

# Special Education Student and School Data Study

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**Final Report**

December 15, 2003



**Prepared for the Illinois State Board of Education  
Department of Special Education**

**by Marucco, Stoddard, Ferenbach & Walsh, Inc.**

**Illinois State Board of Education**

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- The GSEG Task Force
- ISBE staff, including those from the following divisions:
  - Special Education Services
  - Funding and Disbursements
  - Student Assessment
  - Data Analysis and Progress Reporting
  - Standards-Aligned Learning
  - Data Systems
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  - New York
  - California
  - Florida
  - Pennsylvania
  - Ohio
- The following schools, school districts and special education cooperatives
  - Indian Prairie School District
  - Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative
  - Kankakee Area Special Education Cooperative
  - Herscher School District
  - Bourbonnais School District
  - Bradley School District
  - Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School
  - Kankakee School District
  - Central School District
  - Chicago Public Schools district office (two visits)
  - Southside Occupational Academy (Chicago)
  - Hanson Park Elementary School (Chicago)
  - Curie High School (Chicago)
  - Lincoln Community High School / Tri-County Special Education Cooperative
  - Rockford Public School District
  - Niles Township District for Special Education
  - JAMP Special Education Services
  - Regional Office of Education 02
  - Springfield School District

We would like to specifically acknowledge the contributions of Ms. Jodi Fleck to this project. Ms. Fleck, a principal consultant in the ISBE Special Education Services Division, was MSF&W's primary contact and liaison for the entire project. Jodi's professionalism, hard work, exceptional organizational skills, extensive knowledge of special education issues and commitment to serving children with disabilities in Illinois were integral to the success of this project. We thank Jodi for the many hours of work she has contributed to this effort and for the pleasure she has been to work with. We are likewise grateful to the Illinois State Board of Education Department of Special Education for making Jodi available for this project.



## Executive Summary

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In December 2002, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) published a Request for Sealed Proposal (RFSP) to “Identify, Enhance And Align Special Education Student And School Data And Develop A Framework For Integrating And Analyzing Critical Indicators With The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan.” In May 2003, Marucco, Stoddard, Ferenbach & Walsh, Inc. initiated a seven-month project to fulfill the objectives of the RFSP.

In this executive summary, we provide the overarching findings and recommendations presented throughout the following pages of this report.

### Illinois Critical Performance Indicators for Focused Monitoring

The following data have been chosen as critical performance indicators (CPIs) to evaluate the performance of Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in providing effective special education services for students with disabilities:

- Graduation Rate
- Gap Between General Education and Special Education Graduation Rates
- Dropout Rate
- Percent of Students with Disabilities Outside the General Classroom Less Than 21% of the Time
- Percent of Students with Disabilities in a Separate Educational Facility
- Assessment Participation Rate
- Assessment Performance at “Meets Standards” or “Exceeds Standards”
- Disproportionality of Racial/Ethnic Groups within Disability and LRE Categories

It is also recommended that additional indicators measuring an LEA’s performance in preparing students with disabilities for post-secondary success be included in the future. This should occur at such time as data become available to use as a measurable performance indicator.

### Summary of Findings

Studying the current practices in collecting and processing special education data, both at the local and state levels, revealed several issues related to data quality. Here is a listing of these findings, described in detail in the *Local Data Quality* section of the report.

**Finding 1.** There is confusion over how to determine the correct Least Restrictive Environment code for entry into FACTS.

**Finding 2.** Suspension data are not being collected consistently and accurately.

- Finding 3.** Determination of whether a student has dropped out is not being done consistently for FACTS or School Report Card reporting.
- Finding 4.** Demographic data entered for the new assessment demographic sheet is not correlated with other child counts.
- Finding 5.** The Assessment Participation rates do not aggregate correctly at the district and state level on the 2002 School Report Card.
- Finding 6.** The Transition Data Collection form is not filled out consistently, accurately or completely throughout the state.
- Finding 7.** Not all districts / cooperatives employ best practices for accurately capturing data from an IEP to FACTS.
- Finding 8.** The School Report Card does not distinguish between students with IEPs and students with 504 plans.
- Finding 9.** School staff are unclear how to record on the School Report Card graduation information for students whose IEP status has changed during their high school careers.

### Summary of Major Recommendations

The *Recommendations* section of this report addresses recommended courses of action for ISBE to take as a result of this study. The following is a summary of the four major recommended courses of action. In addition to these major recommendations, there are other recommendations that address various issues related to data quality or desired data that are currently unavailable.

#### Major Recommendation 1.

##### **Create a Special Education Student and School Database.**

As the ISBE Department of Special Education moves toward a data-driven approach to monitoring and continuous improvement, an integrated database of special education related data will be required. This database is a repository of data that are currently collected in other data systems at ISBE. Special Education Services staff should have direct access to the database for research, analysis, risk assessment and focused monitoring.

#### Major Recommendation 2.

##### **Develop a Special Education Monitoring / Reporting System**

The Special Education Services Division staff should have at their disposal a reporting system that would provide CPI Performance Reports, LEA Monitoring Reports and *ad hoc* query capabilities. This system will use data collected and stored in the Special Education Student and School Database.

### **Major Recommendation 3.**

#### **Develop and Publish Annual Special Education Reports**

On an annual basis, the Department of Special Education should publish the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance*, reporting how the State is performing on special education Critical Performance Indicators (CPIs). In addition, LEA Special Education Profiles should be available to the public via the ISBE Web site describing how individual LEAs – schools, districts and special education cooperatives – are performing on special education CPIs.

### **Major Recommendation 4.**

#### **Develop and implement a statewide training program**

The Special Education Services Division should develop and implement a comprehensive training program for individuals responsible for providing and approving special education data submitted to the State. This training is to be focused on special education performance indicators and the collection of quality, accurate data.

### **Summary of Personnel Impact**

The implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report will have a direct impact on the current staff in the Special Education Services Division, requiring new staff to handle the additional work effort.

We are proposing a three-person team to handle the additional work that will result from the implementation of all of the recommendations presented in this study. The group would be composed of a team leader, technology expert and business analyst.

This group will function as a support team to the Special Education Services Division, providing the following services:

- maintain the Special Education Student and School Database,
- perform cross-system edits checks of data quality,
- generate monitoring reports for the Special Education Services staff,
- assist staff with *ad hoc* reporting and data mining,
- generate the LEA Special Education Profiles and post to the Web, and
- produce and distribute the Annual State Report on Special Education Performance.



## Section 1

# Project Overview

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### Background

In December 2002, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) published a Request for Sealed Proposal (RFSP) to “Identify, Enhance And Align Special Education Student And School Data And Develop A Framework For Integrating And Analyzing Critical Indicators With The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan.” More specifically, the RFSP defined as its purpose to hire a contractor to:

- Review the special education data elements identified by the Illinois State Board of Education Student Information System (ISBE SIS) Feasibility Project team,
- Recommend to ISBE the inclusion of additional data elements in the ISBE SIS,
- Work closely with the ISBE SIS Project Team to link the ISBE SIS to the Special Education Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS) and the Illinois Student Information System (ISIS),
- Identify areas of concern involving special education data quality and recommend measures to improve this data quality,
- Develop a process for providing greater awareness among LEAs, parents and the public about key indicators on the status of students with disabilities, and
- Prepare recommendations for graphically profiling district and statewide special education data.

The anticipated outcomes of this project were defined in the RFSP as follows:

- Student and school data files will be analyzed.
- Available information will be identified for integration into the ISBE SIS.
- Missing information will be identified and a plan of action for obtaining it will be provided.
- A process for graphically profiling district and statewide special education data will be developed.
- Recommendations for graphically profiling district and statewide special education data.
- Recommendations for developing a risk assessment methodology.
- A final report on the project will be disseminated.

In May 2003, Marucco, Stoddard, Ferenbach & Walsh, Inc. (MSF&W) entered into an agreement with ISBE as the winning vendor for the RFSP. To achieve the objectives and anticipated outcomes as mandated, MSF&W utilized an approach that included:

- convening and engaging a project task force made up of special education stakeholders from across the State,
- assembling a project team that included experts in project management, education related research, all aspects of special education, risk assessment, public reporting techniques, and ISBE application data systems,
- conducting site visits to schools, districts and special education cooperatives across the State,
- researching relevant techniques and procedures employed by similar states across the nation,
- soliciting input from ISBE staff from various divisions,
- soliciting input from other interested organizations and working committees, and
- employing a well thought out, logical project work plan with incremental deliverables.

### **Task Force**

The Task Force was assembled by building upon the GSEG Advisory Council used to oversee the RFSP process. Our intent was to use this group to obtain information from individuals actually involved in the collection of special education data on the “frontlines”. This was not meant to be a group to simply provide token involvement from stakeholders, but rather, a true resource in developing a valid, workable process for collecting data to support the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education (ICIP), monitor performance and manage risk.

It was key that this group provide a broad representation of stakeholders in special education in Illinois. Task Force members proved to be knowledgeable about the issues surrounding the collection and reporting of the data elements included in the ICIP and brought unique perspectives to the team. The Task Force was comprised of a variety of individuals, including:

- District Superintendent,
- Directors of Special Education for school districts and joint agreements,
- Executive Director of Illinois Statewide Independent Living Council,
- Special Education Chairperson for a middle school,
- Assistant Superintendent of a Regional Office of Education,
- Parents of students with disabilities,
- University professors, including the Chair of a Department of Special Education,
- Individuals with disabilities,
- The Director of the Harrisburg Project (FACTS, EDWin),
- Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator for Project TOTAL,
- Members of the ICIP Stakeholder committee,

- Member of the Illinois State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (ISAC), and
- Representatives from several Divisions within ISBE, including:
  - Special Education Services
  - Funding and Disbursements
  - Student Assessment
  - Data Analysis and Progress Reporting
  - Standards-Aligned Learning
  - Data Systems

The Task Force met on four occasions throughout the project and participated in one survey. All of the findings and recommendations contained in this report have been reviewed with the Task Force, and changes and additions requested by the group are included.

We believed that it was important to include the Task Force in this process to take advantage of their broad knowledge of special education in Illinois. We also viewed these individuals as “goodwill ambassadors” for the future implementation of these recommendations.

### **Project Team**

MSF&W assembled a diverse team of educational and information technology professionals to perform the work required for this project. Our team of experts provided an unprecedented collection of exceptional talent uniquely suited for the project.

The project team used by MSF&W was composed of the following individuals:

- Dan Shryock – Project Administrator
- C. Thomas Kerins – Subject Matter Expert, Education, Illinois
- Lawrence Gloeckler – Subject Matter Expert, Special Education, New York
- Barbara A. Frisenda – Subject Matter Expert, Special Education, New York
- L. James Stowell – Subject Matter Expert, Special Education, Illinois & New York
- Robert O’Keefe – Business/Data Analyst, Knowledge of ISBE data systems
- Michael Conkey – Business/Data Analyst, Knowledge of ISBE data systems

### **Dan Shryock**

Mr. Shryock is a senior manager with over twenty years in information technology, including management and project management positions. Mr. Shryock has managed teams of various sizes for a variety of clients in both the private and public sector, and has demonstrated an exceptional ability to communicate with both technical and non-technical staff.

Throughout the project, Mr. Shryock worked with the Project Team and ISBE staff as well as oversaw the overall management of the project, including issue identification and resolution. Dan coordinated the project team activities on a day-to-day basis and was

primarily responsible for compliance to project schedule, scope and objectives. He also actively participated in all phases of the project.

### C. Thomas Kerins, Ed.D.

Dr. Kerins is a consultant with over thirty years in the field of education. He has served in a variety of roles at both state and local levels, has held several honorary positions, is a prolific writer for various journals, is a frequent presenter at conferences and symposiums, and is an adjunct professor for the University of Illinois at Springfield. His most recent consulting services have included work for the Nevada State Assessment Advisory Council, the No Child Left Behind Advisory Panel, and the Chicago Charter School Foundation Academic Advisory Council. Dr. Kerins was Assistant Superintendent for District 186 and has held numerous high-level administrative positions with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Office of Education.

Dr. Kerins participated in all Task Force meetings, numerous meetings with ISBE staff, and several site visits to schools, districts and cooperative around the State. Dr. Kerins actively participated in all phases of the project and was especially instrumental in the assessment of local data quality and the development of the Annual State Report on Special Education Performance and the LRE Special Education Profile.

### Lawrence Gloeckler, M.S.

Mr. Gloeckler, was the Deputy Commissioner for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), New York State Education Department through October 31, 2003. Currently the Executive Director of the Special Education Institute, International Center for Leadership in Education, Mr. Gloeckler, is a nationally recognized expert in the field of special education performance measurement and monitoring, and was instrumental in the development of New York's *Pocketbook of Goals and Results for Individuals with Disabilities*.

Mr. Gloeckler participated in specific Task Force meetings and was key in providing input into practices and procedures used in New York, including public reporting and focused monitoring, and in facilitating project contacts with his special education peers in other states. His primary areas of participation included the identification of key performance indicators and the development of a method for public awareness of those indicators.

### Barbara A. Frisenda, M.S.

Ms. Frisenda is a consultant with over twenty-five years experience in special education, having served in a variety roles, including: teacher, adjunct professor, principal, administrator, Director of Special Educational Services for Rye School District, and Director of Special Services for Seaford Union Free School District. As an educational consultant since 1995, Ms. Frisenda has served as a subject matter expert in the areas of School Restructures, Inclusion/Collaborative Teaching Model, Instructional Support Teams (SED), Pre-referral Strategies and Alternate Assessment. Ms. Frisenda has participated in international programs, including an education policy roundtable at Oxford University and the International Special Education Conference in Beijing, and has served as a consultant for special education teachers in Korea.

Ms. Frisenda participated in Task Force meetings and site visits to schools in Chicago. Her primary areas of participation included defining data requirements, assessment of local data quality, developing a risk management methodology, and the development of a method for public awareness of key performance indicators.

### L. James Stowell, M.S.E.

Mr. Stowell is a consultant with over thirty years experience in special education. He has served as Director of Special Education for two Boards of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) in New York; Chief Administrator of Central Division of Special Education, New York City Board of Education; Assistant Director of the Department of Specialized Education Services, Illinois State Board of Education; and, most recently, Executive Director/CEO of The Center for Developmental Disabilities, Inc. in Woodbury, New York. Mr. Stowell's work as a consultant includes developing strategic plans for on-site special education and related services staffing for urban schools, and developing a program improvement plan for a suburban school district special education operation.

Mr. Stowell participated in Task Force meetings and worked with the project team to define data requirements, develop a risk management methodology, and develop a method for public awareness of key performance indicators.

### Robert O'Keefe

Mr. O'Keefe has over twenty-five years in information systems with specific experience in project management, business analysis, requirement studies and high-level design. Mr. O'Keefe possesses broad knowledge of ISBE data systems gleaned from his extensive work at ISBE over the past ten years.

Mr. O'Keefe's primary areas of participation included defining data requirements, and providing input into ISBE data systems and procedures.

### Michael Conkey

Mr. Conkey has more than twenty-five years in information systems, including twelve years with the Illinois State Board of Education. Mr. Conkey is intimately familiar with many of the data systems at ISBE which were included by this study.

Mr. Conkey's primary area of participation included obtaining hands-on access to pertinent data contained in ISBE data systems and assisting in the analysis of that data as related to the recommendations developed for this study.

## **ISBE Staff**

Throughout the project, we solicited information from individuals in several divisions within ISBE. In addition to the continuous involvement of staff from Special Education Services, the following divisions provided input to MSF&W:

- Funding and Disbursements
- Student Assessment
- Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

- Standards-Aligned Learning
- Data Systems

We conducted an information gathering meeting with the Special Education Services Springfield compliance monitoring staff, and participated in a meeting with Special Education Services transition staff, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting staff and a representative from the DHS Office of Rehabilitation Services to review transition issues.

### Other Groups

Members of our team met with ISAC to provide an overview of the project, address concerns of the Council, and solicit input from the Council. Project team members also attended the October meeting of the Secondary Transition Experience Program (STEP) Advisory Committee to discuss the project and obtain feedback regarding the Transition Data Collection form. Dan Shryock participated with Chris Koch and Jimmy Gunnell in two presentations on the project during the annual Special Education Directors Conference in August, and met with representatives from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to discuss data-related issues.

### 7-Pak Survey

A key element of our approach to the project was to conduct research into the practices of other, comparable, state departments of education in several areas related to special education. To begin that process, the project team prepared a survey for the *7-Pak Consortium of Large States* to study how states similar to Illinois were addressing various issues. The 7-Pak, representing the seven largest states, is comprised of Illinois, New York, California, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

The survey was designed to research how other states are approaching issues related to:

- Data Collection,
- Focused Monitoring,
- Post-exit Follow-up,
- Evaluation of Parental Involvement, and
- Reporting of Special Education Performance to the Public

Respondents were instructed to answer the questions in either the context of what their state is currently doing, or what they plan to do in the near future. Of the entire 7-Pak, all but Texas responded to our survey. (The complete responses to the survey may be found in *Appendix E*.)

