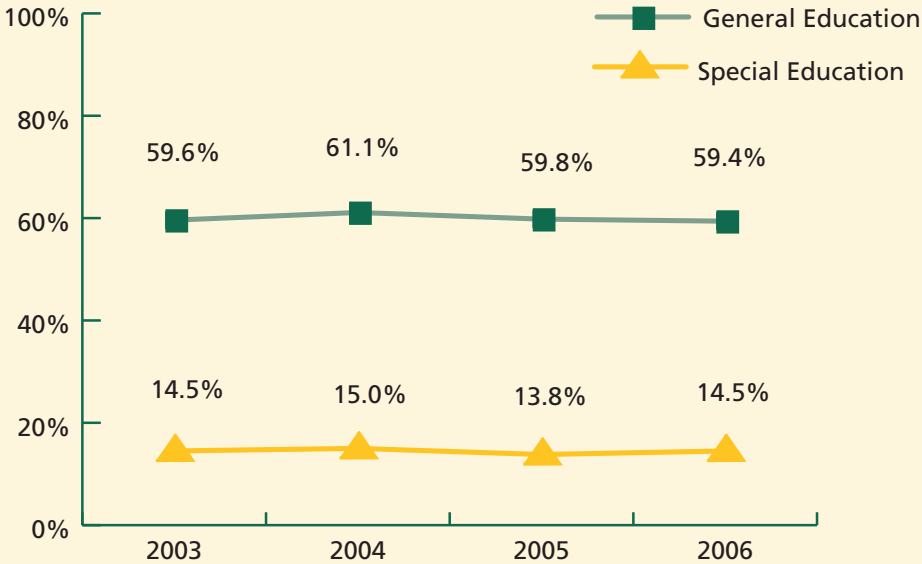
Performance on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) - 2003-2006



The Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) measures the performance of students in grades 3 through 8. This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at "Meet Standards" or "Exceed Standards". Combined score: Reading, Mathematics and Science; all grades tested.

ISAT performance for students receiving special education services has steadily improved since 2003. However, the gap between special education and general education performance slightly increased from 37.0 percentage points in 2003 to 39.2 percentage points in 2006.

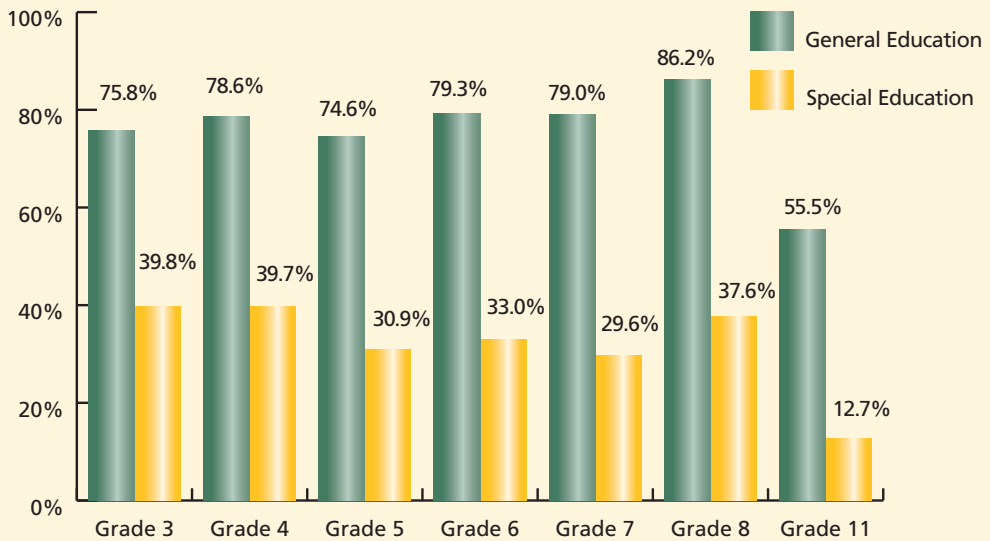
Performance on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) — 2003-2006



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, Mathematics and Science.

PSAE performance for students receiving special education services increased from 2005 to 2006. Further, the gap between special education and general education performance has slightly decreased from 45.1 percentage points in 2003 to 44.9 percentage points in 2006.

