

A guide to understanding **District Special Education Profiles**

District Special Education Profiles are created for each public school district in Illinois. These profiles allow the reader to view how a district is performing on indicators that are critical to special education. While some of these data are available via other sources, such as the School Report Card, the Special Education Profile allows the reader to conveniently peruse all of the special education performance information in one place.

Local data are displayed along with statewide numbers for comparison purposes. Districts belonging to a special education cooperative, or joint agreement, also have coop-level information on their profiles. Additionally, some data are also displayed by *type of district*: elementary district, high school district, or unit district. (When unit district data are displayed, Chicago Public School District 299 data are not included.) Finally, in addition to information specific to the current school year, the profiles also include historical results for certain data so that trends can be observed.

Special Education Profiles are comprised of five sections:

1. Background Information
2. Student Performance
3. Educational Environment
4. School Completion
5. State Performance Plan

Section One: Background Information

Background data contains background or status information regarding the school district, such as size and demographic makeup. It also provides data that reflect prevalence, or proportionality, by race/ethnicity for the identification of children with disabilities. These data are for students ages 3 through 21:

- **Student Population.** This table displays the enrollment of the total student population (students with and without IEPs). It also shows the enrollment of students with IEPs, expressed as both a count and as a percentage of the total student enrollment. These data are provided at the district, type of district, state, and if applicable, coop levels.
- **Percent of Students by Race/Ethnicity.** The percentage of students in each race/ethnicity group is shown for both the total student population and students with IEPs. Data for all students are reported in seven race/ethnicity groups. These data are provided at the district, state, and if applicable, coop levels.
- **Percent of Students in Each Disability Category.** This table breaks down the total number of students receiving special education services in two ways. First, it shows students in each disability category as a percentage of all students. This answers the question, "What percent of the total student population are identified with a specific disability?" The total of these percentages should add up to the percent of students with IEPs displayed in *Student Population*, above.

Second, this table shows students in each disability category as a percentage of all students with IEPs. This answers the question, "What percent of the students with IEPs are identified with a specific disability?" The total of these percentages should add up to 100%.

These data are provided at the district, type of district, state, and if applicable, coop levels.

Section Two: Student Performance

Section Two provides information on indicators related to the State assessments, including participation in the tests and actual performance. In order to protect students' identities, test data for groups of fewer than 10 students are not reported and appear as blank spaces in the student performance tables.

- **Participation Rate for State Assessments.** Participation Rate for State Assessments displays the participation rate on the state reading and mathematics exams for students with IEPs and for all students, and the enrollment on the first day of testing for each group. The data are "as reported" on the State and District Report Cards. These data are provided for the three most recent years at the district and state levels.
- **Overall Student Performance.** This table shows the percent of test scores that are considered proficient or above for the three most recent years for students with and without IEPs. The gap between the two groups of students is calculated by subtracting the results for students without IEPs from the results for students with IEPs. Thus, a gap less than zero (e.g., -10.5) indicates that students with IEPs tested at a lower proficiency rate than those without IEPs.

To obtain these results, all subjects for all grades tested are added together for the following tests: the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT), the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) and the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA). District averages are compared to statewide averages by type of district: elementary district, high school district, or unit district. Coop averages are also included if the district belongs to a special education coop or joint agreement.

- **Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA).** The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is administered to students with disabilities whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) indicate that participation in the ISAT or PSAE would not be appropriate. This table presents the percentages of students who scored in the "Progressing" or "Attaining" performance levels for the most current year. Results are presented by grade and subject with a comparison to state averages. Due to the small number of students who take this test, many districts do not have enough tests to meet the minimum requirement of 10, resulting in blank cells in this table to protect students' identities.
- **Student Performance by Subject.** These two tables show the percent of students performing at Meets Standards or Exceeds Standards levels on the reading and mathematics portions of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test and Prairie State Achievement Examination, for students with and without IEPs, and the gap between the two groups of students. These data are provided for the three most recent years at the district and state levels.