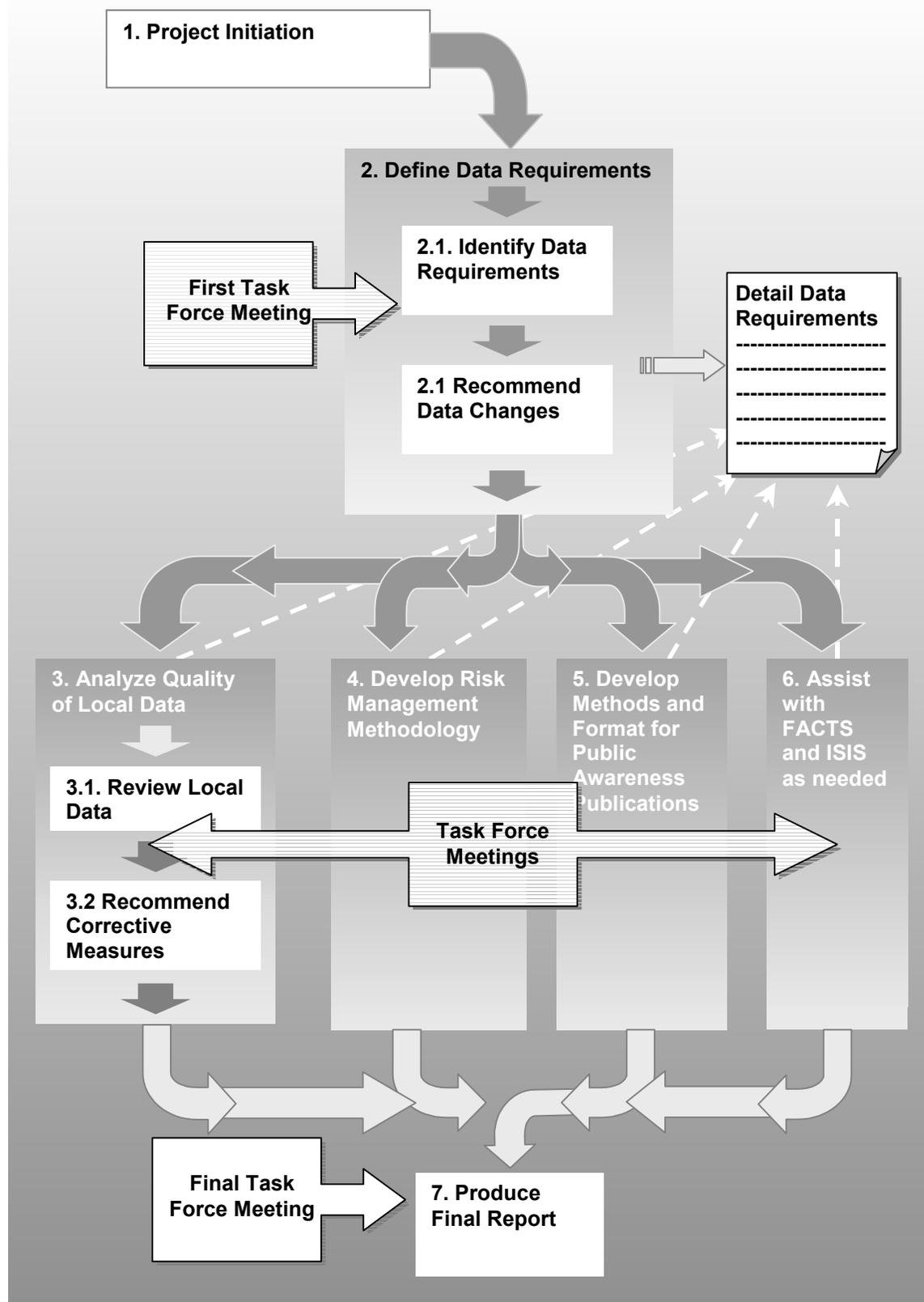
### Project Plan

We employed a formal, structured project plan, developed specifically for this project to meet its unique requirements and objectives. The following project phases comprised our proposed project plan.

1. Project Initiation
2. Define Data Requirements

3. Assess Quality of Data at the Local Level
4. Develop Risk Management Methodology
5. Develop Public Awareness Process
6. Assist with FACTS and ISIS linkage
7. Prepare Final Report

The diagram on the following page graphically illustrates these phases.



## Section 2

# Data Requirements

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This section reflects the understanding of this project team regarding the data requirements identified to support the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education. The purpose of this process was to identify the data that are required to meet the project objectives, including:

- Data required to support the goals of the ICIP,
- Data required for public dissemination via a publication and a Web site,
- Data required for identifying LEAs at risk, and
- Data required to comply with legislation, such as No Child Left Behind.

### Background

The initial identification of these data during the Data Requirements phase became the foundation that the rest of the project built upon; the subsequent project phases expounded upon the requirements identified during this phase. The Assess Local Data Quality phase provided insight into the current quality and validity of the data identified here and provided recommended solutions to address deficiencies. The Risk Management and Public Reporting phases identified additional data that are required or desired to support each of those activities, as well as a more defined structure for a Special Education data analysis system.

The identification of these data requirements was performed through a variety of project activities, including:

*Thorough review of the ICIP and its development process / background, including project work papers and meeting notes*

The ICIP states specific goals that require measurement to determine success/results. By reviewing the ICIP, the project team identified the data requirements to support those goals.

#### *Sessions with ISBE staff and ICIP stakeholders*

Project staff met with ISBE staff from various departments and divisions, including Special Education, Student Assessment, Data Analysis & Progress Reporting, Information Technology and Funding & Disbursements. In addition, we had conversations with other individuals from other groups including the Harrisburg Project and Project TOTAL. There were also members of the original ICIP stakeholders committee who were members of our project Task Force.

### *Input from industry experts*

As mentioned earlier, our project team included experts in education data collection and special education from Illinois and New York. They all contributed to the identification of these requirements.

### *Review work from other states, most notably New York*

There has been a significant body of work completed in other states in the area of special education statistics, monitoring and reporting. Our team included experts from New York who either have been or still are involved in special education at the state level, including Lawrence Gloeckler, Deputy Commissioner for VESID, New York State Education Department. We also reviewed related work from other states, including developing and conducting the 7-Pak Survey, mentioned in *Project Overview*.

### *Task Force*

The Task Force was instrumental in assisting us in ensuring that the indicators for evaluating both special education programs and students were accurate, stable and understood by all the stakeholders. The first two Task Force meetings had a significant focus on data requirements. Recommendations from those meetings have been incorporated into the contents of this report. It is our intent that this document reflects the consensus of the Task Force members.

This section focuses on the following data required to support continuous improvement:

- High School Graduation Rate
- Dropout Rate
- Suspension and Expulsion Data
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Assessment Participation and Performance
- Transition Outcomes

A general background discussion of the data is provided for each item, followed by recommendations prepared by the project team. This information and recommendations are the result of the activities described above, as well as a detailed analysis of pertinent laws, procedures and guidelines.

## High School Graduation Rate

Goal 1 of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education states, “Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the percentage of youth with disabilities who exit school with a standard diploma (reaching 90% in the year 2007)... “. The first desired result defined for Goal 1 is to “increase the percentage of students ages 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma.” The ICIP further specifies that high school completion data should be collected and analyzed for both special and general education students, and that the gap between the two should be analyzed. All of this data is to be reported back to the LEAs and the public.

Currently, the School Report Card collects graduation data in aggregate and disaggregated by various categories, including students with disabilities. However, the School Report Card definition of “students with disabilities” includes all students with an IEP or Section 504 plan.

The School Report Card calculates graduation rate as a cohort rate, as follows:

$$\frac{2003 \text{ Graduates}^1}{1999 \text{ Freshmen} - (\text{Transfers Out}^1 + \text{Died}) + \text{Transfers In}^{1,2}}$$

<sup>1</sup>. Do not include students who dropped out, were expelled or did not graduate due to lack of credits.

<sup>2</sup>. Graduates who were not members of the original 1999 freshman class.

By comparison, the OSEP definition of graduation rate is a percent of all school leavers, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Graduates}}{\text{Graduates} + \text{Received a Certificate} + \text{Dropouts} + \text{Died} + \text{Reached Max Age}}$$

### Conclusion

Use the School Report Card as the source for Graduation Rate for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs. To do this, the instructions for the School Report Card Data Collection Form must be changed to specify that only students with an IEP should be counted as students with disabilities; do not include students with Section 504 plans.

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan requires not only the collection, analysis and reporting of graduation rates for students with disabilities, but also a comparison of the gap between special and general education students. The only manner to effectively achieve a gap analysis is to calculate graduation rates the same for both cohorts. The School Report Card is an established tool for reporting this type of information and provides a consistent source of graduation data.

In addition, this is the same calculation for Graduation Rate that Illinois has defined for determination of adequate yearly progress (AYP) in its approved accountability plan for No Child Left Behind.

Note: This recommendation does not affect the requirements that ISBE has to report data to OSEP on school leavers, in particular, *TABLE 4 – Report of Children with Disabilities Exiting Special Education*.

### Dropout Rate

The ICIP requires that “ISBE collect and analyze statewide data on the dropout rate of special and general education students. This data will be disaggregated by LEAs with an analysis discussing the gap between general and special education students.” This activity is designed to support Desired Result 1.B, “Decrease the dropout rate of students (ages 14-21) with disabilities.” Currently, dropout information is collected via three data collection tools: FACTS, School Report Card and the End of Year Report.

FACTS captures exit information strictly for students receiving special education services. Reason for Exit “D” is specifically defined as follows:

“Dropped out (age 16 or older). This code includes students who are not attending the schools of the district as expected, i.e., most districts have a policy of dropping a student from the roles after a certain number of days of nonattendance.”

The School Report Card collects a total count of dropouts for high school only. It uses the following definition:

“A ‘dropout’ is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school. Count as a dropout any student considered to be transferring but for whom a transcript request was not received from another school system or the student’s parent/guardian within 30 days of that student’s last day of attendance. Include in the count all students who did not re-enroll in the fall of 2002-03 school year as well as those who dropped out during the 2002-03 school year. Do not include students who dropped out during the 2002-03 school year but returned and completed the 2002-03 school year. Do not include students who have been expelled.”

The End of Year Report collects dropout counts for all students by grade (1-12), gender and race/ethnicity. In addition, it includes totals for dropouts in grade 7-12 in the following three categories: LEP, migrants, and low-income.

The End of Year Report defines dropout essentially the same as the School Report Card, with the inclusion of grades 1 through 8. It also includes the instruction to “assign special education and nongraded students to the appropriate grade according to the students’ age.”

One of the critical performance indicators defined by OSEP in 2003 is dropout rate of students 14-21, defined as:

“Number in disability category dropped out / number in disability category leaving school”,

with the following definitions:

“Dropped out’ is defined as the total who were enrolled at some point in the reporting year, were not enrolled at the end of the reporting year, and did not exit through any of the other bases described. This category includes dropouts, runaways, GED recipients, expulsions, status unknown, and other exiters.

“Students leaving school includes students who graduated with a diploma, received a certificate, dropped out, died, and reached maximum age.”

Students with disabilities who were enrolled at some point in the reporting year, were not enrolled at the end of the reporting year, and did not exit through any other basis described (*no longer receiving special education; graduated with diploma; received a certificate; reached maximum age; died; moved, known to be continuing; or moved, not known to be continuing*). This count includes dropouts, runaways, GED recipients, expulsions, status unknown, and other exiters. *OSEP IDEA, PART B DATA DICTIONARY, October 2002*

The ICIP requires not only reporting dropout rates for special education students age 14-21, as OSEP requires, but also reporting the same data for general education students and reporting the gap. Currently, dropout counts for general education students are collected on the School Report Card and the End of Year Report.

### Conclusion

Use the School Report Card definition of Dropout for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs. School districts are instructed to use this definition for reporting on the Report Card and the End of Year Report. Maintaining this pre-established definition will help in obtaining consistent dropout data from school to school.

Use the School Report Card as the source for Dropout data for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs. The Report Card is increasingly becoming the central instrument for collecting school-based data. The ICIP requires the collection, analysis and reporting of dropout rates for students with IEPs as well as a comparison of the gap between special and general education students. The only way to effectively perform this gap analysis is to calculate dropout rates identically for both cohorts, preferably from the same source.

To implement this, the School Report Card Data Collection Form must be changed to require two numbers for dropouts instead of one. Line 8 should require High School Dropouts for students both with and without IEPs.

Calculate Dropout Rate as: number of students who dropped out / number of students in grades 9-12. This is the percentage of all high school students who dropped out, compared to OSEP’s percentage of all school leavers who were dropouts.

Example:

A high school has 400 students. There were 100 school leavers this year (graduates, dropouts, reached maximum age, etc.). There were 10 dropouts.

- Using the recommended Dropout Rate definition, the dropout rate is **2.5%** (10/400).
- Using OSEP’s definition for the same high school, the dropout rate is **10%** (10/100).

Based upon research conducted by the project team, and the consensus of the team and the Task Force, defining dropout rate as the percentage of all high school students who dropped out (2.5% in the example) is more meaningful than the percentage of all exiters who dropped out (10% in the example) used by OSEP. This is also the same definition of dropout rate used by New York and Florida.

### **Suspension/Expulsion Data – End of Year Report**

Desired Result 1.E of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education states, “Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are suspended.” Desired Result 1.F states, “Decrease the percentage of students (ages 14-21) with disabilities who are expelled.” Both of these statistics are to be compared with general education students, with the gap between special and general education analyzed and reported to the LEAs.

Today, suspension and expulsion data is collected on the End of Year Report. Page two collects suspension counts disaggregated by IEP status, ethnicity, gender and number/length of suspensions. Expulsion counts are disaggregated by IEP status, ethnicity, gender and elementary/high school grades.

Page three contains information used to submit *TABLE 5 – Report of Children with Disabilities Unilaterally Removed or Suspended/Expelled For More Than 10 Days* to OSEP, including disaggregation by disability and ethnicity.

A decision has been made to remove the IEP-specific suspension and expulsion data from the End of Year Report. Staff from Data Analysis and Progress Reporting intend to engage the Special Education Services staff in dialog to develop a new reporting instrument that meets Special Education’s needs for federal reporting. This new instrument should be available for next year’s reporting.

### Conclusion

Use the new, yet to be developed, suspension and expulsion reporting instrument to collect this data.

Disaggregate the data on the new instrument by IEP status (with or without an IEP) to provide the ability to perform gap analysis between the two cohorts.

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

Goal 2 of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education states, “Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the number of students with disabilities (3-21) who are provided Free and Appropriate Public Education in general education classrooms (80%+ time) in the school they would attend if not disabled...” The first desired result defined for Goal 2 is to “Increase the percentage of students with disabilities (ages 6-21) who are served in general education with non-disabled peers 80% or more of the time, and decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who are served in general education with non-disabled peers less than 40% of the time.” The ICIP further specifies that LRE data should be collected and analyzed, disaggregated by

disability and other demographic variables, and by LEA, and reported back to the LEAs and the public.

Currently, FACTS collects LRE data at the individual student level. This provides the ability to analyze the data not only at the LEA level, but also by student demographic variables such as disability, ethnicity and gender. FACTS uses LRE definitions that have recently been redefined to match those used by OSEP, and that meet the requirements specified in the ICIP.

### Conclusion

Use FACTS as the source for LRE data for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs.

### **Assessment Participation**

Desired Result 1.C in the ICIP states, "Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in either statewide (ISAT, PSAE & IMAGE) or alternate assessments (IAA)." It further defines that this data must be disaggregated by grade.

This requires not only the number of students participating in the assessments, but also the total number of students enrolled in the tested grades at the time the assessments were conducted. Further, this enrollment data must be broken down by various subgroups, including students with disabilities. This requirement is not only important to the ICIP, but is also required to determine whether schools, districts and the state are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) as required by No Child Left Behind.

To fulfill the NCLB requirement, ISBE has implemented the use of scannable enrollment forms, beginning in April 2003. (District 299 submits the same data in a different manner and does not use the forms.) These sheets request enrollment as of the first day of state testing of all students and for students in various categories that will be used for NCLB accountability such as ethnicity, IEP status and participation in free/reduced lunch. Districts and schools must complete separate sheets for grades 2 (if appropriate), 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 11. The forms are returned to NCS Pearson. For 2004, ISBE is exploring the possibility of collecting this information online.

This data is reported in the new School Report Card format.

### Conclusion

Use the assessment participation data from NCS Pearson / School Report Card as the source for participation data for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs. Enrollment per grade (the denominator) will use the counts provided on the new enrollment forms. IAA participation numbers will be obtained from the Division of Student Assessment as reported on the School Report Card.

### **Assessment Performance**

Desired Result 1.D in the ICIP states, "Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who perform at the "meet standards" or "exceed standards" level as measured by the ISAT or PSAE or alternate assessments (IAA)."

This data is currently being collected from NCS Pearson and is reported on the School Report Card.

### Conclusion

Use the assessment performance data from NCS Pearson / School Report Card as the source for performance data for Continuous Improvement and for reporting results to the public and LEAs. IAA performance data will be obtained from the Division of Student Assessment as reported on the School Report Card.

### **Transition Outcomes**

Desired Result 1.A.2 in the ICIP states, “Increase the percentage of students ages 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma and employment.” Desired Result 1.A.3 states, “Increase the percentage of students ages 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma, complete an alternative education program or GED and go on to post-secondary education.” Both of these results require the collection, analysis and reporting of transition data to determine that progress is being made with regard to post-secondary education and employment.

Collecting information on the participation of students in transition planning is difficult to do today. While this type of information is included in students’ IEPs, there is currently no inclusion of this data in any data collection systems at ISBE.

The Transition Data Collection Form is a paper reporting instrument that collects information on students’ goals in the areas of Employment, Post-Secondary Education and Community Living. It also collects information on Transition Supports/Services provided while students are in school. The form records the total number of students with specific goals or who are receiving specific services.

For example, under Employment Goals, school districts are to report the number of students whose goals are “Employment Following Post-Secondary Education”, “Competitive Employment Following High School”, “Supported Employment Following High School”, “Military Following High School”, or “Other”. This information is collected for students age 14 and older, and is aggregated at the district level by anticipated year of high school exit.

When the paper form is completed, it is sent to Transition Planning Committees (TPCs), who are responsible for compiling the numbers by county. The TPCs use these totals to complete a Transition Planning Committee Summary Report which includes an analysis of services that are unmet, or expected to be unmet, and recommendations regarding specific needs in each county. The Summary Reports, along with Compilation Data Forms, are sent to the Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS).

While this process collects transition data that could, potentially, be extremely useful, the information collected on this form is not available to ISBE and does not exist in a disaggregated manner (by district or school). Further, there seem to be serious problems with the validity of the data. For example, in Chicago alone, only 71% of the

high schools submitted the data. Initial evidence from other districts seems to reflect a similar lack of complete data or data accuracy throughout the state.

While information on transition goals or services seems to be lacking, there is much potential regarding actual transition outcomes. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) program in the Career Development & Preparation Division has developed a process to access actual post-secondary outcome information. CTE sends files to external sources for matching against college and university enrollment databases and employment and wages databases. In this manner, CTE is able to gauge the effectiveness of their programs in preparing students for post-secondary employment and education. Currently, their data match process includes all Illinois public universities and colleges, and Illinois, Missouri and Federal employment records. There is the potential to expand this process to access a national database of colleges and universities (The National Student Clearinghouse) and to expand the reach of the employment match.