Performance on the State Reading Tests* — 2006

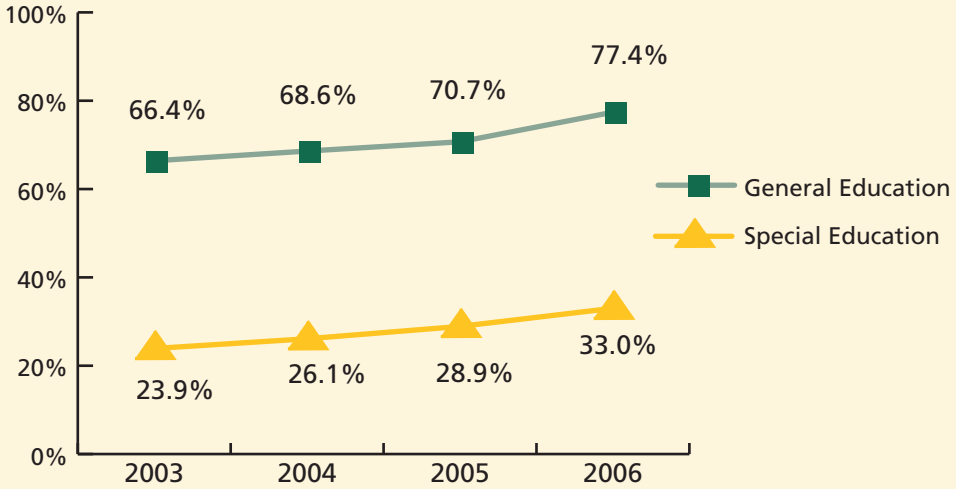


*ISAT for grades 3 through 8; PSAE for grade 11

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

The gap in reading test performance between students receiving special education services and general education students is greatest at the 7th, 8th, and 11th grade levels.

Performance on State Reading Tests* — 2003-2006

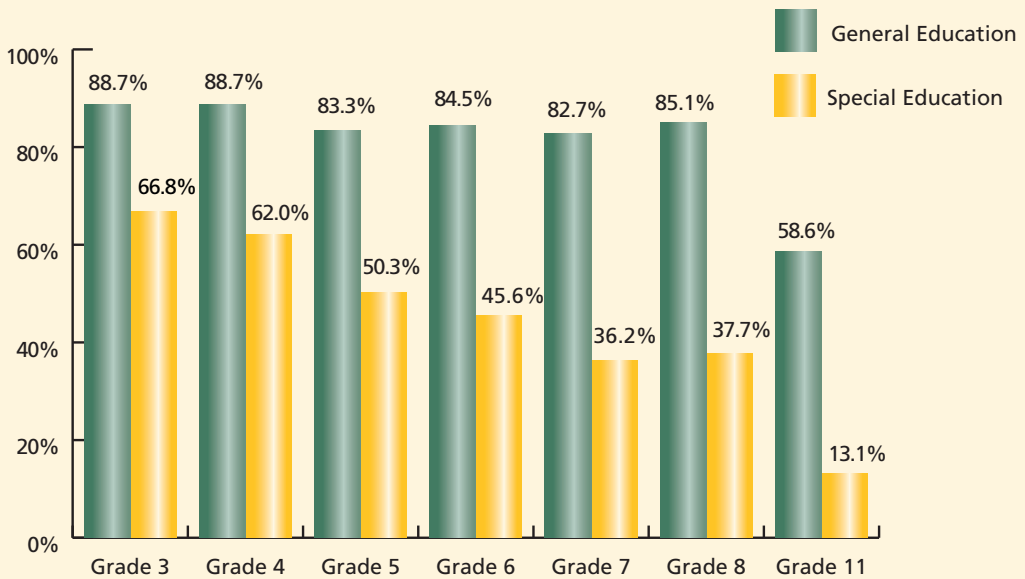


*ISAT for grades 3 through 8; PSAE for grade 11

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

Reading test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education has improved since 2003. However, the gap between the two has grown slightly from 42.5 percentage points in 2003 to 44.4 percentage points in 2006.