Section Three: Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students receiving special education services receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment with their non-disabled peers. This is considered a critical performance indicator as research¹ 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. For students ages 6 through 21, educational environment information is described as the percent of students receiving special education services in the following settings:

1. Inside the general classroom 80% or more of the time,
2. Inside the general classroom 40% to 79% of the time,
3. Inside the general classroom less than 40% of the time, and
4. In a separate educational facility.

¹ 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/AKInclusion.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) 111-21 - III-27, <http://www.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/1999/index.html>

The first page of educational environment data is provided for students ages 6 through 21.

- **Percent of Students with IEPs in Various Educational Environments.** This table shows the percentage of students with IEPs in four educational environments. These data are provided for the three most recent years. District numbers are compared to statewide averages by type of district: elementary district, high school district, or unit district. Cooperative numbers are also provided if the district is a member of a special education cooperative or joint agreement.
- **Educational Environments for Selected Disabilities.** This table shows the percentage of students with IEPs in four educational environments, for each of the six highest incidence disabilities: Autism, Emotional Disability, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability and Speech or Language Impairment. These data are provided for the most current year at the district and "type of district" levels.
- **Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity.** This table shows the percentage of students with IEPs in four educational environments for each of the seven race/ethnicity categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Two or More Races. These data are provided for the most current year.

The second page of educational environment data is provided for children ages 3 through 5. Educational environments for children ages 3 through 5 can be generally classified into one of the following settings:

- A. Children attending a regular early childhood program and receives the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.
- B. Children attending a regular early childhood program and receives the majority of special education and related services in some other location.
- C. Children receiving special education or related services full time in a separate class/facility.
- D. Children receiving special education or related services full time in the child's home.
- E. Children receiving special education or related services from a service provider, and who do not attend an early childhood or special education program.

Educational environments for students ages 6 through 21 can be generally classified into four settings:

1. Students receiving special education or related services inside the general classroom 80% or more of the time,
 2. Students receiving special education or related services inside the general classroom 40% to 79% of the time,
 3. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general classroom less than 40% of the time, and
 4. Students receiving special education or related services in a separate educational facility.
- **Percent of Children with IEPs in Various Educational Environments.** This table shows the percentage of children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs in five educational environment categories. These data are provided for the most current school year. District numbers are compared to statewide averages by type of district: elementary district, high school district, or unit district. Cooperative numbers are also provided if the district is a member of a special education cooperative or joint agreement.
 - **Educational Environments for Selected Disabilities.** This table shows the percentage of children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs in five educational environment categories for each of the seven highest incidence disabilities: Autism, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disability, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability and Speech or Language Impairment. These data are provided for the most current year at the district and "type of district" levels.
 - **Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity.** This table shows the percentage of children ages 3 through 5 with IEPs in five educational environment categories for each of the seven race/ethnicity categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian, and Two or More Races. These data are provided for the most current year. Special education data are not currently available for "Multi Racial".

Section Four: 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 major psychological and financial importance for students with disabilities, as it does for all students. Dropout rate and graduation rate are both critical indicators related to high school completion, reflecting the level at which students receiving special education services both remain in school and graduate with a standard diploma, respectively.

Section Four is only provided in the Special Education Profile for districts that include high school grades.

Graduation Rate

Graduation rate is calculated based on the federal guidance of NCLB High School Graduation Rate, <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/hsgrguidance.pdf>. According to 2008 Regulations, states are required to calculate a four-year adjusted-cohort graduation rate. Graduates only includes students who graduate with a regular high school diploma in four years or less as a high school graduate in the original cohort—that is, the cohort with which he or she started 9th grade. A student with a disability who does not graduate with a regular high school diploma, but instead receives an alternative diploma, certificate of completion, or any other degree or certificate that is not fully aligned with a state's academic content standards may not be counted as graduating in calculating the graduation rate.

- **Graduation Rate for Students with IEPs.** The first table in this section shows the graduation rate for the past three years for students with IEPs, compared to the statewide and, if appropriate, special education coop graduation rates.
- **Compared to All Students.** This table shows the graduation rate of students with IEPs compared to the graduation rate of all students. The gap between the two rates is calculated by subtracting the graduation rate for all students from the graduation rate of students with IEPs. Thus, a gap less than zero (e.g., -10.5) indicates that students with IEPs graduated at a lower rate than all students. These data are provided for the most current year at the district, state, and, if appropriate, coop levels.
- **Graduation Rate Column Chart.** This chart graphically presents a comparison between graduation rates for students with IEPs and all students for the past three years as a column chart.