The lynchpin to this matching process is the student's social security number. Files must be created containing a list of SSNs for students that have left high school. The entities that administer the enrollment or employment databases then return information on any matches they find in their system. If ISBE could obtain SSNs for students with IEPs, it would be possible for the Department of Special Education to begin measuring how many students actually enroll in a college or university or obtain employment after exiting high school.

ISBE cannot require that parents provide social security numbers for their children. There are parents who are concerned about privacy and identity theft and would therefore not provide this information. However, CTE has been fairly successful in obtaining SSNs in their data system, ISIS. We feel that the Department of Special Education will be able to obtain a high enough percentage of SSNs to make this data meaningful and useful for continuous improvement.

The EDWin system used by most school districts currently contains SSN, and most schools tend to collect it, although they may not use it. It is not currently transmitted with the FACTS data, but could be with system modifications.

### Conclusion

Begin collecting social security numbers for students and include this information in FACTS. This will give us a link to external systems to explore the wealth of information available related to transition outcomes.

Use various external sources to identify exited students who are enrolled in post-secondary education or have obtained employment after exiting high school. Coordinate this effort with CTE.

### Other Data

#### Collect School (Building) Code in FACTS

Currently, the student information that is submitted in FACTS does not include the student's school code. It is the recommendation of this team that FACTS be modified to collect the sending, or home, school code for each student.

This information will provide more granularity in the data that is provided by FACTS. Currently, the School Report Card, End of Year Report, and assessment data are available at the school level. NCLB requires accountability at the school level. It seems to be consistent, then, that we provide school-level data in FACTS.

EDWin currently contains the school code. It is necessary to modify the FACTS student records that are created from EDWin to include the school code, and any districts that submit data directly to Harrisburg, such as Chicago, would need to modify their own systems.

#### Require the Use of District Student ID in FACTS

The FACTS student record contains an optional District Student ID field. It is our recommendation that ISBE require that this field be used. The new SIS system will require an initial conversion process to match students in FACTS with their unique student record in SIS. Since the matching of SIS to districts' school administration packages will have already been previously completed, the inclusion of the district student ID will facilitate the matching of FACTS to SIS.

#### SIS Requirements

ISBE SIS has been designed to interface with FACTS as an external application, as opposed to integrating the FACTS data elements in ISBE SIS. All of the fields on the FACTS student record have been identified in the *ISBE SIS Requirements Specification*. This project team has not identified any new data elements that are specific to special education or required by both general and special education that have not already been identified in the ISBE SIS design.

Many of the other data collection instruments used today to collect information for special education continuous improvement and reporting (such as End of Year Report, Fall Housing Report, etc.) will no longer be required when ISBE SIS is available. Most, if not all, of that data will be available at the student level in ISBE SIS with a wealth of potential to perform detail-level analysis not possible today.

## Section 3

# Local Data Quality

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This section presents the findings from the Analyze Local Data Quality Phase. The purpose of this phase was to identify areas of concern involving special education data quality at the local level, and recommend measures to improve this data quality.

### Background

Our approach to meeting this project requirement included the following tasks:

- Review Data Requirements and determine feasibility of collecting the data at the local level.
- Study data samples and procedures from various locations – Chicago, suburban, downstate, etc.
- Conduct site visits to a *select* group of school districts to observe firsthand the issues involved in collecting the required data.
- Identify problems, or potential problems, with regard to data and procedures.
- Prepare recommendations to improve data quality.

Our original methodology, as described in our Best and Final Offer, included visiting six to ten school districts representing various sizes, locations and resources. However, between July 2 and September 5, we visited about twice as many LEAs as originally anticipated, with visits to several special education cooperatives, districts, schools, and one Regional Office of Education. The list of sites visited includes:

- Indian Prairie School District
- Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative
- Kankakee Area Special Education Cooperative. This visit also included staff from the following districts:
  - Herscher School District
  - Bourbonnais School District
  - Bradley School District
  - Bradley-Bourbonnais Community High School
  - Kankakee School District
  - Central School District
- Chicago Public Schools district office (two visits)
- Southside Occupational Academy (Chicago)
- Hanson Park Elementary School (Chicago)

- Curie High School (Chicago)
- Lincoln Community High School / Tri-County Special Education Cooperative
- Rockford Public School District
- Niles Township District for Special Education
- JAMP Special Education Services
- Regional Office of Education 02
- Springfield School District

Dr. Tom Kerins was primarily responsible for conducting this phase of the project. Dr. Kerins participated in every site visit except one. Also participating were Dan Shryock, Barbara Frisenda, Robert O’Keefe and John Marucco. Our assessment teams were very well received at each visit, and all of the people we met with were exceptionally helpful.

We employed a standard procedure for all of our site visits and refined it throughout the process. The stated purposes for the visits were (1) to observe the processes by which special education data is collected and reported at the local level, and (2) to identify areas in which these processes can be enhanced to improve the accuracy and quality of special education data in Illinois.

We requested to meet with staff – administrators, teachers and secretaries – who were involved with the collection, data entry and verification of special education data that are sent to the State, including FACTS, School Report Card and End of Year Report. Before visiting any of these locations, we familiarized ourselves with their FACTS LEA Profile reports and School Report Cards.

The scope of our interviews included reviewing the data flow for various data, including: where do the data originate, who supplies them and how, what are the processes for entering them into the appropriate data system, and how are they verified? As we found patterns in the earlier visits, we pursued various topics on subsequent visits, such as the Transition Data Collection Form, quality of suspension data, and determination of LRE. We also asked specific questions regarding the data that were potentially going to be used as critical performance indicators or components of an LEA special education profile.

One issue that arose as a cause for concern was the use of the Transition Data Collection Form used to collect transition information for the DHS Office of Rehabilitation Services. This form is sent by school districts to Transition Planning Committees, volunteer organizations that review the needs in a community and assist in planning to address those needs. As we got further into reviewing this process, we determined that it was necessary to talk with TPCs to gain a better understanding of how the information from the Transition Data Collection Form is used after it is submitted by schools. The following TPCs, representing about 20% of the committees, were contacted for information:

- Quad Cities / Tri-County
- DuPage County

- Livingston County
- Mid South
- Eastern Illinois
- Southeastern Illinois
- McHenry County

The findings and recommendations that follow are based on the Project Team's analysis of information determined through:

- The site visits and contacts described above,
- Conversations and meetings with ISBE staff representing Special Education, Data Analysis, and Student Assessment,
- An on-site meeting with the director of The Harrisburg Project and his staff in Harrisburg, Illinois,
- Input from other comparable states regarding their approach to local data quality issues,
- A review of actual data, and
- A review of state and federal rules, regulations and statutes.

## Findings

### ***Finding 1: There is confusion over how to determine the correct Least Restrictive Environment code for entry into FACTS.***

Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment refers to placing students, as much as is appropriate, in a general, or regular education classroom. The Illinois Administrative Code defines a regular classroom as, “one that is composed of students of whom at least 70 percent are without identified special education eligibility, that utilizes the general curriculum, that is taught by an instructor certified for regular education, and that is not designated as a general remedial classroom.” The determination of a student’s LRE code in FACTS is based upon the percentage of time that student received special education and related services outside of the general education classroom. This is not necessarily the same as the percentage of time a student receives special education services, due to the fact that a student can receive those services in a general education classroom.

The determination of LRE Code is correctly described in the *Instructions for the Special Education Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS)*. However, through discussions with district and co-op personnel, it became evident that some districts are not properly determining this code. Some districts are determining LRE in the same manner as “Percent of Time in Special Education”, or the time a student receives special education or related services, regardless of whether the student is in a general education classroom or not. Percent of Time in Special Education is a data element that is used to determine the appropriate pupil reimbursement amount. This is not the same as LRE, but it appears as if some districts are treating these two data elements as the same. In fact, while researching this issue, the project team was referred several times to a document posted on The Harrisburg Project’s web site entitled, *Percent of Time in Special Education*, that describes how to determine the correct percentage for submitting claims – not LRE. Further, there are districts where staff have a perception (an incorrect perception) that if a student’s LRE code shows that student in a general education classroom, even though he or she is still receiving special education services in that classroom, the district’s reimbursement for that student will be reduced.

The inference of this finding is that the actual number of students in an integrated setting (20% or less outside of a general education classroom) in Illinois is higher than the number that is being reported. It can be expected, then, that if each district reported LRE correctly, Illinois’ ranking compared to other states would be much higher than it is currently.

### ***Finding 2: Suspension data are not being collected consistently and accurately.***

Suspension data are required to be reported to OSEP on *TABLE 5 – Report of Children with Disabilities Unilaterally Removed or Suspended/Expelled For More Than 10 Days*. TABLE 5 is due to OSEP on November 1. In past years, including 2002-2003, these data have been collected on page three of the End of Year Report. Additional suspension and expulsion information is collected on page two of the report with a breakdown by IEP and non-IEP students.

A review of the data reported on the End of Year Report and interviews with school and district staff have shown that the data collected via this instrument is occasionally both

inaccurate and incomplete. Some reports are completed only partially, ignoring certain pages or sections. In other instances, principals are reluctant to share any information at all regarding their school's suspensions.

The reasons for these findings tend to be anecdotal or speculative. Late changes to the End of Year Report certainly are a factor. The change that was made to page three of the report this past spring required schools, at a very late point in the school year, to report information in categories and breakdowns that they may not have been using throughout the year to collect the data. As such, some were unable, or unwilling, to provide the information accurately as requested, resulting in responses that were "best guesses" or non-responses. Some administrators are reluctant to reveal how many suspensions have actually taken place at their school, especially those suspensions that resulted from weapon or drug offenses.

It was also found that some school districts tend to have different approaches regarding suspensions. There are districts, for example, that no longer suspend students, but employ the use of "in-school suspensions" only. However, there are inconsistencies in determining whether a student is actually serving an in-school suspension. Simply placing a student in an environment separate from his or her classroom does not necessarily constitute an in-school suspension. *Illinois Special Education Policies and Procedures* states the following:

"In-school removals shall not be considered as a day of suspension as long as the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately progress in the general curriculum, continues to receive services specified on the child's IEP and continues to participate with nondisabled children to the extent he or she would have in his or her current placement. Appropriately qualified personnel shall provide the services provided during in-school suspensions."

There are other instances where children are "just sent home" from school without an "official" suspension being recorded. However, the same Policies and Procedures referenced above also state that, "Any suspension or removal for disciplinary reasons for any portions of a school day shall count as a full day of suspension. If a child is sent home early from school because of misconduct, the early dismissal must be counted as a day of suspension."

***Finding 3: Determination of whether a student has dropped out is not being done consistently for FACTS or School Report Card reporting.***

Both the School Report Card and FACTS report students who have dropped out of school, and each system has its own definition of what constitutes a dropout. The School Report Card is used to accurately and consistently report this information to the public, while FACTS is used to satisfy the OSEP reporting requirements for *TABLE 4 – Report of Children with Disabilities Exiting Special Education*.

While each of the definitions of dropout used in these systems is adequate for its respective purposes, the actual recording of dropout counts is not precise or consistent. Interviews with staff that enter this information show that a determination of dropout is sometimes based more on what the data entry person "just knows" about the student,

rather than what the system definition specifies. For example, if a student moved and there has been no request for a transcript, a school employee entering information on that student may actually not record that student as a dropout, based on having “heard” that the student is attending another school. However, according to the School Report Card definition, any student who moves but for whom “a transcript request was not received from another school system or the student’s parent/guardian within 30 days of that student’s last day of attendance,” should be considered a dropout.

The issue here is consistency across school districts. With regard to the School Report Card, this information will be used for reporting special education performance to the public as well as for rank comparisons for focused monitoring. As such, all schools should report dropout information consistently. Regarding FACTS, while the data is not currently used to compare districts, it also should still be as accurate as possible as it is used by OSEP.

***Finding 4: Demographic data entered for the new assessment demographic sheet is not correlated with other child counts.***

Desired Result 1.C of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education states, “Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in either statewide (ISAT, PSAE, & IMAGE) or alternate assessments (IAA).”

This requires not only the number of students participating in the assessments, but also the total number of students enrolled at the time the assessments were conducted. Further, this enrollment data must be broken down by grade and by IEP status. This requirement is not only important to the ICIP, but is also necessary to determine whether schools, districts and the state are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) as required by No Child Left Behind.

To fulfill the NCLB requirement, ISBE implemented the use of enrollment forms in April 2003. (District 299 submits the same data in a different manner and does not use the forms.) These forms requested enrollment as of the first day of state testing of all students and for students in various categories that will be used for NCLB accountability such as ethnicity, gender, disability status and participation in free/reduced lunch. The forms are returned to NCS Pearson for scanning.

The initial submission of this data was not successful. Between ten and twenty percent of the schools did not return the sheets at all. Of the data that was submitted, there were a significant number of errors, such as data missing for a grade or the sum of categories (e.g. male and female) did not add up to the total enrollment. Other data were flagged as possible errors because they did not seem reasonable, such as 50% or more of students were marked as having an IEP or no students were marked as receiving free or reduced lunch.

In May, ISBE sent a Demographic Verification Report to schools and districts displaying the data that was submitted, and any condition codes associated with the data (edit errors, etc.). The schools were instructed to make any corrections and return the sheets to ISBE. This process was repeated in June. After two attempts to cleanse the data, staff in Student Assessment made phone calls to schools to try to resolve any remaining data issues. That process involved more than 200 remaining schools.

For 2004, ISBE is exploring the possibility of collecting this information online. This process will help immensely in eliminating basic edit errors in the data. It should also encourage more schools to respond in a timely manner since they won't have to fill out and return paper forms.

While this information is important for both NCLB and the ICIP, there is no verification of this data with other ISBE data systems. The counts are entered on the School Demographic Verification Report independent of any other child count information currently available. As such, it is possible that this information could conflict with other child counts currently being used at ISBE, such as FACTS or the Fall Housing report.

For example, in a large unit school district for 2002, 703 students with disabilities were identified as being enrolled on the first day of testing for the tested grades based on the individual report cards for all of the schools. Two schools in that district reported no students with disabilities for the tested grades on the first day of testing. FACTS did not have grades for the 2002 school year. However, in 2003, the first year FACTS included grade levels, there were 889 students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 – a difference of 186 students.

To research this issue further, we attempted to reconcile the actual assessment records with the numbers reported on the Report Card. For this district, the assessment data showed that 871 students took the tests. However, as stated above, the individual report cards showed only 703 students were enrolled in the grades tested. A closer look revealed that 24 of the 32 schools had more students tested than were reported as being enrolled. Only two schools in the district had assessment data that reconciled with the participation data reported on their respective report cards.

It is understood that there is no way to match the assessment demographic data to FACTS, due in part to the fact that the different systems count students at different points in time (i.e., December 1 versus the first day of testing). However, it is possible to perform *reasonableness* editing of this data to identify *potential* errors.

***Finding 5: The Assessment Participation rates do not aggregate correctly at the district and state level on the 2002 School Report Card.***

The district and state assessment participation rates do not correctly aggregate the reported participation rates of the individual schools within each district or the entire State.

For example, a large unit district's 2002 report card showed a 100% participation rate on reading and math assessments for students with disabilities. However, four of the 32 schools in that district reported less than 100% participation. When the data for the individual schools were aggregated to the district level, the district participation rates were actually 96.4% and 96.3% for reading and math, respectively.

Similar discrepancies were found at the state level. The 2002 State Report Card reported a 99.1% participation rate for students with disabilities taking the reading test, out of an enrollment of 78,455 on the first day of testing for the grades taking the assessment. This would mean that 706 students with disabilities did not take the

reading test statewide. However, the actual school level data show that 12,473 students with disabilities were not tested. That number reflects an 84.1% participation rate, not 99.1%. A similar discrepancy exists with the math participation rate: the Report Card reported a 99.4% rate while the actual school data show a 84.4% rate.

***Finding 6: The Transition Data Collection form is not filled out consistently, accurately or completely throughout the state.***

Section 14-8.03 of the Illinois School Code requires that information be collected annually on transition goals and needed supports/services for students with disabilities who receive special education services. The Code reads as follows:

*A school district shall submit annually a summary of each eligible student's transition goals and needed supports resulting from the multidisciplinary staff conference and individualized education program meeting to the appropriate local Transition Planning Committee.*

The Transition Data Collection form is used to satisfy this requirement. As described in *Data Requirements*, this form collects counts of the number of students, age 14-21, who have specific post-secondary goals, are receiving specific services while in school, and are provided linkages to specific post-secondary services. This form is completed by staff at districts or at individual schools and sent to the district. Districts then submit a single form to their TPC. The TPCs summarize the data by county, identify unmet community needs along with recommendations to meet those needs, and submit the information to ORS.

One issue regarding this process is that not all schools submit the data. For example, only 66 of 93 high schools in District 299 provided this information for 2002-2003. Of the TPCs included in our study, school participation in providing this information ranged from 68% to 100%. TPCs that were affiliated with a special education cooperative tended to have the highest participation rates.

Another issue with this process is the inaccuracy of the data. While there were some TPCs who were confident in the accuracy of their data (once again, those affiliated with a special education co-op), most stated that the data collected were not valid.

Three main reasons were given for the lack of data quality:

1. Several people mentioned a lack of clear instructions and examples for providing the data.

The only TPC that did not mention a problem with data quality was a special education cooperative that has been conducting training with the schools over the last three years with regard to this form.

2. Schools are skeptical about the value in completing the form and see it as a waste of time.

None of the TPCs contacted were able to identify specific assistance that their county received as a result of the data submitted. Some could remember grants

in the past that may have been a result of this, but were not certain if there was actually a relationship between the information submitted to ORS and the grant money received.

3. The process is strictly manual and time-intensive.

Several people mentioned that it would be helpful if the process was computerized. Two individuals suggested adding this information to FACTS. Some districts use IEP forms that are based on the State's IEP template, which includes the data elements required for the Transition Data Collection Form. However, those that use vastly different IEPs, perhaps purchased from a third party vendor, may require translating the information in their IEPs to the data requested on the Transition Data Collection Form.

The assessment of this process is that it requires a tremendous amount of manual work for those who try to provide the data accurately. However, it results in little or no perceivable benefit to the schools, districts, or communities. In the words of one TPC chairperson, "the papers just fall into a black hole".