Performance on State Mathematics Tests* — 2006

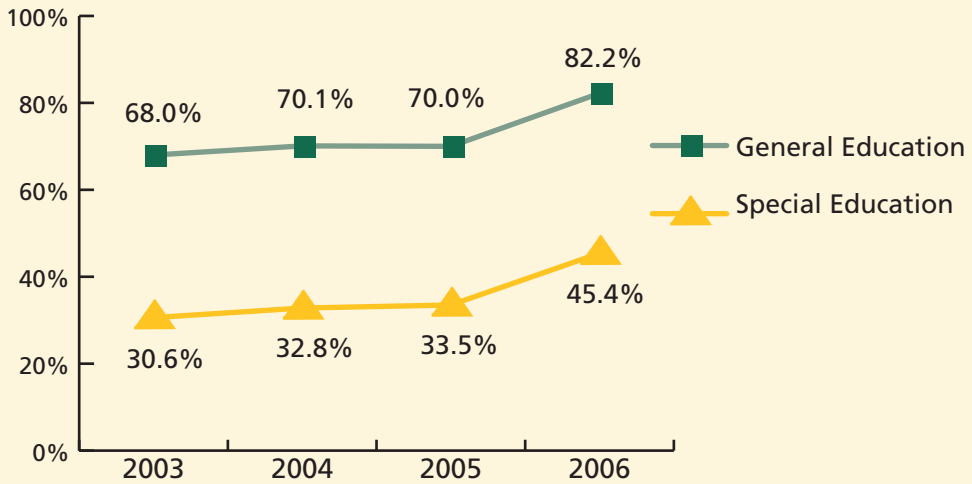


*ISAT for grades 3 through 8; PSAE for grade 11

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

The gap in mathematics test performance between students receiving special education services and general education students is greatest at the 7th, 8th and 11th grade levels.

Performance on State Mathematics Tests* — 2003-2006

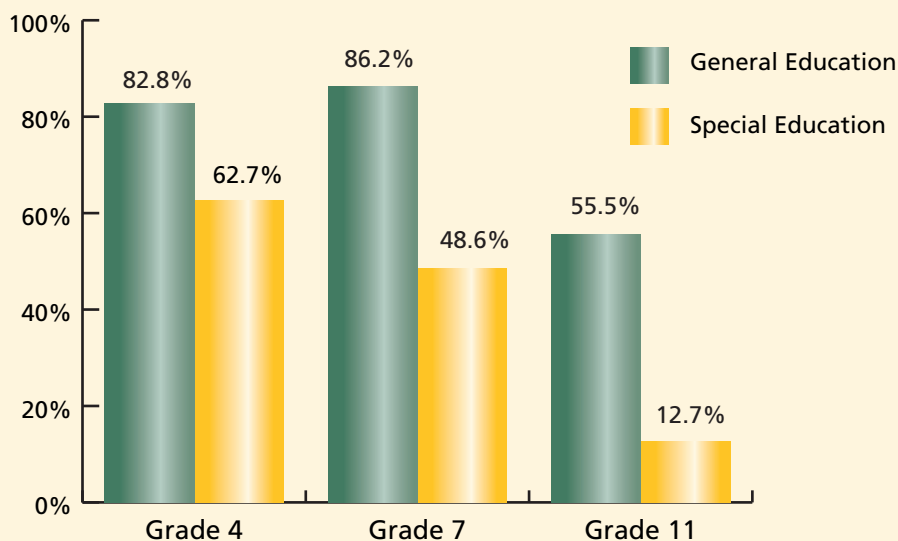


*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

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

Mathematics test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education has improved significantly from 2003 to 2006. However, the gap between the two has decreased only slightly from 37.4 percentage points in 2003 to 36.8 percentage points in 2006.