Dropout Rate

Dropout rate is the number of dropouts, divided by the fall enrollment (not including postgraduates), multiplied by 100. Dropouts include students in grades 9-12 whose names have been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason (such as, moved not known to be continuing, transfer to GED program, and age out) other than death, extended illness, graduation/completion of a program of studies, transfer to another public/private/home school, or expulsion.

The 2004-2005 school year was the first for which dropout data were collected in this manner.

- **Dropout Rate for Students with IEPs.** The first table in this section shows the dropout rate for the past three years for students with IEPs, compared to the statewide and, if appropriate, special education coop dropout rates.
- **Compared to All Students.** This table shows the dropout rate of students with IEPs compared to the dropout rate of all students. The gap between the two rates is calculated by subtracting the dropout rate of students with IEPs from the dropout rate for all students. Thus, a gap less than zero (e.g., -10.5) indicates that students with IEPs dropped out at a higher rate than all students. These data are provided for the most current year at the district, state, and, if appropriate, coop levels.
- **Dropout Rate Column Chart.** This chart graphically presents a comparison between dropout rates for students with IEPs and all students for the past three years as a column chart.

Section Five: State Performance Plan

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) requires states to develop and submit a State

Performance Plan to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education. The State Performance Plan is 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 plan consists of several priority areas with specific indicators defined for each area. Measurable and rigorous targets are defined for each indicator to show progress.

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

Section Five shows how the district performed on specific indicators and whether or not it met the annual targets for those indicators as defined in the Illinois State Performance Plan. The indicator is briefly described, the district's performance for the current school year for that indicator is listed, the State target from the State Performance Plan for the current school year is listed, and an indication of whether or not the district met the State target is provided. A checkmark indicates that yes, the district met state target.

Data Sources

The data in this profile were obtained from various data collection systems at the Illinois State Board of Education.

- **Section One.** Background information for "all students" is obtained from the Fall Housing Report, representing data as of the fall of the reported school year. Information for students with IEPs is obtained from the Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS) as of the December count date for the reported school year (usually, December 1). Disability category is the primary disability recorded for each student in FACTS.
- **Section Two.** Assessment participation rates are obtained from the Illinois School Report Card. Student performance data are calculated from data obtained from the School Report Card data files and the assessment data files used by the School Report Card.
- **Section Three.** All educational environment data are obtained from FACTS as of the December count date for the reported school year. Disability category is the primary disability recorded for each student in FACTS.
- **Section Four.** Graduation data are obtained from the School Report Card data files. Dropout counts are obtained from the End of Year Report, submitted at the end of the reported school year. To calculate a dropout rate, dropout counts are divided by the number of students in grades 9 through 12. For all students, this number comes from the Fall Housing Report. For students with IEPs, this number comes from FACTS.

Section Five. Most of the data displayed in Section Five are found elsewhere in the District Profile and are addressed above. Three of the indicators are found only in Section Five: The determination of whether or not a district made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for students with IEPs is obtained from the District Report Card. The percent of students with IEPs expelled or suspended for more than 10 days is obtained from the End of Year Report. The percent of children referred by early intervention prior to age three who are found eligible for special education services and have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday is obtained from the Early Intervention to Early Childhood Special Education Tracking Forms.

Glossary of Terms

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..

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

PSAE. 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.

State Performance Plan. A State Performance Plan (SPP) is a plan required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA and describes how the State will improve student performance/achievement. It is a six-year plan covering federal fiscal years 2005-2010 (school years 2006-2011). States are required to submit an annual performance report each February to report their progress in meeting the targets established in their SPP.

Special Education Disability Categories

Autism. A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, which 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.

Intellectual Disability. 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.

Deafness. A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which 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.

Developmental Delay. A child with a disability, aged three through nine, who is experiencing developmental delays as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

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, impairments caused by disease (e.g., Poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, 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, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; 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; physical 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.