***Finding 7: Not all districts / cooperatives employ best practices for accurately capturing data from an IEP to FACTS.***

Data that is entered into EDWin and, subsequently, FACTS, originates in some form in each student's Individualized Education Program. The process of data flowing from the actual IEP file into EDWin/FACTS can provide an opportunity for data corruption due to data entry errors, misinterpretation of data, and other causes. The responsibility for the data rests with the special education cooperatives or with the district for those that do not belong to a co-op. Various co-ops and districts have different ways in which to collect their FACTS data, and, consequently, reflect various levels of data quality.

The significant factors that we have identified that influence the quality of the data entry process are:

- Use of a data entry form
- Personnel who record the data
- Personnel who actually enter the data into EDWin

Use of a data entry form

Several co-ops and districts have developed their own data entry form for EDWin. Such a form captures, from the IEP, only the information that is required for input into EDWin. The form provides the data using EDWin codes. For example, LRE will actually be A, E, F, etc., so that a data entry person does not have to determine which code is appropriate. Ideally, the form is designed to match the order and format of the EDWin screens to increase the speed and reliability of data entry.

Personnel who record the data

The best approach observed here involves special education professionals – psychologists, caseworkers, co-op staff – recording the data on the data entry form.

There are instances where information has to be *interpreted* from the IEP to determine the appropriate EDWin entry. It is essential that properly trained staff do any such interpretation when necessary.

### Personnel who actually enter the data into EDWin

If a data entry form is properly designed, any minimally trained data entry operator should be able to use it to enter data into EDWin. However, the best approach involves special education professionals entering the data. Some co-ops have data entered by their professional staff. One district visited has the special education chairperson for each building enter their building's data. This practice allows more opportunity for a professional to identify errors in the data before it is submitted. At the very least, a review of the data entry forms by co-op staff can increase the quality of the data.

There were also sites that we visited that used various automated IEP software packages, either custom developed (homegrown) or purchased, or had a School Administration Package that included special education data. Although these systems potentially have all of the data required for FACTS in them, most of these districts or co-ops still manually entered data into EDWin instead of electronically exporting the data from their system into EDWin/FACTS. District 299 is one exception to this: They automatically extract FACTS data from their data system for transmission to FACTS, bypassing the manual use of EDWin.

### ***Finding 8: The School Report Card does not distinguish between students with IEPs and students with 504 plans.***

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education requires the collection of data for students receiving special education services, or, those who have an IEP. Some of the information required by the ICIP, such as dropouts and graduates, will be obtained from the School Report Card. This will require that the Report Card provide the ability to identify students with IEPs when collecting this data.

Currently, the School Report Card collects data for "students with disabilities" - this combines IEP and 504 students. This occurs in the following places on the School Report Card Data Collection Form:

- Item 1.A – Total number of attendance days for all pupils in this school
- Item 1.B – Total number of absence days for all pupils in this school
- Item 9.A-B – Graduates

With this type of breakdown, it is not possible to determine graduation rate (or attendance/absence days) for students with IEPs to satisfy the ICIP.

In addition, under No Child Left Behind, states are required to use "additional academic indicators" for determining AYP. All states use graduation rate for high schools; Illinois has chosen to use attendance rate for elementary and middle schools. "Students with disabilities" is a subgroup that must meet AYP. However, per OSEP staff, students with 504 plans are "absolutely not" to be counted as students with disabilities for purposes of AYP. (This was also confirmed by OESE staff.) Consequently, Illinois is currently incorrectly calculating graduation and attendance rates for AYP reporting.

***Finding 9: School staff are unclear how to record on the School Report Card graduation information for students whose IEP status has changed during their high school career***

It is not clear how to report, in the graduation table, students whose IEP status has changed during their high school career. For example, a student may have had an IEP as a freshman but did not by the time he/she graduated. Including that student in the “1999 Freshmen” count but not the “2003 Graduates” count would produce a lower, misleading graduation rate for students with IEPs.

The correct manner in which to handle this, according to the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division, is to count students in the transfer in or out categories, as appropriate, when their IEP status changes. For example, if a student had an IEP as a freshman, but not as a graduating senior, that student should be counted in A (original freshmen) and C (transfers out). Likewise, a student that was not in special education as a freshman but was as a graduate, should be counted in B (graduates) and D (transfers in). The instructions provided for the School Report Card do not describe how to report this.



## Section 4

# Risk Assessment Methodology

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This section presents the recommendations of this project team for developing a risk analysis methodology and a risk assessment monitoring and reporting system.

### Background

Much has been said and documented regarding the use of a focused approach to federal monitoring of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In July 2002, the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education released its report, *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families*. This report outlined the Commission's findings and recommendations for improving the educational performance of children with disabilities. The first of three major recommendations included in the report was: "Focus on results – not process." A focused approach – focusing on specific performance results data – is consistent with the Commission's and the Secretary of Education's goal of moving from a culture of *compliance* to a culture of *accountability*.

A focused monitoring system is a data-driven approach to monitoring characterized by focusing on a small number of carefully chosen priorities that have the greatest impact on improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. The focused monitoring approach is based on:

1. choosing a limited number of priorities, each supported by measurable indicators;
2. data/evidence-based decision making including decisions relative to the allocation of limited human resources;
3. the provision of technical assistance to educational agencies in need of improvement;
4. the use of standard, uniform performance benchmarks when making monitoring decisions;
5. attention to diverse populations;
6. ensuring that the State has an effective dispute resolution system; and
7. clear triggers for the initiation of interventions and sanctions.

The purpose of this section is to focus on the identification and assessment of measurable indicators for use in Illinois; it does not deal with the actions that the State should implement in response to the data. Specifically, our recommendations address the following aspects, as defined in section 3.4 of our proposal:

- Identify critical performance indicators (CPIs)
- Define uniform benchmarks to which CPIs can be compared

- Define a methodology for applying the results of the CPI analysis in a meaningful manner
- Design required monitoring and reporting mechanism to identify LEAs within the lower 10% when measured against the benchmarks.

### **Critical Performance Indicators**

Our approach to developing a Risk Assessment Methodology, as described in our proposal, centers on the use of critical performance indicators, or CPIs, also often referred to as key performance indicators (KPIs).

### ***Performance Indicators versus Contributing Factors***

These indicators focus on performance results, as opposed to factors that may contribute to certain results. Studies have shown that there are many factors that can influence academic performance, such as district wealth, available resources, student poverty, student/teacher ratio and others. Critical performance indicators, however, focus on results. LEAs are identified according to how they *actually* perform based on these indicators, not how they *may* perform based on various factors. If an LEA is not performing well against one or more CPIs, a review of various factors such as those mentioned above should be included in determining the most effective forms of assistance for that LEA. The intent is to identify and assist those LEAs whose performance indicates that they are most in need of assistance in helping their students with disabilities succeed.

Contributing factors, as described here, also tend to apply to all students in a school or district, not just those with disabilities. As such, they belong to a broader process of evaluating LEAs, not limited to special education. The focus of the CPIs described here is strictly on students with disabilities.

This approach is similar to those being initiated by State Education Agencies (SEAs) in several states across the nation, and is aligned with OSEP's recently developed focused monitoring procedures.

### ***The Office of Special Education Programs***

In April 2003, OSEP announced its intent to implement an integrated, four-part accountability strategy aligned with the recommendations of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. Part Four of this strategy is, "Focusing OSEP's intervention on States with low ranking performance on critical performance indicators." A key aspect of this strategy is that it will enable OSEP to focus on a small set of critical indicators that are based on improving results for children with disabilities and their families.

OSEP has developed preliminary indicators for ranking States' performance annually. For the first year of implementation, OSEP has identified four initial indicators – two for Part B and two for Part C. The following are the Part B indicators:

1. Exiting Data
  - Percent of exiters leaving with a diploma
  - Percent of exiters dropping out
  - Difference between graduation rates for special education and regular education
2. Educational Environments (LRE)
  - Percentage of students outside a general education classroom less than 21%
  - Percentage of students outside a general education classroom more than 60%

- Percentage of students served in a separate school facility

As last stated in April 2003, OSEP also intends to use additional indicators such as participation and performance on assessments for Part B. It is important to point out that OSEP has not yet established benchmarks for these indicators, but is currently using a simple rank ordering of the States.

**Other States**

Several states are already using or planning to use their own performance indicators for focused monitoring. The National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM) at Louisiana State University provides information on various states in the process of moving toward focused monitoring.

In addition to accessing information provided by the NCSEAM Web site, the project team utilized a survey (described in *Project Overview*) for the 7-Pak Consortium of Large States to see how states similar to Illinois were approaching this issue. As previously mentioned, all but Texas responded to our survey. Of the survey respondents, Ohio had not yet identified their critical performance indicators.

The following table reflects data gathered both from the NCSEAM Web site and the 7-Pak survey.

**Indicators that trigger selection for specific types of monitoring (focused, verification, facilitated, etc.).**

Indicator	New York	California	Florida	Pennsylvania	Louisiana	New Mexico
Graduation Rate	X		X	X	X	
Dropout Rate	X		X	X		
LRE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assessment Participation			X	X	X	X
Assessment Performance	X	X		X	X	X
Disproportionality	X			X		
Incidence Rate	X					X
Complaints, etc.	X					
Post-School Plans	X					
Transition to Post-Secondary Education and Employment	X					

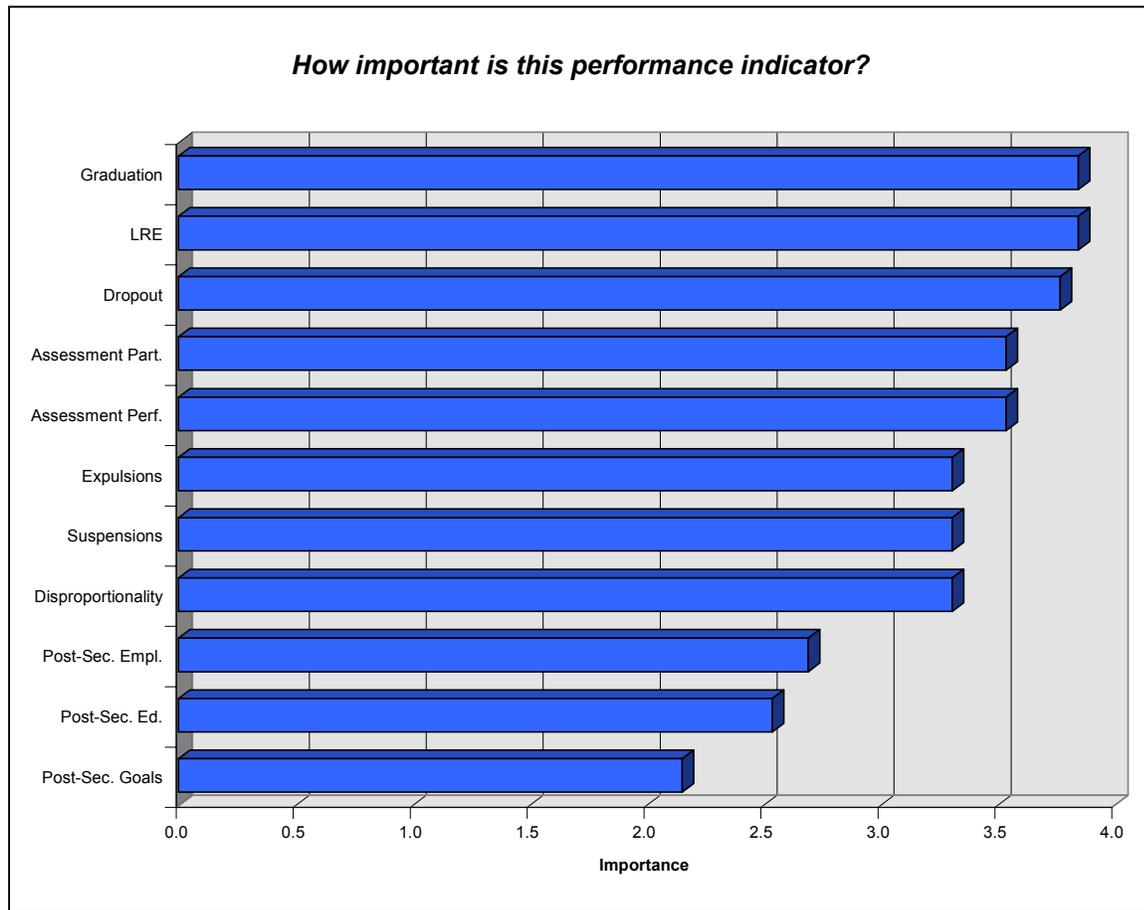
### ***CPI Survey***

The project team also developed a survey to obtain a consensus from the GSEG Task Force concerning what performance indicators should be used for measuring how well the State and individual LEAs are performing in special education. The survey asked respondents to rate the importance of each performance indicator and to identify which of these indicators are significant to use in identifying LEAs for monitoring. The following scale was used to rate the importance of each indicator:

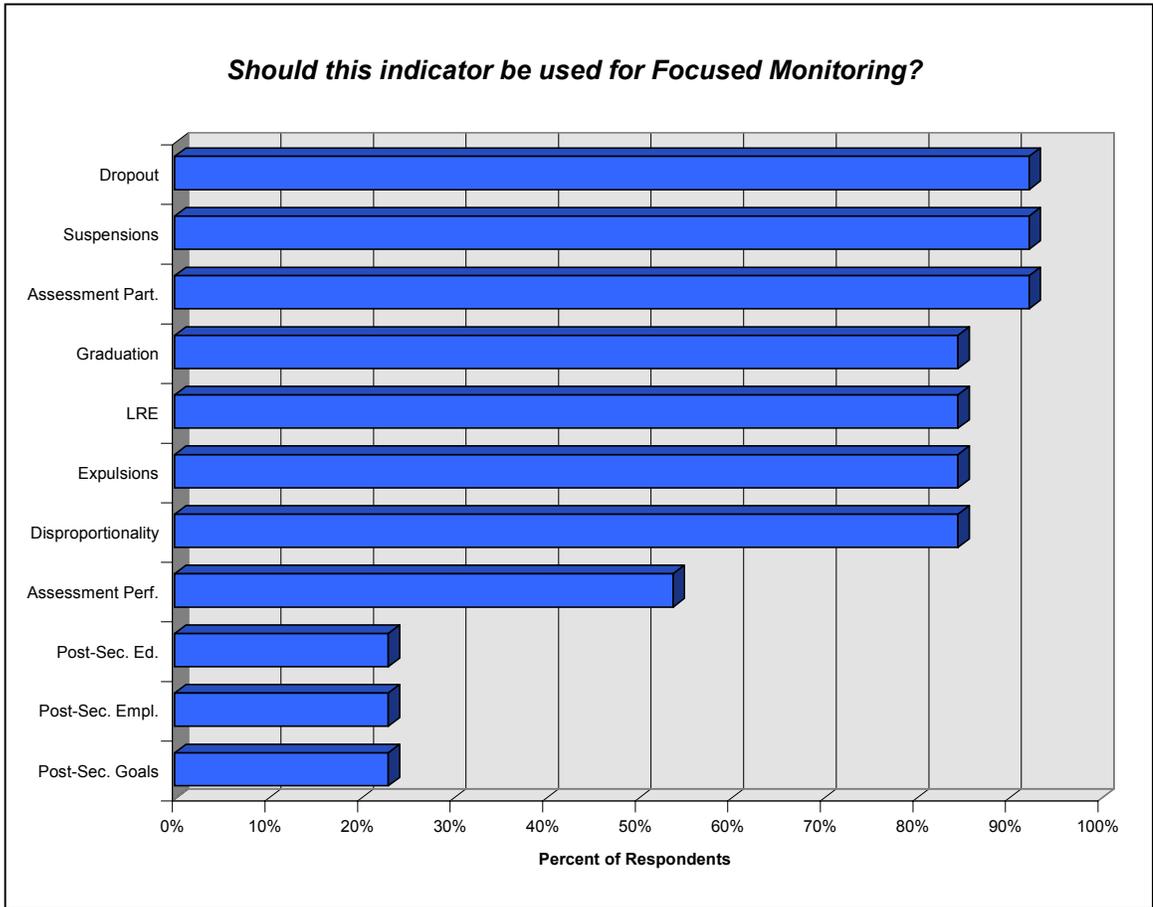
- 0: Not important at all
- 1: This data element is interesting and may prove to be useful in the future
- 2: This data element is of secondary interest and may be valuable to explain more important data, for example, in “drilling down” to get additional information if a higher-level indicator has identified a potential problem.
- 3: This data element is of primary interest and should be reported on statewide and LEA special education profiles
- 4: This is a critical indicator of the effectiveness of special education or this is a critical factor affecting special education results.

The respondents were given the opportunity to provide comments for each indicator and to suggest additional indicators that may not have been listed on the survey.

Thirteen members of the Task Force responded to the survey. The chart on the following page represents how these respondents rated the importance of each performance indicator:



The chart on the following page displays the percent of respondents who identified each performance indicator as a critical performance indicator for monitoring.



### **Illinois Critical Performance Indicators**

The project team evaluated information from all of the sources described here – OSEP, NCSEAM, 7-Pak Survey, and the Task Force survey – to determine those data elements that should be used in Illinois as CPIs. In addition to the importance of the data elements, the team also factored in the data quality of each indicator as collected and reported in Illinois. The following indicators have been identified for use in determining LEAs most at risk for failing to meet performance:

- Graduation Rate and Gap
- Dropout Rate
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Assessment Participation
- Assessment Performance
- Disproportionality

#### ***Graduation Rate and Gap***

Graduation rate is an indicator that is identified in Goal 1 of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education (ICIP). Desired Result 1.A.1 states, “Increase the percentage of students ages 17 to 21 with disabilities who exit with a standard diploma.” OSEP has identified both Graduation Rate and the gap between general education and special education Graduation Rate as two of its initial critical performance indicators. Four of the six states researched used this CPI for focused monitoring. Of the remaining two, California has identified it as one of its Key Performance Indicators, but does not use it “for Verification Review selection and Facilitated district selection.”

It is our recommendation that both Graduation Rate and the gap between general education and special education Graduate Rate be used in Illinois as a critical performance indicator for focused monitoring.