Performance on State Science Tests* — 2006

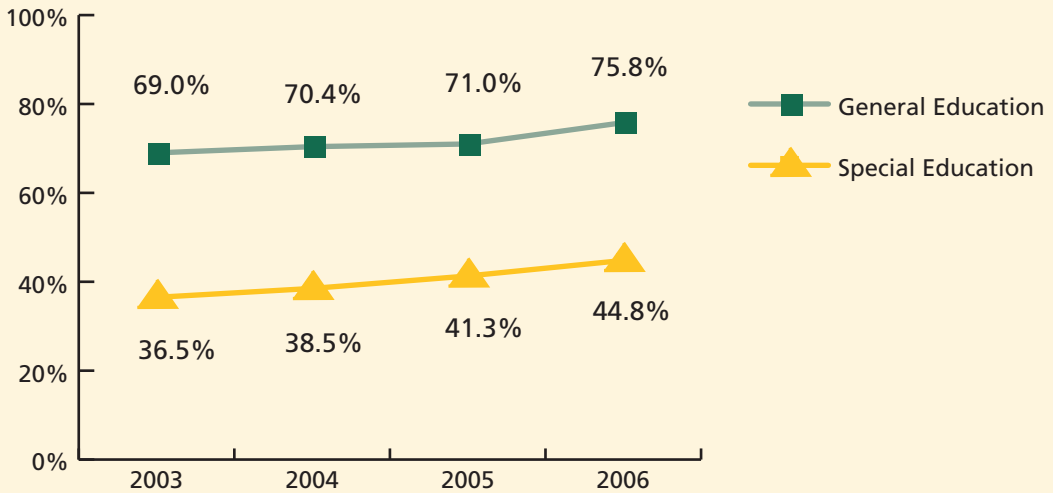


**ISAT for grades 4 and 7; PSAE for grade 11*

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

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

Performance on State Science Tests* — 2003-2006

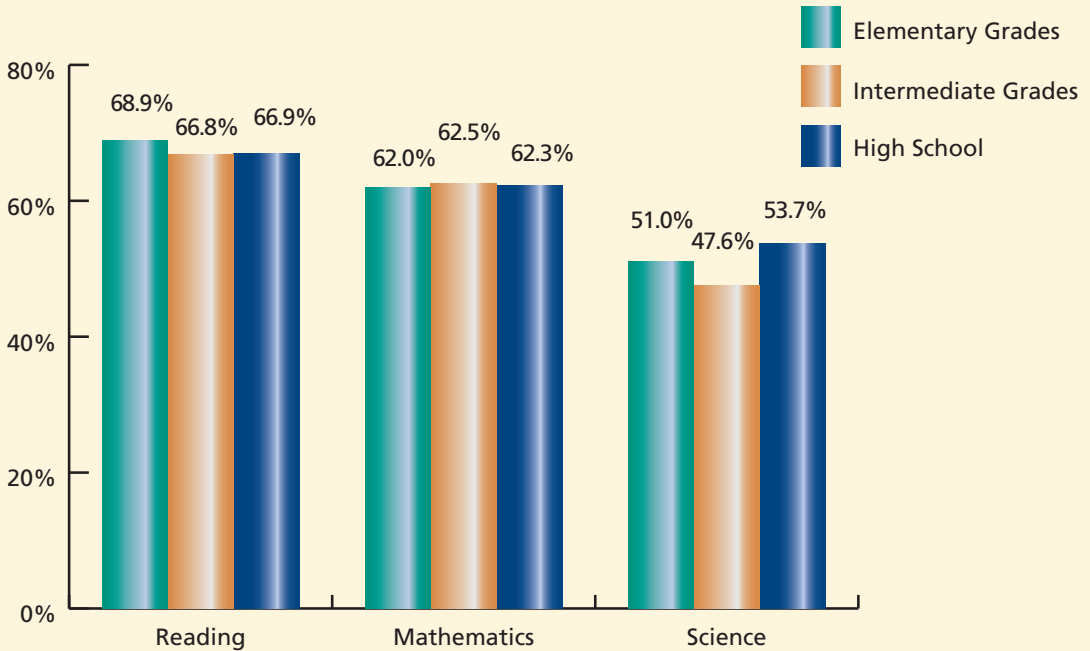


*ISAT for grades 4 and 7; PSAE for grade 11

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

Science test performance for both students receiving special education services and those in general education have improved significantly since 2003. However, the gap between the two has only slightly decreased from 32.5 percentage points in 2005 to 31.0 percentage points in 2006.

Performance on the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) — 2006



The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is the instrument the State uses to measure the learning of students with significant disabilities. 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.

This chart shows the percent of students receiving special education services who perform

The 2006 alternate assessment portfolio process reflects a slight decrease in the percentage of students at the “Progressing” or “Attaining” level in reading between the elementary and intermediate grades, but relatively stable levels in mathematics.

at the “Progressing” or “Attaining” levels in each subject area. For math and reading, elementary grades include grades 3 through 5, intermediate grades include grades 6 through 8 and high school consists of 11th grade. For science, students are tested in grades 4 (elementary), 7 (intermediate) and 11 (high school).

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 and greater academic achievement than those students in a more restrictive, segregated, environment.

Educational environments can be generally classified into four settings:

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

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

Desired Results:

The following targets were defined in the Illinois State Performance Plan for the 2005-2006 school year.

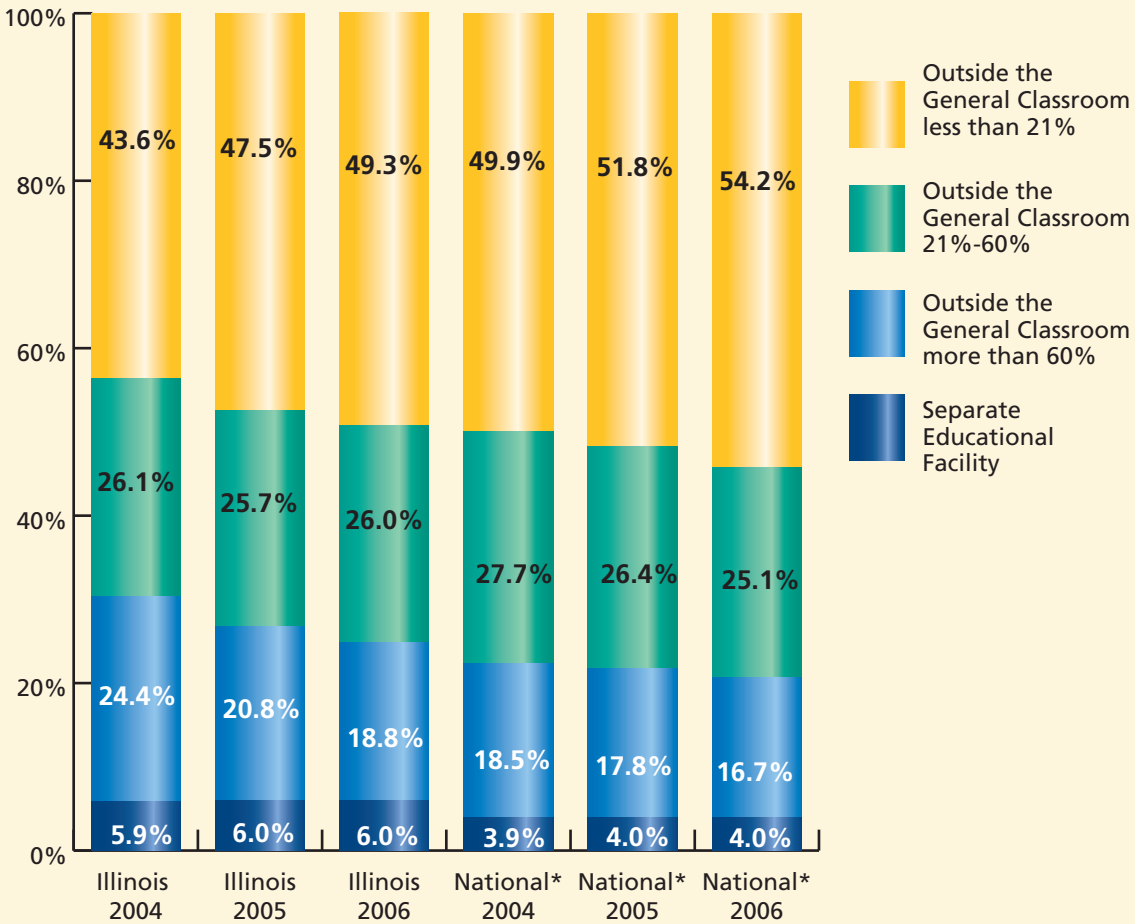
- At least 48% of students with disabilities receive special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time.
- No more than 20.5% of students with disabilities receive special education services outside of the general education classroom more than 60% of the time.
- No more than 5.57% of students with disabilities receive special education services in a separate educational facility.