#### ***Dropout Rate***

Dropout Rate is another indicator that is identified in Goal 1 of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education (ICIP). Desired Result 1.B states, “Decrease the drop-out rate of students (ages 14 to 21) with disabilities.” OSEP has identified Dropout Rate as one of its initial critical performance indicators, as have three of the states researched.

It is our recommendation that Dropout Rate be used in Illinois as a critical performance indicator for focused monitoring.

#### ***Least Restrictive Environment***

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education, Goal 2 states, “Illinois will increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the number of students with disabilities (3-21) who are provided Free and Appropriate Public Education in general education classrooms (80%+ time) in the school they would attend if not disabled.” Desired Results 2.A and 2.B add the requirement to “*decrease the percentage of students with*

*disabilities who are served in general education with non-disabled peers less than 40% of the time” for students age 6-21 and 3-5, respectively.*

OSEP has identified educational environments as critical performance indicators, defined by (1) percent outside regular class less than 21%, (2) percent outside regular class more than 60% and (3) percent in public/private separate facilities. Further, every state that we researched also used education environment or LRE in some manner as a critical performance indicator.

Actual statistics for Illinois from the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 school years show a significant difference in LRE numbers when broken down by age (a breakdown by grade is not available for 2002). When the placement of students in educational environments is viewed by age group – 3-13 (elementary school) and 14-21 (high school) – the results are as follows:

School Year	All Ages	Ages 3-13	Ages 14-21
<b>Percent of Students Outside the General education classroom less than 21%</b>			
2002-2003	43.13%	50.09%	27.72%
2001-2002	40.77%	47.90%	24.41%
<b>Percent of Students Served in Separate Facilities</b>			
2002-2003	6.11%	3.90%	11.00%
2001-2002	6.21%	3.98%	11.32%

The significant difference between LRE placements in elementary schools and high schools demands that each population be examined separately. Defining a single CPI and benchmark for all districts (for example, 43% outside the classroom less than 21% of the time) would favor elementary districts first, then unit districts. High school districts would be at a definite disadvantage in attempting to meet such a benchmark. Also, an acceptable overall percentage for a unit district that does very well in placing elementary age students in a general education classroom could mask more restrictive LRE placements in high school.

Alternately, separate benchmarks for elementary and high school students can provide the ability to define and identify realistic progress for each type of school within a district. High school districts will be judged by their performance according to specific benchmarks for high school students; elementary school districts will have a different set of benchmarks. Likewise, unit districts will use both indicators for the appropriate students within their districts.

It is our recommendation that the following LRE categories be used in Illinois as critical performance indicators:

- Percent of elementary school students outside a general education classroom less than 21%,
- Percent of high school students outside a general education classroom less than 21%,
- Percent of elementary school students served in separate facilities, and

- Percent of high school students served in separate facilities.

### ***Assessment Participation***

Desired Result 1.C of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan states, “Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who participate in either statewide (ISAT, PSAE & IMAGE) or alternate assessments (IAA).” OSEP has identified assessment participation rate as a desired future critical performance indicator. In addition, the U. S. Department of Education has identified participation in assessments as an area in which schools must meet specific goals for Adequate Yearly Progress.

It is our recommendation that Participation Rate in state assessments be used in Illinois as a critical performance indicator.

### ***Assessment Performance***

Desired Result 1.C of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan states, “Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who perform at the “meet standards” or “exceed standards” level as measured by the ISAT or PSAE or alternate assessments (IAA).” OSEP has identified assessment performance as a desired future critical performance indicator. In addition, the U. S. Department of Education has identified performance on assessments as an area in which schools must meet specific goals for Adequate Yearly Progress.

It is our recommendation that Assessment Performance in math and reading on the ISAT and PSAE statewide assessments be used in Illinois as a critical performance indicator. Specifically, we recommend that, for an LEA, math and reading scores be combined across grades to create the following CPIs:

- Performance on Math Assessments, and
- Performance on Reading Assessments.

### ***Disproportionality***

Disproportionality refers to the under or over identification of subgroups of students, usually by race or ethnicity, compared to the representation of those subgroups in the total student population. For example, if African-Americans represent 25% of a district's student population, but account for 45% of a specific disability category, that subgroup is considered to be over identified for that disability, or disproportionate to the total population.

In the same manner, disproportionality can also be determined with respect to the placement in particular educational environments for children in specific subgroups.

The IDEA specifies that state data be collected by race/ethnicity and disproportionality determined as follows:

- (1) IN GENERAL – Each State that receives assistance under this part, and the Secretary of the Interior, shall provide for the collection and examination of data to determine if significant disproportionality based on race is occurring in the State with respect to –

(A) the identification of children as children with disabilities, including the identification of children as children with disabilities in accordance with a particular impairment described in section 602(3); and

(B) the placement in particular educational settings of such children.

[20 U.S.C. §1418(c)(1)]

It is our recommendation that Disproportionality, both in identification and educational environment, be used in Illinois as a critical performance indicator. With regard to identification, we are recommending that Illinois focus on the five highest incidence disability categories: MR, SL, SLD, ED, and OHI. Regarding educational environment, we are also recommending that Illinois focus on placement outside a general classroom less than 21% of the time (LRE code “A” in FACTS) and served in a separate facility, regardless of disability category.

- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in MR
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in SL
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in SLD
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in ED
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in OHI
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in LRE Code “A”
- Proportion of Race/Ethnicity in Separate Facilities

### ***Indicators Not Chosen***

#### Transition Indicators

It was the intent of this team to include critical performance indicators that would measure an LEA’s success in preparing students with disabilities for post-secondary success – both in terms of post-secondary education and employment. However, even though transition results are a very important priority, at this time data do not exist to support them as measurable indicators. With the future collection of social security number for students receiving special education services, as described in *Data Requirements*, ISBE will be able to track actual post-secondary education enrollment and employment data for these students. In addition, the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan defines a 1-, 3-, and 5-year survey of a sample of school leavers to determine the effectiveness of their IEPs and transition plans. Data from both of these sources should be considered in the future in regards to critical performance indicators.

#### Suspensions

Suspension rate was identified as an important indicator by the Task Force, but was not chosen for use as a critical performance indicator. The current quality of suspension data in Illinois, as described in *Local Data Quality*, was found to be inadequate to support its use as a critical performance indicator.

The use of “in-school suspensions” was also a factor in deciding not to use suspension rate as a CPI. There are districts that no longer suspend students, but employ the use of in-school suspensions only. While this is not the same as being suspended outside of school, it is still an action that should be monitored when reviewing an LEA’s

performance regarding student discipline. *Illinois Special Education Policies and Procedures* states that, “Repeated in-school suspension should be examined to ensure that a pattern of removals does not exist.” Inconsistencies were also found in determining whether a student is actually serving an in-school suspension, as explained in *Local Data Quality*.

It is our recommendation that suspension rate should not be considered as a critical performance indicator until the quality of suspension data collected by the State is raised to an acceptable level. Further, a determination must be made regarding whether in-school suspensions should be examined as well, along with a clear understanding among school districts of what constitutes an in-school suspension.

### Expulsions

Expulsion rate was also identified as an important indicator by the Task Force, but was not chosen for use as a critical performance indicator. Expulsions are used very sparingly in Illinois. A study of high school expulsions for the past three reported years (2000 - 2002) shows that students with disabilities and those without disabilities are expelled at a rate of around a quarter of one percent. Further, students with disabilities are expelled at a *lower* rate than students without disabilities. A concerning aspect of the data, however, is that the rates have been gradually increasing for both groups of students for the years mentioned, from .21% to .27% for students with disabilities and from .23% to .28% for those without disabilities.

While expulsion rate is certainly something that ISBE should continue to review at a high level, it does not currently warrant the attention of a special education critical performance indicator. However, should expulsion rates continue to rise in coming years, ISBE should reconsider this position.

**Illinois CPI Benchmarks**

The next step after identifying CPIs is defining uniform benchmarks to which each CPI can be compared. There should be a specific goal for each CPI against which performance can be evaluated. Some of these have been defined in the Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education; some are addressed as Adequate Yearly Progress goals in Illinois’ NCLB Accountability Plan; others have not been defined at all in Illinois. Our approach in determining benchmarks for each CPI includes reviewing both the ICIP and the Accountability Plan, as well as work done by OSEP or other States.

**Graduation Rate and Gap**

The first goal of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education is to increase the Graduation Rate of students with disabilities by 4.5% per year, reaching 90% in 2007. This goal exceeds the AYP goal specified in the State’s NCLB Accountability Plan, as reflected in the comparison below.

School Year	ICIP Goal	AYP Goal
2003	72.0%	65.0%
2004	76.5%	66.0%
2005	81.0%	67.0%
2006	85.5%	69.0%
2007	90.0%	72.0%

As a further point of reference, according to the 2003 Illinois State Report Card, the graduation rate for students with disabilities was 71.5% for 2003, an increase of 2.4% from the 2002 rate of 69.1%. In 2002 (the most recent year for which school-level numbers are available), 286 of 639 schools, or about 45%, reported a graduation rate less than the ICIP goal for 2003.

However, it should be noted that this data includes students with a Section 504 plan. That would suggest that the graduation rate for students receiving special education services (having an IEP) was actually less than 71.5% in 2003 and 69.1% in 2002.

Based on analysis of the information presented above, and considering input from the Project Task Force, we recommend adopting the State’s AYP annual goals as benchmarks for the Graduation Rate indicator.

At this time, it is difficult to determine benchmarks for the gap between special education and general education Graduation Rate. The ICIP does not specify a goal or benchmark. OSEP has prepared a rank ordering of States for the 2000-2001 school year, but uses two different formulas for special education and general education graduation rate: special education uses a percentage of all school leavers, while general education uses a cohort rate based on the Jay Greene study (*High School Graduation Rates in the United States – 2001*). In the absence of a clear precedent for this indicator, our recommendation is to use a rank ordering of all districts and identify those in the lowest 10% (i.e., having the largest gap).

**Dropout Rate**

Dropout Rate is another indicator for which no clear benchmarks have been determined. National figures are computed by OSEP as a percentage of all students with disabilities leaving school, with a National Baseline of 29% (2000-2001 school year). Illinois calculates this rate as a percentage of all students with disabilities enrolled. Neither the ICIP nor Illinois’ NCLB Accountability Plan addresses specific targets with regard to dropout rate.

For these reasons, our recommendation for Dropout Rate is to use a rank ordering of all districts and identify those in the lowest 10% (i.e., having the highest dropout rate).

**Least Restrictive Environment**

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education specifies a goal to “increase by 4.5 percentage points, per year, the number of students with disabilities (3-21) who are provided Free and Appropriate Public Education in general education classrooms (80%+ time) in the school they would attend if not disabled.” It provides a baseline figure of 36.7% for the 1998-1999 school year. However, the ICIP does not specify an ultimate goal, for example, reaching xx% by the year 20xx.

Actual statistics from FACTS show that for the 2002-2003 school years the percentage of students outside of a general education classroom less than 21% was 48.47% for elementary schools (grades pre-K through 8), and 27.77% for high schools (grades 9-12).

It is our recommendation that Illinois use the following benchmarks for students outside the general education classroom less than 21% of the time, using 2002-2003 as the baseline and increasing 4.5% a year. (2002-2003 was the first year grade level was available in FACTS.)

**Benchmarks for Percent of Students Outside the General education classroom less than 21%**

School Year	Elementary Students	High School Students	Resultant Composite*
2002-2003	48.5%	27.5%	43.0%
2003-2004	53.0%	32.0%	47.5%
2004-2005	57.5%	36.5%	52.0%
2005-2006	62.0%	41.0%	56.5%
2006-2007	66.5%	45.5%	61.0%

\*estimated, based on current elementary and high school special education populations.

Placement in separate facilities is the other area identified as a performance indicator for LRE. However, there is no clear goal, either stated in the ICIP or by OSEP, for this indicator. While there is definitely a desire to decrease the percent of students in separate facilities, there seems to be no clear opinion as to what the ideal percentage should be. In the absence of a clear precedent for this indicator, our recommendation is to use a rank ordering of all districts and identify those in the lowest 10% (i.e., having the highest percent) for elementary school students and for high school students.

### **Assessment Participation**

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education does not specify goals for assessment participation. However, the U. S. Department of Education has identified participation in assessments as an area in which schools must meet specific goals for Adequate Yearly Progress, requiring 95% participation for all subgroups.

It is our recommendation that the benchmark for Participation Rate in state assessments be 95%.

### **Assessment Performance**

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education does not specify goals for assessment performance. However, Illinois is using an *equal steps* model for attaining AYP goals for performance on assessments. This model uses 40% as the starting point for students achieving the *meets* or *exceeds* levels for 2003. In 2005 the rate increases to 47.5 and increases annually by 7.5%, reaching 92.5% in 2012. In 2014 it reaches 100%.

It is our recommendation that the benchmarks for Performance on Math and Reading Assessments be the same as the AYP goals specified in Illinois' approved State Accountability Plan.

### **Disproportionality**

As already mentioned, the IDEA specifies that state data be collected by race/ethnicity and significant disproportionality be determined, with respect to both identification and educational environment. However, although this requirement is clear, neither the law nor the implementing regulations specify what criteria should be used to determine significant disproportionality.

As of 2001, twenty-nine states have specific criteria for determining disproportionality — 26 have a single criterion and three have multiple criteria. The most common criteria are a percentage point discrepancy (the number of percentage points more or less than the expected percentage for each disability group) or a significance test (*chi-square*, *z scores*, *t-test* or *confidence intervals*). Other states employ a wide variety of criteria including *odds ratio*, *E-formula*, *equity index*, and other custom formulas.

Regardless of approach, an important factor of determining disproportionality is the school/district size and ethnic/racial composition. Small numbers of students can create very misleading percentages. One technique that addresses this is setting a minimum number of students in a data cell (e.g., population of students classified as MR). If a data cell does not contain at least this many students, disproportionality cannot be determined.

It is our recommendation that the benchmark for all Disproportionality CPIs be a percentage point discrepancy of 10%, both for identification and educational environment. Furthermore, we recommend setting a minimum number of students per data cell, or *n*, of 10.

### Reporting Mechanism

The use of critical performance indicators to identify LEAs most in need of monitoring and of assistance presents a significant dependence on data collection and data analysis. We have addressed issues with data collection under *Local Data Quality*. In this section, we want to address the reporting of critical performance data in a manner that Department of Special Education staff can use to identify districts and cooperatives most in need of attention.

The foundation of a data-driven monitoring system is an integrated database that provides all of the data needed to evaluate CPIs. The *Recommendations* section, later in this report, defines a Special Education Student and School Database. This database is a repository of data that are currently collected in other data systems at ISBE. Special Education Services staff should have direct access to these data for research, analysis, risk assessment and focused monitoring. Initially, this database will contain data collected from School Report Card, Student Assessment, Fall Housing and FACTS. In the future, it will also include post-secondary data (employment and post-secondary education) collected from external data sources.

A series of *CPI Performance Reports* will be created to identify districts that fail to meet established benchmarks or fall into the lowest 10% for a CPI. These Performance Reports will not only identify districts, but also the Special Education Joint Agreements of which they may be a part. A preliminary list of reports to be included in this reporting system include:

- Graduation Rate
- Graduation Rate: Special Education Compared to General Education
- Dropout Rate
- Students Outside of General Education Less Than 21% of the Time
- Students Served in a Separate Educational Facility
- Participation Rate in State Assessment Exams
- Performance on State Math Assessment Exams
- Performance on State Reading Assessment Exams
- Disproportionality of Identification in MR, SL, SLD, ED and OHI
- Disproportionality of LRE Code “A” (<21%) and Separate Facilities

Each of these reports should have various options. For example:

- Include only districts exceeding the benchmark / Include all districts
- Use a preset benchmark / Use a user-defined benchmark (e.g., report districts with assessment participation rate < 85% instead of 95%)
- Use a preset ranking / Use a user-defined ranking (e.g., report the lowest 25% instead of 10%)
- Use a preset *n* size / Use a user-defined *n* size

In addition to the CPI Performance Reports, the monitoring/reporting system will also provide the ability to print monitoring profile reports for specific LEAs. These profiles provide a snapshot of pertinent data to be used by monitors to gain an overall view of how an LEA is performing. A sample of the *Special Education Monitoring Profile* is included in *Appendix C*.

In addition to prewritten, or “canned”, reports, the system must also provide the ability to perform *ad hoc* queries against the database to satisfy unique reporting requirements. This feature will allow Special Education Services staff to respond quickly to unanticipated data requests and to conduct data-driven root cause analysis on a unique, case-by-case basis.

A key characteristic of this system is that it must be flexible. Other states that have moved to a data-driven approach to monitoring LEAs have gone through considerable changes in their methodology as they learn more about the performance of LEAs in their state. The monitoring/reporting system, therefore, must be capable of adapting to those changes. The Special Education Services staff should be able to look at the performance data in various ways, change benchmarks or rank order thresholds, change *n* size, or rank order LEAs by a combination of indicators.



## Section 5

# Data Dissemination Strategy

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This section describes our dissemination strategy for reporting special education performance data to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and the public.

As defined in our proposal, this phase involves the following tasks:

- Finalize the list of data elements required for public dissemination,
- Define a process for deriving data on a regular basis,
- Define a process for disseminating data on a regular basis,
- Review methods and materials used in other states,
- Review formats,
- Solicit input regarding effectiveness of various approaches, and
- Prepare recommendations.

As specified in our project schedule, this section focuses on our recommended dissemination strategy. Prototypes of the various reporting instruments have been developed based on the strategy and design described herein.

Our strategy is centered on the development and implementation of two reporting instruments:

- *The Annual State Report on Special Education Performance*, and
- *The LEA Special Education Profile*.

Both of these reports are described in this section.

### **Critical Performance Indicators**

An initial step in developing a public reporting strategy is the determination of *what* is to be reported. The project team took several sources of information into consideration in making this determination:

- Data required to be reported by the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education (ICIP),
- Critical performance indicators used for risk analysis,
- Task Force input via a CPI survey,
- Data being reported by OSEP, and
- Data being reported by other states.

In addition to these, we also evaluated the current availability and quality of the various data as collected today by ISBE.