Observations:

- The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased each year since 2004, while the percent of students with disabilities served in a separate facility has remained fairly constant during that time.
- African American students receive special education services in less integrated settings than any other race/ethnic group.
- Almost one third (29.9%) of students identified with Emotional Disabilities received special education services in a separate educational facility in 2006.
- Almost three-fourths (73.7%) of students with Cognitive Disabilities (MR) receive services either outside of the general education classroom more than 60% of the time or in a separate facility, the highest of any disability category.
- Illinois serves 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 — 2004-2006



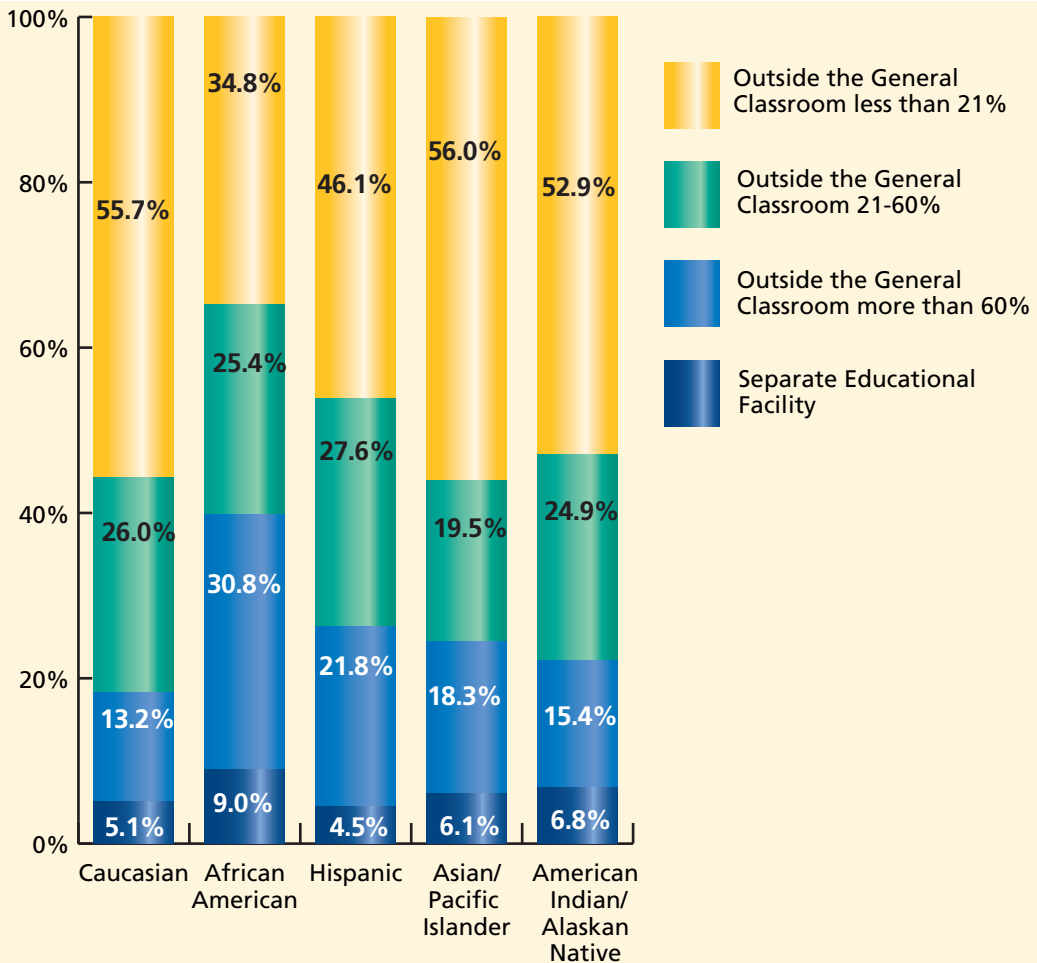
*Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

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.