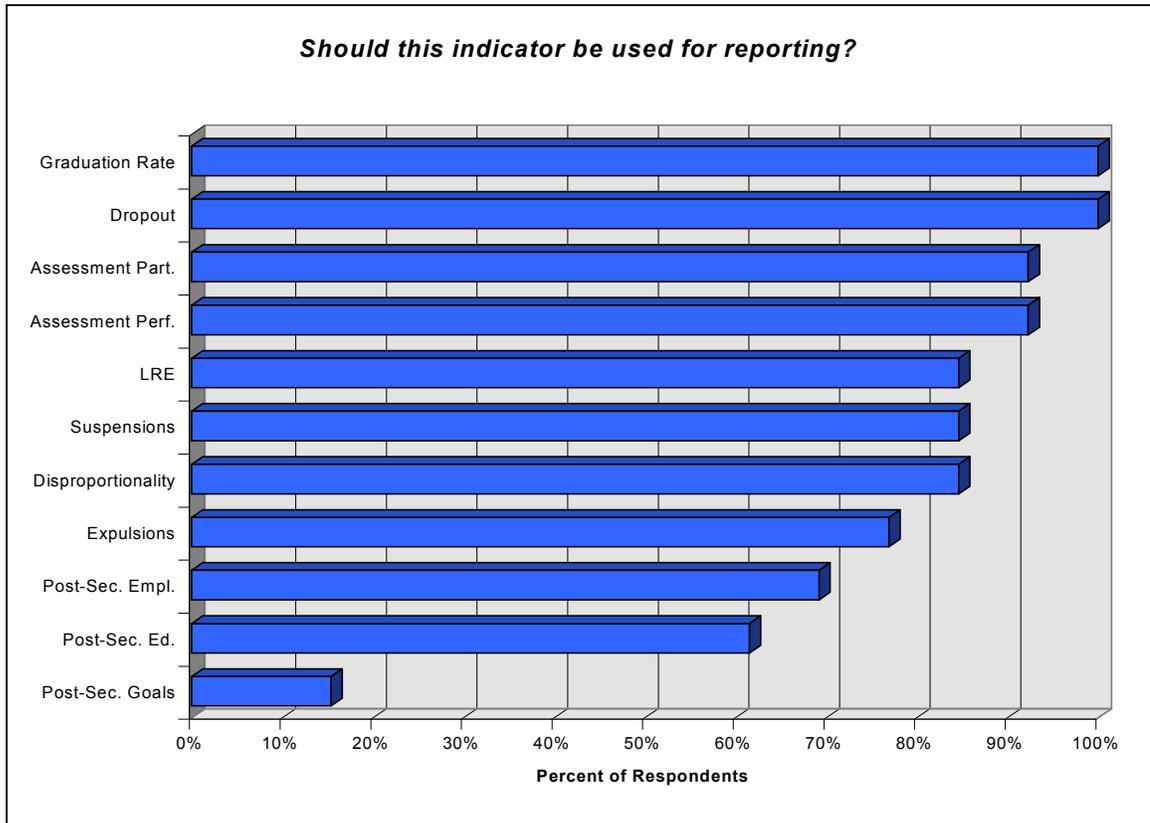
### ***Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan***

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education identifies several data that are to be reported to LEAs and the public. Included in this list are:

- Graduation Rate
- Gap between general education and special education Graduation Rate
- Dropout Rate
- Gap between general education and special education Dropout Rate
- Participation Rate on state assessments
- Performance on state assessments
- Suspension Rate
- Gap between general education and special education Suspension Rate
- Expulsion Rate
- Gap between general education and special education Expulsion Rate
- Least Restrictive Environment data disaggregated by disability and demographic variables
- Participation in transition planning
- Post-secondary employment
- Post-secondary education
- Results of various surveys to be developed by ISBE, including:
  - 1-, 3-, & 5-year survey of a sample of school leavers (graduates, dropouts, and those who age out)
  - Parental involvement, satisfaction and awareness

**CPI Survey**

The *Risk Assessment Methodology* document describes the CPI survey and the results with regard to importance of the indicators and their use for Focused Monitoring. In addition to those aspects, the survey also asked respondents to identify which performance indicators should be used for reporting results to the public. The chart below represents the percent of respondents who identified each performance indicator for use in public reporting.



**Selected Indicators**

The following performance indicators have been identified by the project team to use for reporting to the public on each Annual State Report and the Special Education Profile.

Annual State Report of Special Education Performance

- Incidence Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Dropout Rate
- Expulsion Rate
- Assessment Participation
- Assessment Performance
- Educational Environments (LRE)

### LEA Special Education Profile

- Incidence Rate
- Graduation Rate and Gap
- Dropout Rate
- Assessment Participation
- Assessment Performance
- Educational Environments (LRE)

### ***Future Indicators***

There are additional data that should be included in the reports in the future. Some of these data are not currently available; others currently have data quality issues that need to be addressed before they can be included.

### Post-secondary education experiences of students with disabilities

With the future collection of social security number for students receiving special education services, ISBE will be able to track actual post-secondary education enrollment data for these students. In addition, the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan defines a 1-, 3-, and 5-year survey of a sample of school leavers to determine the effectiveness of their IEPs and transition plans. It is recommended that data from both of these sources be included in future reports.

### Employment of youth with disabilities pre- and post-exiting high school

Results from this indicator will be reported in the same manner as the education data described above.

### Suspension rates for students with disabilities

Currently, suspension data in Illinois is not of a high enough quality to publish in the reports. (This is discussed in *Local Data Quality*.) However, the ICIP specifies that suspension data is to be collected, analyzed and reported, both at a rate for special education students and as a gap between special education and general education students. It is recommended that the results of this critical performance indicator be included in the reports when valid suspension data is collected in the future, either via a new data collection instrument or the new ISBE Student Information System.

### Parental Involvement

Under Goal 4 of the ICIP, it states that “ISBE will provide for the development and implementation of a survey instrument (measuring such items as participation, involvement, satisfaction, knowledge and awareness).” The information gathered from this survey is to be disseminated to LEAs and the public. It is recommended that the results of this survey be included in future reports as they become available.

## Annual State Report on Special Education Performance

The Annual State Report is a document that will be created each year to show how the State is performing on special education Critical Performance Indicators (CPIs). This report will be published in the form of a booklet that will be available from ISBE, as well as being available online via the ISBE web site. There will also be an automatic mailing to specific groups who should receive the report each year. *Appendix D* contains a preliminary list of those recipients.

The Report will consist of the following sections:

1. A message from the State Director of Special Education
2. Three sections of charts
  - Background Section
    - i) Percentage of students receiving special education services
    - ii) Breakdown by disability category
    - iii) Race/ethnicity proportionality
  - High School Completion Section
    - i) High school graduation rate
    - ii) High school dropout rate
    - iii) High school expulsion rate
  - Student Performance Section
    - i) Participating in State testing
    - ii) Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)
    - iii) Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)
    - iv) Performing or Attaining on the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA)
    - v) Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the State reading tests – current year (by grade) and comparison of the past three years (all grades combined)
    - vi) Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the State math tests – current year (by grade) and comparison of the past three years (all grades combined)
    - vii) Meeting or Exceeding Standards on the State writing tests – current year (by grade) and comparison of the past three years (all grades combined)
  - Educational Environment Section
    - i) Placement in various educational environments
    - ii) Placement by disability – five highest incidence disabilities
    - iii) Placement by race/ethnicity
3. Glossary of Terms

Each chart section will begin with a section title page that will include:

- Description of what the section contains and its significance
- Desired results in this section
- High level observations concerning the data in this section, e.g., “The percent of students receiving special education services in an integrated educational setting is increasing annually,” or, “The graduation rate of students with disabilities continues to climb annually.”

Each page containing a chart will include:

- a chart title,
- the chart,
- a brief analysis of what the chart shows (one-two sentences), and
- additional information as required.

The following pages provide samples of the various types of pages in the Report. *None of this sample data should be considered as actual results.*

A complete sample of the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance* is included in *Appendix A*.

## Sample Message from the Director

### Message from the State Director

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

In order to improve results, parents, teachers, administrators and the public need to first know how we are doing in terms of progress and results. This first in a series of annual reports is provided to ensure that you are regularly informed of how we are doing as a state. Information about how individual schools, districts, and special education cooperatives are doing on critical performance indicators is also available on our Web site, [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net), in the form of Special Education Profiles.

We at the State Board of Education hope this document will be informative and useful to you. Please contact us with your comments and suggestions.

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

## Sample Section Overview Page

### High School Completion

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

#### Desired Results:

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

#### Observations:

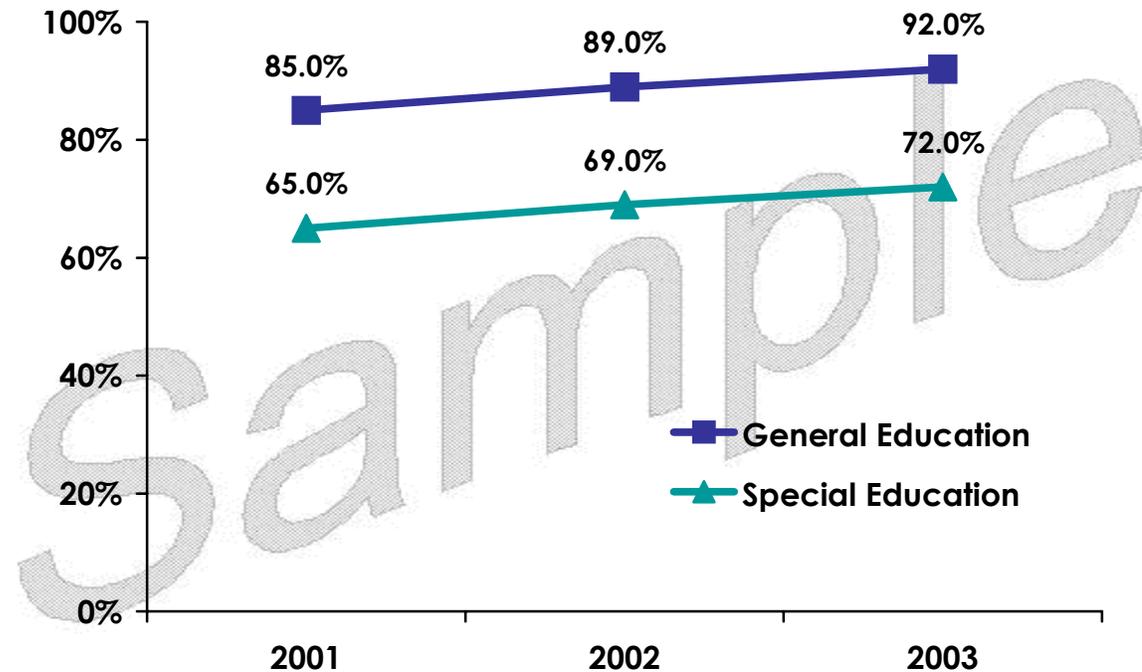
Below are some *sample* observations that could apply to the information presented in this section.

- The graduation rate of students with disabilities continued to climb with xx.x% of these high school students graduating in the spring of 2003.
- The dropout rate for students receiving special education services has been more than [x amount] the dropout rate for students in general education for the past two years.
- The rate of expulsion for students with disabilities remains low and continues to be lower than for the general education population.

Sample Chart Page

### High School Graduation Rate – 2001-2003

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



Although increasing every year, the Graduation Rate for students receiving special education services continues to lag behind that of students in general education, and the gap between the two is not closing.

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

## Sample Glossary

### Glossary

A glossary of terms will be provided at the back of the booklet. Below is a sampling of some of the items that should be included in the 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 2004 State testing.
- **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.
- **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.

Definitions of each of the thirteen disability categories could also be included here.

### **LEA Special Education Profile**

Special Education Profiles allow the reader to view how a school, district or special education cooperative is performing on critical performance indicators. While much of this data is available via other sources, such as the School Report Card, the Profile allows the reader to conveniently access all of the special education performance information in one place.

Special Education Profiles are available at the school level and can be aggregated to the district and cooperative levels. Not all data, such as FACTS information, is yet available at the school level. (FACTS currently tracks students by district only.) However, the vast majority of the data elements below are currently available at the school level, and this project team has made recommendations that would allow for the remaining data to be available by school.

Special Education Profiles will be accessed via the ISBE web site, similar to the manner in which the School Report Card is viewed. Due to the various sources from which the performance data are obtained, the Profiles will not be available until sometime after the School Reports Cards are completed. Local data will be displayed along with statewide numbers for comparison purposes. In addition to school year-specific information, the Profiles will also include historical results for certain variables so trends can be observed.

The Special Education Profiles will be comprised of four sections:

1. Background Data
2. School Completion
3. Student Performance
4. Educational Environment

A sample of the *LEA Special Education Profile* is included in *Appendix B*.

#### **Background Data**

Background data contains background or status information regarding the LEA, such as size and demographic makeup. It also provides data that reflect prevalence, or proportionality, by race/ethnicity for the identification of children as children with disabilities.

#### **Student Population**

This refers to the total student population, number and percent of students with disabilities and total by race/ethnicity.

#### **Special Education Population**

This refers to the special education population broken down by race/ethnicity and by disability category.

### ***School Completion***

This section of the Profile provides information on indicators of school completion, specifically relating to graduation and dropout.

#### Graduation Rate

This will include the percent of students receiving special education services who earned a standard diploma over the last three years compared to the State average, as well as a comparison to the percent of students in general education who earned a standard diploma.

#### Dropout Rate

This will include the dropout rate of students receiving special education services over the last three years compared to the State average, as well as a comparison to the dropout rate of students in general education. Dropout rate is calculated as a percentage of all students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out.

### ***Student Performance***

This section of the Profile provides information on indicators related to the State assessments, including participation in the tests and actual performance.

#### Assessment Participation

This refers to the percent of students receiving special education services who participated in the State tests for the past three years compared to the State average.

#### Assessment Performance

This refers to the percent of students with disabilities who performed at the Meet Standards and Exceed Standards levels on the ISAT and PSAE tests, compared with their non-disabled peers and the State average. To obtain these results all the grades tested and all subjects will be added together.

IAA results will be presented broken down by grade and by subject with a comparison to State averages.

This will also include the percent of students with disabilities who performed at the Meet Standards and Exceed Standards levels in reading, mathematics and writing compared with their non-disabled peers and the State average, over the last three years. All of the grades tested will be added together.

### ***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. Educational environment information will be presented in the following manner:

The percent of students receiving special education services in the following settings:

## Special Education Student and School Data Study

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- Outside of the general classroom less than 21% of the time
- Outside of the general classroom 21%-60% of the time
- Outside of the general classroom more than 60% of the time
- In a separate educational facility

This data will be displayed:

- For all students receiving special education services,
- By disability category, and
- By race/ethnicity.



## Section 6

# Recommendations

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The following are recommended courses of action that address current deficiencies in data quality, provide new data that are unavailable today, improve the effectiveness of the Special Education Services Division, or fulfill the requirements of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education.

### **R1: Create a Special Education Student and School Database**

ISBE should develop a Special Education Student and School Database. This proposed database should be used as a repository of data that are currently collected in various other data systems. The purpose of such a database would be to put data that are required for research, analysis, risk management and focused monitoring at the disposal of the Special Education Services staff. This database would collect and align special education key performance indicators in a single source, providing data for reporting progress on those indicators to key stakeholders.

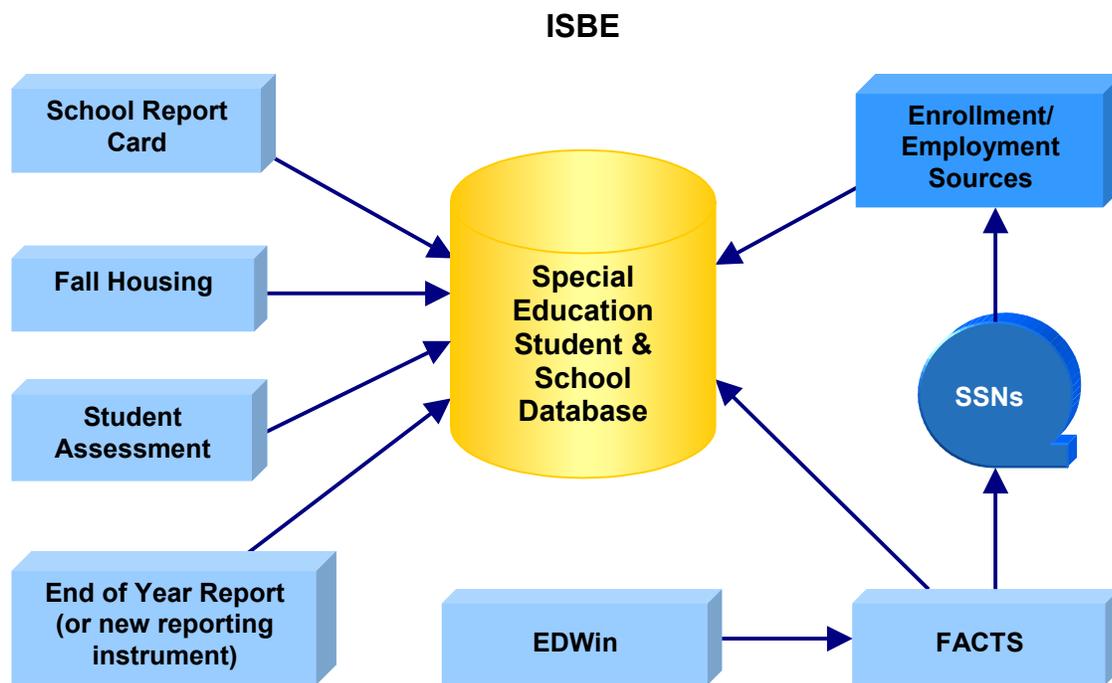
It is intended that such a database would not collect data at a student level, but rather, at the school, or building, level. Data would be disaggregated at the lowest level possible. For example, disaggregation by ethnicity and disability category would be available where the data currently support it.

A goal of this database is to provide access to special education data without requiring the completion and submission of new data collection instruments. It is expected that current data sources, along with the implementation of the recommendations included in this document, will provide adequate data for the purposes of continuous improvement, focused monitoring and public reporting of special education performance indicators.

This recommendation is based on the current sources of data pertinent to special education. It is expected that the eventual development and full implementation of the ISBE Student Information System (ISBE SIS) will provide a superior source of special education data than is available today.