The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time increased between 2004 and 2006, while the percent of students with disabilities served outside the classroom more than 60% of the time continues to decrease.

Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity, Ages 6-21 – 2006

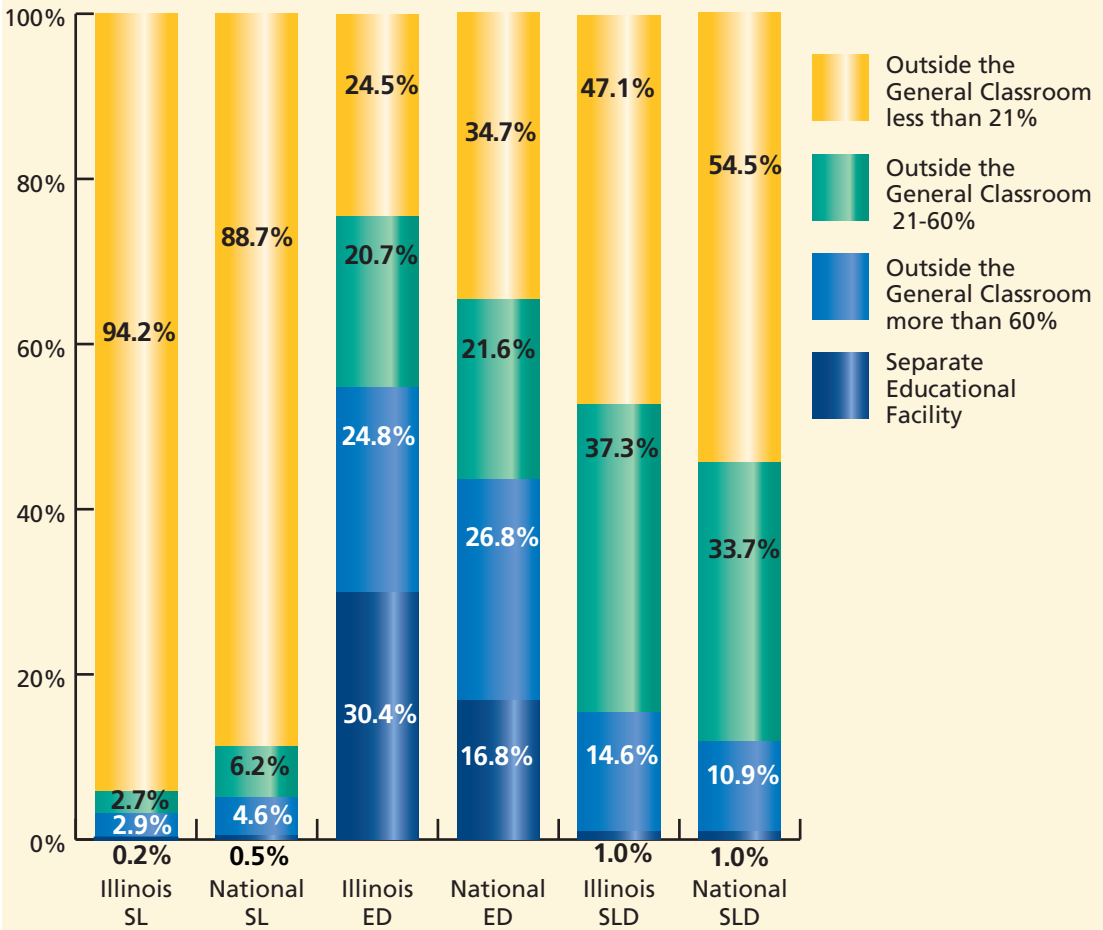
Educational Environment



This chart displays settings for the five race/ethnicity categories: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaskan Native.

African American students receive special education services in less integrated settings than any other race/ethnic group. Hispanic students are less likely to receive special education services in separate educational facilities than any other racial/ethnic group.