The diagram on the following page graphically depicts the proposed database.

**Special Education Student and School Database**



**R2: Develop a Special Education Monitoring / Reporting System**

The Special Education Monitoring / Reporting System described in *Risk Assessment Methodology* should be developed, building on the Special Education Student and School Database. This system should provide the following features:

- CPI Performance Reports, showing how LEAs performed and ranked according to the Illinois Critical Performance Indicators,
- LEA Monitoring Profile Report, and
- Ad hoc reporting capabilities.

Once implemented, this system should be directly available to Special Education Services staff for research, analysis, risk assessment and focused monitoring.

**R3: Develop and publish the annual special education reports**

This study defined two reports to be created annually to report special education performance data to the public: the *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance*, and the individual *LEA Special Education Profiles*. The actual process to create these reports on an annual basis should be developed and implemented. This will included the collection of all required data into the Special Education Student and School Database and the development of the reports themselves. A review process should be implemented to address quality control of the reports before dissemination to

the public. Production logistics should be addressed, including the physical production of the Annual Report booklet, as well as all aspects of publishing the reports to the ISBE web site.

### **R4. Develop and implement a statewide training program**

The most common, overarching need that we have identified in this study, as pertaining to the quality of special education data, is the need to conduct comprehensive training for all individuals responsible for providing special education data to the State. It was determined during this study that there are LEAs whose staff do not always understand the reporting criteria and data definitions involved with the various data collection instruments. Consequently, they may submit data that are technically error-free, in the sense that they do not generate validation errors, but are inaccurate.

On the other hand, there were other cooperatives and districts that had very high quality data. A common trait that these LEAs shared was that they provided training to their staff and, in the case of cooperatives, their member districts' staff.

The training that we are recommending is not focused on how to use the software (EDWin, FACTS, etc.). Nor does it address claims or reimbursements. Rather, it is centered on special education performance indicators and the collection of quality data to support the activities outlined in this report.

Developing this training program effectively first requires an understanding of the underlying objectives and principles to be achieved. In particular, we recommend that the training approach include the following attributes:

1. The training should be practical as well as theoretical. It should not use a lecture-based approach only, nor should it utilize hypothetical or sample data. Trainees (e.g., special education directors, data entry clerks, etc.) should have access to their own data during training. Special education cooperative staff should be able to look at profiles of the actual schools and students they serve.
2. The training should take place in the context of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan. ISBE staff should explain how it is modeling good practices in the manner in which it organizes and analyzes data for continuous improvement in order to persuade local staff that they need to shift their thinking.
3. The training material should include a manual that includes each data form that affects special education, a set of clear definitions and examples, and an explanation of how ISBE will use this data. The latter cannot be ignored. A better understanding of the purpose of the data will contribute to overall higher quality data.
4. The training should correlate the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan with the other State NCLB and School Improvement requirements. Connections with career and technical education, State testing, reimbursement, etc. should also be obvious to the trainees.

5. The content of these training sessions should parallel the critical performance indicators used by the State in its focused monitoring process as well as public reports. Once those decisions are made, the objectives for the training and the content of the training can be developed.
6. A significant emphasis in the training should be how to understand and communicate continuous improvement data to others. For example, training on State assessment needs to go beyond how to provide accurate data. Directors need to understand how to interpret the data if they are going to use it for improvement. Such an understanding will become more critical as AYP academic achievement goals for students with disabilities become more demanding. Part of the focus of this training will be to illustrate to special education directors how they can use this new knowledge in leveraging local resources to help students with IEPs.
7. The training should be done regionally. This could be accomplished using Regional Offices of Education, special education cooperatives, large districts that are also cooperatives, such as Rockford, or a combination of these. There are several reasons for this. First, the director and at least two or three other staff need to attend to build a core of local understanding. Second, many regional issues can be better exposed and dealt with in smaller groups —JAMP, for example, is different from Rockford or Niles. Third, if local personnel have access to their own data (see point 1), training staff need time to circulate and work with individuals and small groups.
8. To successfully execute number 7, above, a *train the trainer* model is recommended. Regional trainers would be trained centrally in Springfield or in two or three distributed locations throughout the state. This would lessen the burden of centralized trainers having to repeat sessions at such a large number of sites.
9. A helpdesk should be established so that questions can be answered (via phone or e-mail) after the training has occurred. Such an approach should also be used to gather information to clarify training materials, definitions and directions, and to shape future training efforts. District and co-op staff need to understand that the proposed training is just one component of the support available from ISBE to aid them in improving the quality and accuracy of the data they are reporting.
10. This training should be used to thoroughly explain focused monitoring and how this approach by ISBE should benefit LEAs. By focusing on specific performance indicators, LEAs can be targeted for specific technical assistance that will meet the unique needs of the district or cooperative. As Illinois moves toward a focused monitoring approach, LEAs should understand the implications of the data they are providing – the data will be analyzed and various types of interventions could occur as a result of the data. Subsequent training can provide examples based on past experiences.
11. Regional training sessions should be scheduled for three consecutive years and should be mandatory. To lessen the burden on LEA staff, each training session should only last for one day. The number of these one-day sessions that take

place annually will depend on the final list of training objectives. (ISBE may wish to consider tying this training to Continuing Education Units and/or Administrator Academy credit). During this three-year period, ISBE can inquire to see if various universities or Regional Offices of Education could continue this effort.

### **R5: Implement cross-system edit checks**

There are several data elements that are collected at various points in time from various sources or data collection instruments. For example, the School Report Card collects information on students with disabilities who graduate and (in the future) dropout of school – data that is also collected in FACTS. The new demographic sheets used for State assessments contain counts of children with IEPs for each grade being tested, on the first day of testing. Similar counts are also available in FACTS.

For all such data, an automated crosscheck between the appropriate systems should be implemented to validate the data. The key here is that these edits only need show that the numbers are “reasonably” close. For most (if not all) of these situations, there are factors that may prevent an exact match. For example, the demographic information collected for the state assessments represents enrollment data as of the first day of state testing. FACTS data may not account for all students who have exited or enrolled since the last FACTS count date, but there should be no large discrepancies. A level of tolerance should be determined, perhaps individually based on each specific data element edited.

Once such a system is implemented, Special Education Services staff should review the results of the data. LEAs that show wide discrepancies in data reported via various reporting systems should be monitored to try to determine the cause of the differences. A review of this data should also be included when monitoring an LEA.

In addition to the primary goal of improving data quality, this recommendation is also intended to identify processes or misunderstandings that lead to inconsistent data, and to convey to LEAs that the data they submit are being reviewed and analyzed.

### **R6: Redesign the process for collecting suspension data**

It has already been determined that the End of Year Report will no longer be used to collect suspension data disaggregated for students with disabilities. That being the case, a new process to collect this information should be designed. The solution should satisfy the following requirements:

- A process should be used to collect this information as it occurs throughout the school year instead of requiring administrators to go through records at the end of the school year.
- The instrument to collect this data should be Web-based and incorporated into the IWAS architecture.
- School administrators should be made aware that this information is important to the State, it is required by OSEP, participation is not optional, and data accuracy is essential.

- A review process should be implemented that audits this information to encourage compliance.
- The data should be verified when special education monitoring visits are conducted.

### **R7: Eliminate the Transition Data Collection Form**

The Transition Data Collection form should be eliminated. Transition data are important, the Illinois School Code requires that the information be collected and sent to Transition Planning Committees, and the Illinois Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Act defines the establishment and responsibilities of TPCs. However, the current process is not working, and the problems, as described in *Local Data Quality*, are many. Eliminating this form, at least in its current format, sends a positive message to LEAs regarding ISBE's approach to collecting and using special education data: the data that *are* being collected are important and are being used, and data that are *not* being used will not be collected.

ISBE should make it a priority to study this issue and develop an alternate approach to transition data by the spring of 2004. All aspects should be examined, including:

- the ultimate objectives of this process,
- the value of using TPCs (in their current form) to accomplish those objectives,
- the best manner in which to collect required data, and
- current relevance of the appropriate sections of the Illinois School Code, the Disabled Persons Rehabilitation Act, and other pertinent statutes or code.

As there are several interested parties involved in transition issues, (STEP, TOTAL, ISAC, IDHS, etc.) this process should include a Task Force with representatives from all of these groups and should attempt to develop a new, effective approach that is agreeable to all parties. ISBE must take the lead in this effort.

### **R8: Develop an EDWin data entry form**

A best practice observed at several special education cooperatives and districts is the use of a data entry form that captures, from the IEP, the information required for entry into EDWin. ISBE, with perhaps participation from The Harrisburg Project, should prepare a template data entry form and make it available on their Web site, along with detailed instructions and examples. Such a form should be designed to reflect the data as it is entered into EDWin, using the same codes and terminology. The format of the form should also reflect the format of the EDWin screens used for this process.

The introduction of this form and its proper use should be included in the training described in Recommendation 4, above. It should be encouraged during training that this form should be completed by special education professionals such as psychologists, caseworkers or co-op staff, who are familiar with the IEP process and, ideally, with the individual student's case.

### **R9: Identify students with IEPs on the School Report Card**

The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education requires the ability to identify graduation rates of special education students and compare that to graduation rates of general education students. Illinois' NCLB accountability plan also requires AYP for students with disabilities, not to include 504, for graduation rate and attendance rate. To facilitate these requirements, the School Report Card should be changed for the 2003-2004 school year to collect **attendance**, **absence** and **graduation** data for students with IEPs separately from those with 504 plans. The instructions should be updated likewise, and all schools should be notified of the change in a timely manner.

### **R10: Update the Report Card instructions for reporting graduation data**

The instructions for the School Report Card Data Collection Form should be updated to explain the procedure for recording students whose IEP status has changed during their high school career when determining graduation rate (Item 9 on the 2003 Report Card). For example, a student may have had an IEP as a freshman, but not as a graduating senior, or vice versa.

The correct manner in which to handle this is to count students in the transfer in or out categories, as appropriate, when their IEP status changes. For example, if a student had an IEP as a freshman, but not as a graduating senior, that student should be counted in 9.A (original freshmen) and 9.C (transfers out). Likewise, a student that was not in special education as a freshman but was as a graduate, should be counted in 9.B (graduates) and 9.D (transfers in). (Although out of the scope of this project, this situation also exists for other subgroups, including LEP, Migrant, and Free/Reduced-Price Lunch.)

### **R11: Add new fields to FACTS, make District ID required**

Social security number and home (sending) school should be added to the FACTS pupil file. Social security number cannot be required, but schools should ask for it when registering students. Home school should be a required field.

Both of these fields are currently in EDWin. The system should be modified to include these fields when creating the FACTS pupil records from EDWin. Districts or special education cooperatives that do not use EDWin, such as District 299, will be required to include these fields when creating their FACTS pupil records.

A new field to store the ISBE SIS student ID will also be required as part of the ISBE SIS project. This field will need to be added to both EDWin and FACTS.

In addition to these new fields, District ID should be changed from an optional field to a required field. As described in *Data Requirements*, this will facilitate the process of matching FACTS records to the new ISBE SIS.

**R12: Implement procedure to obtain post-secondary results**

The Special Education Services Division should work with the Career Development & Preparation Division to obtain actual post-secondary outcome information. Using student social security numbers obtained as mentioned above, Special Education Services should include these numbers in the files that Career Development & Preparation currently sends to external sources for matching against college and university enrollment databases and employment and wages databases.

As already mentioned, ISBE cannot require that parents provide social security numbers for their children. However, Career Development & Preparation has been fairly successful in obtaining enough SSNs in their data system, ISIS, to provide meaningful information, and we feel that Special Education Services should be able to replicate those results.

## Section 7

# Personnel Impact

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The Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan represents a major change in the expectations of how ISBE special education staff collect, manage and organize data for school improvement for students with disabilities. The implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report will have a direct impact on the current staff in the Special Education Services Division, requiring new staff to handle the additional work effort.

We are proposing a three-person team to handle the additional work that will result from the implementation of these recommendations. It may be possible to implement some of the recommendations with a smaller team if several recommendations are not accepted.

This team should have a team leader who is knowledgeable in special education as well as data collection, analysis and reporting. This person should also possess excellent interpersonal skills that will make him or her successful in coordinating work with other divisions within ISBE, as well as external entities (IDHS, OSEP, etc.).

Two individuals would assist the team leader. One person should be technically skilled in maintaining an integrated database and the software needed to support the Special Education Student and School Database, and the Monitoring/Reporting System. This individual must also have the ability to find, organize and report data. This individual has to be knowledgeable in working with computer files and large databases. Ideally, this individual should also possess some knowledge about special education.

The third person of this team should be an analyst who can write about the data in terms of both statewide reports and policy analyses. This person may also work in developing or enhancing training programs. This individual should have some background in special education and ideally, assessment.

The team will be responsible for the following tasks. It is key that all of these tasks be performed by staff in the Special Education Services Division who report to the division administrator and the Director of Special Education.

- maintain the Special Education Student and School Database
- perform cross-system edits checks of data quality
- generate monitoring reports for the Special Education Services staff
- assist staff with *ad hoc* reporting
- generate the LEA Special Education Profiles and post to the Web
- create the Annual State Report on Special Education Performance
  - collect the data
  - prepare the appropriate charts
  - write copy, including observations on the data



- obtain all appropriate input and approval
- oversee the physical production (printing, binding, etc.)
- oversee and facilitate distribution
- publish to the Web

## Appendix A – Sample Annual State Report

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The following is a sample of the proposed *Annual State Report on Special Education Performance*.

## Message from the State Director

The following is a sample message that would be provided at the beginning of the Report:

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

In order to improve results, parents, teachers, administrators and the public need to first know how we are doing in terms of progress and results. This first in a series of annual reports is provided to ensure that you are regularly informed of how we are doing as a state. Information about how individual schools, districts, and special education cooperatives are doing on critical performance indicators is also available on our Web site, [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net), in the form of Special Education Profiles.

We at the State Board of Education hope this document will be informative and useful to you. Please contact us with your comments and suggestions.

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

## Background Information

The following pages provide background information useful to understand 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.

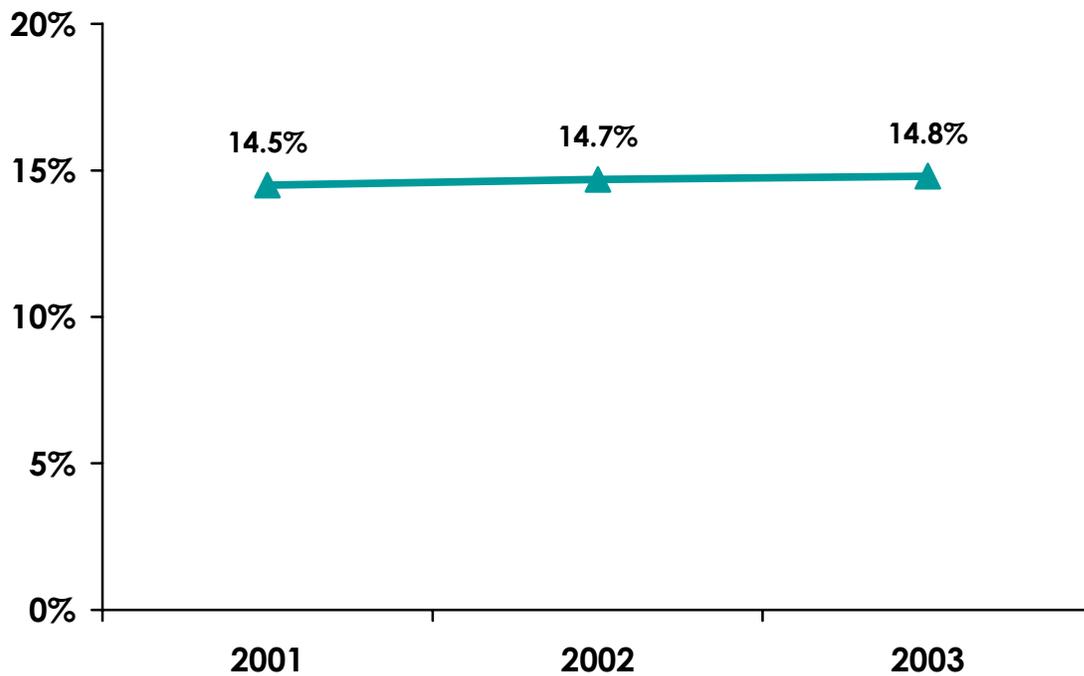
### **Observations:**

Below are some *sample* observations that could apply to the information presented in this section.

- The percent of Illinois students receiving special education services has increased slightly over the last three years, from 14.5% to 14.8%.
- During this time period, the incidence rates of the four highest incidence disability categories have declined, while the incidence rate of Other Health Impaired has steadily increased.
- Both white and African American students are slightly over represented among students receiving special education services, while Hispanic and Asian students are under represented.

## What percent of Illinois students are receiving special education services?

The chart below includes students in all disability categories over the past three years.