Educational Environments for Specific Disabilities, Ages 6-21 — 2006

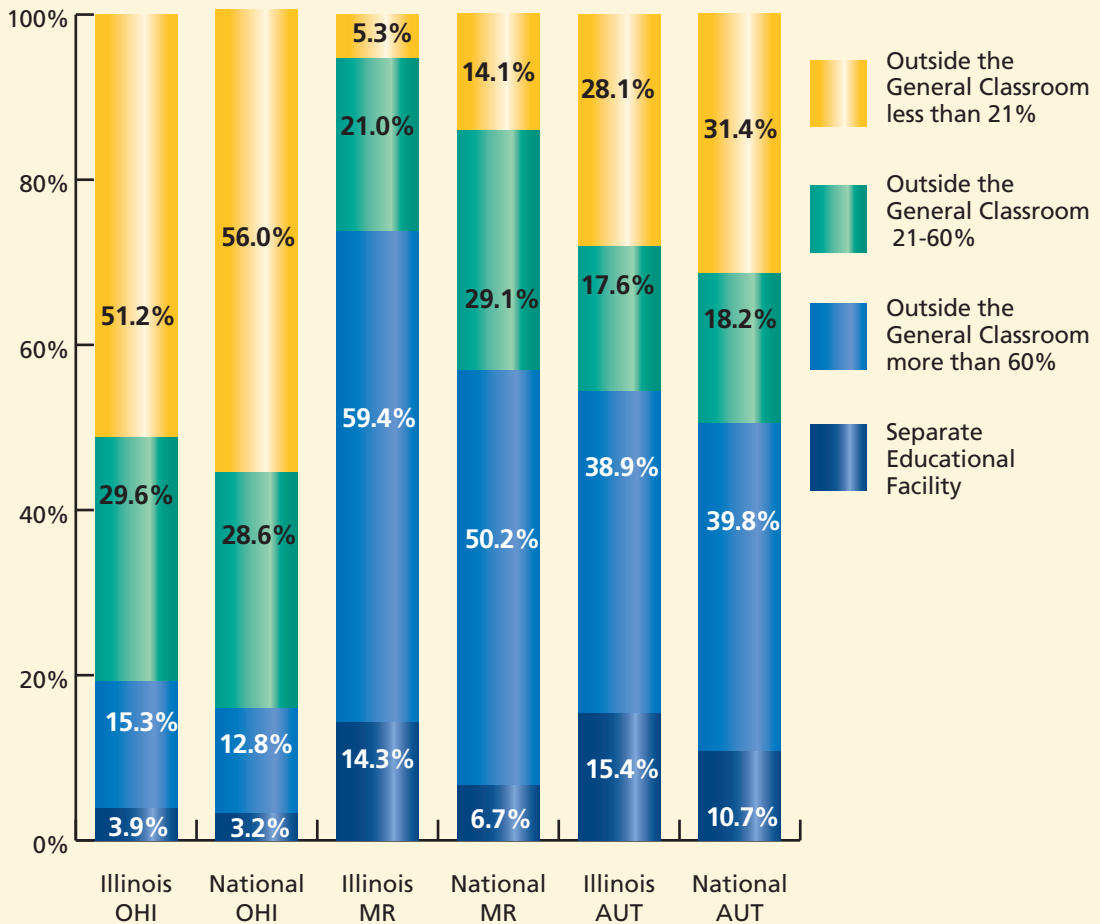


This chart displays student settings by the following disability categories: Speech/Language (SL), Emotional Disturbance (ED) and Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

Illinois places students in less inclusive settings at a rate below the national averages for both Emotional Disability 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 — 2006

Educational Environment



This chart displays national student settings for the following disability categories: Other Health Impairment (OHI), Cognitive Disability (MR) and Autism (AUT).

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

Glossary

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 document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with the provisions of IDEA.

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.

SPP – State Performance Plan. A six-year plan designed to evaluate the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describe how the State will improve its implementation. The SPP consists of several priority areas with

specific indicators defined for each area. Measurable and rigorous targets are defined for each indicator to show progress throughout the six-year period.

IDEA requires states to develop and submit the SPP to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education.

A link to the Illinois State Performance Plan, Part B for 2005-2010 can be found on the Special Education Services home page, www.isbe.net/spec-ed.

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.

Cognitive Disability (MR).

Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the

developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

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 Disability. (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.

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://www.rrfcnetwork.org/content/view/242/47/>

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>



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