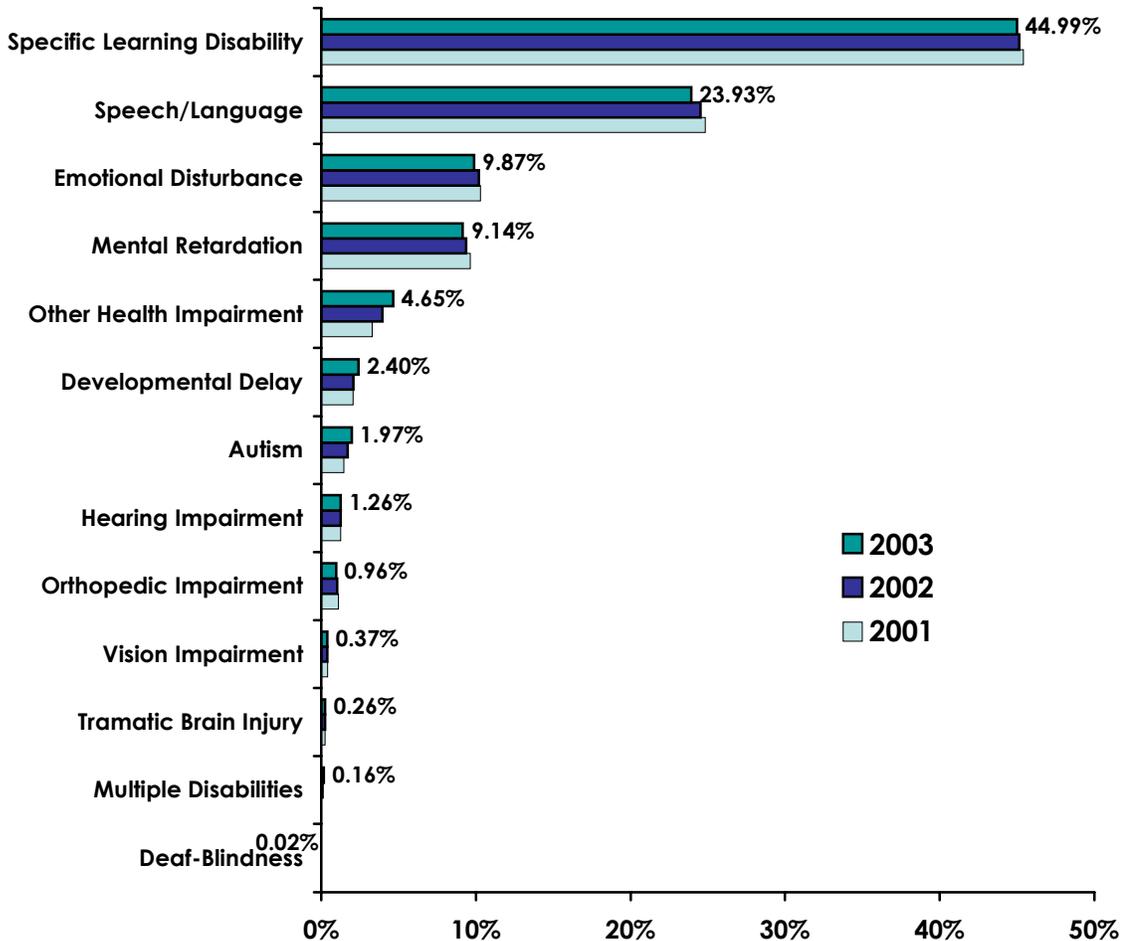
*2000-2001: 2,048,792 total students; 297,316 students with disabilities*  
*2001-2002: 2,071,391 total students; 305,997 students with disabilities*  
*2002-2003: 2,084,187 total students; 310,260 students with disabilities*

Put brief analysis here, e.g.:

**This chart illustrates that the percent of Illinois students receiving special education services has increased slightly over the last three years.**

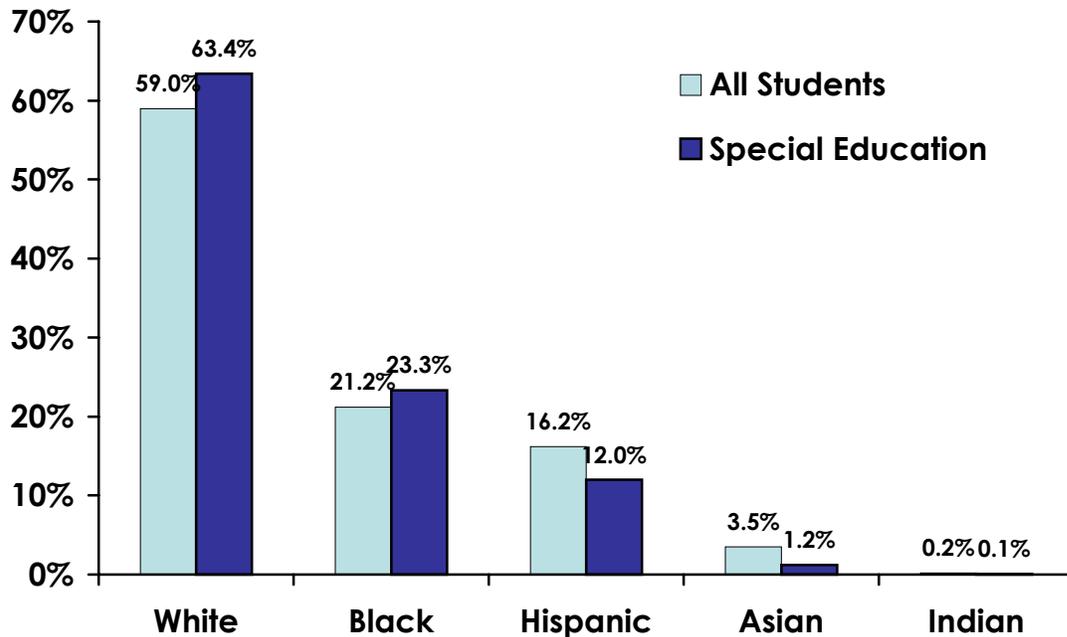
## What percent of students receiving special education services is identified for each disability category?

This chart compares the percent of students receiving special education services in each disability category for the past three years.



## What is the race/ethnicity distribution of students receiving special education services?

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



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

## High School Completion

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

### Desired Results:

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

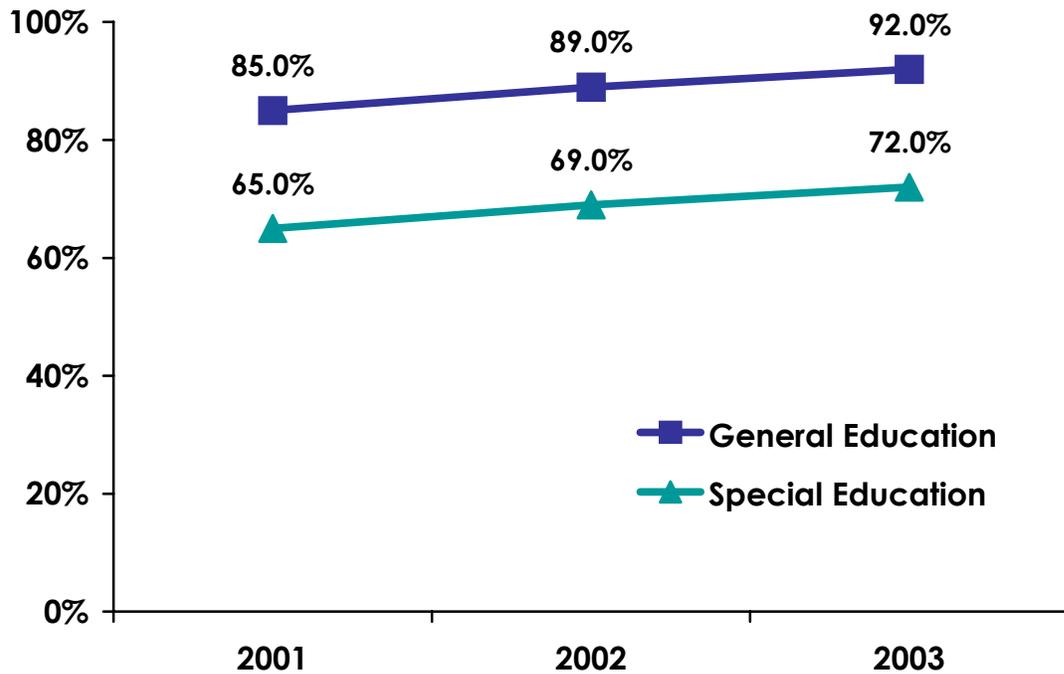
### Observations:

Below are some *sample* observations that could apply to the information presented in this section.

- The graduation rate of students with disabilities continued to climb with 71.5% of these high school students graduating in the spring of 2003.
- The dropout rate for students receiving special education services has been more than double the dropout rate for students in general education for the past two years.
- The rate of expulsion for students with disabilities remains low and continues to be lower than for the general education population.

## High School Graduation Rate – 2001-2003

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



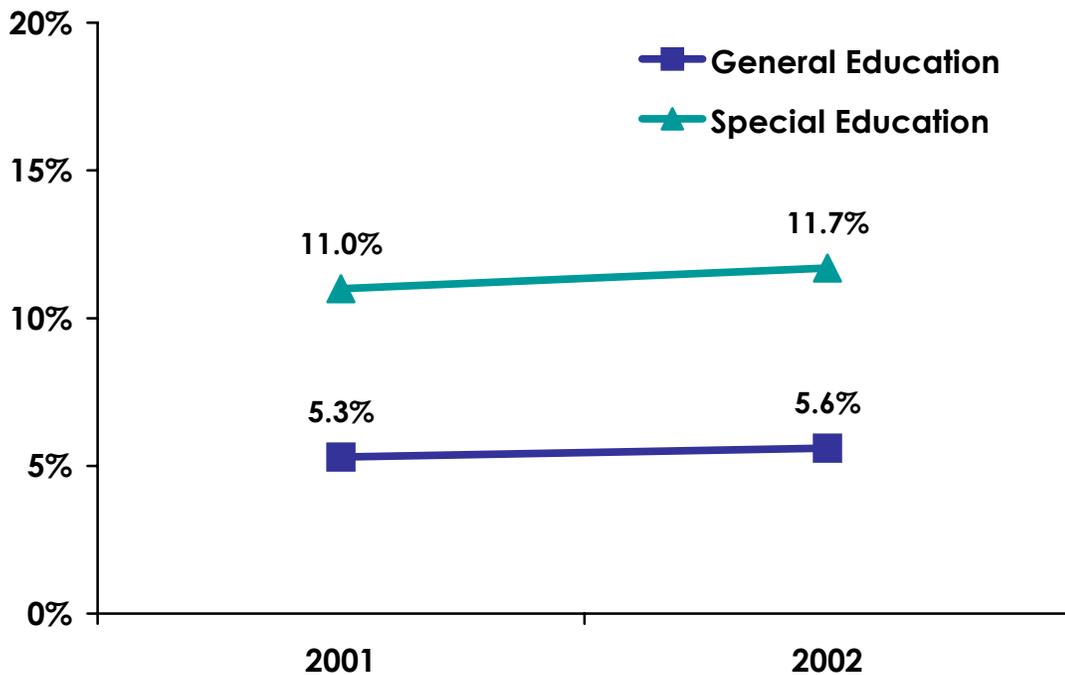
**Although increasing every year, the Graduation Rate for students receiving special education services continues to lag behind that of students in general education, and the gap between the two is not closing.**

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

## High School Dropout Rate - 2001-2002

A **Dropout** is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school, or who did not re-enroll as expected in the fall.

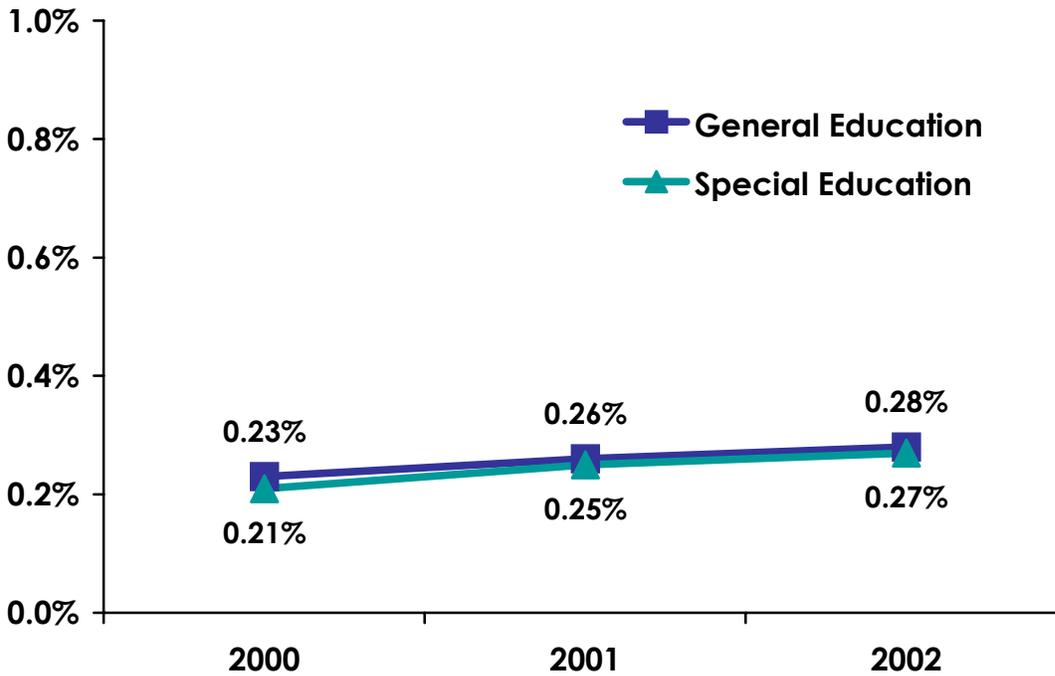
**Dropout Rate** is calculated as a percentage of all students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out.



The dropout rate for students receiving special education services has been more than double the dropout rate for students in general education for the past two years.

## High School Expulsion Rate - 2000-2002

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



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

## Student Performance

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

### Desired Results:

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

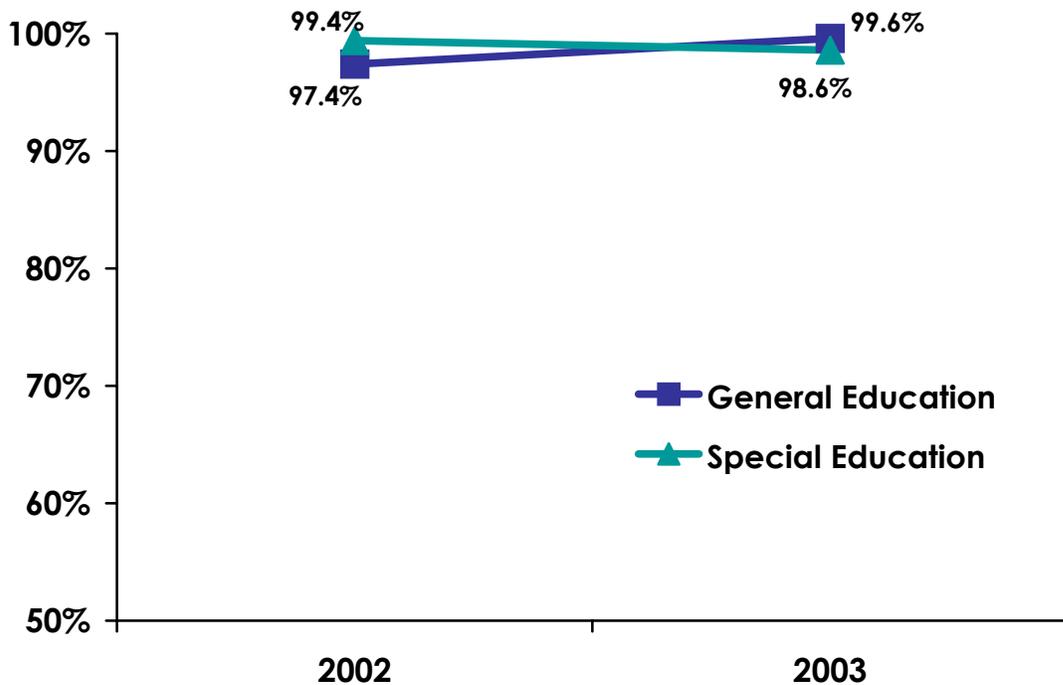
### Observations:

Below are some *sample* observations that could apply to the information presented in this section.

- Students receiving special education services continue to participate in state sponsored assessments at a very high rate with almost 99% of these students taking a state test. This participation rate includes those students who take the Illinois Alternate Assessment.
- 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 math while reading results remained stable.
- In high school, both groups of students declined in their knowledge of Illinois Learning Standards as measured by the Prairie State Assessment Examination. Of particular note is the drop in reading scores of students receiving special education services.

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

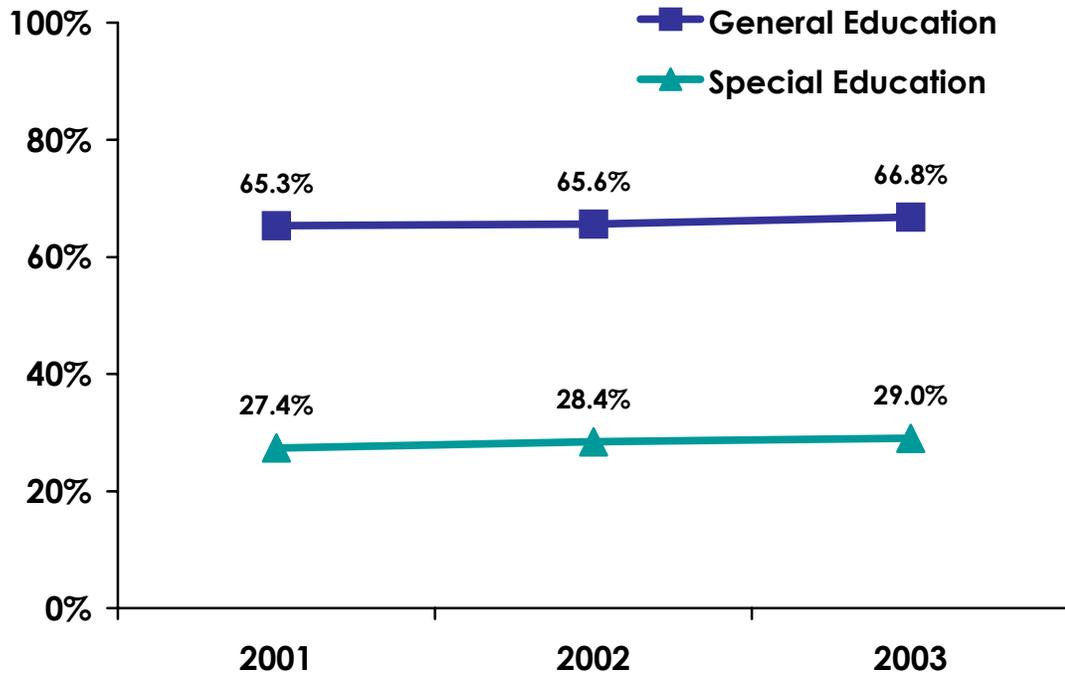
Participation rate includes students who take the ISAT, PSAE, IMAGE or IAA assessments, as reported on the Illinois State Report Card. The 2002 school year was the first year that participation rate was recorded for students with disabilities.



Put brief analysis here.

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

This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies; all grades tested.

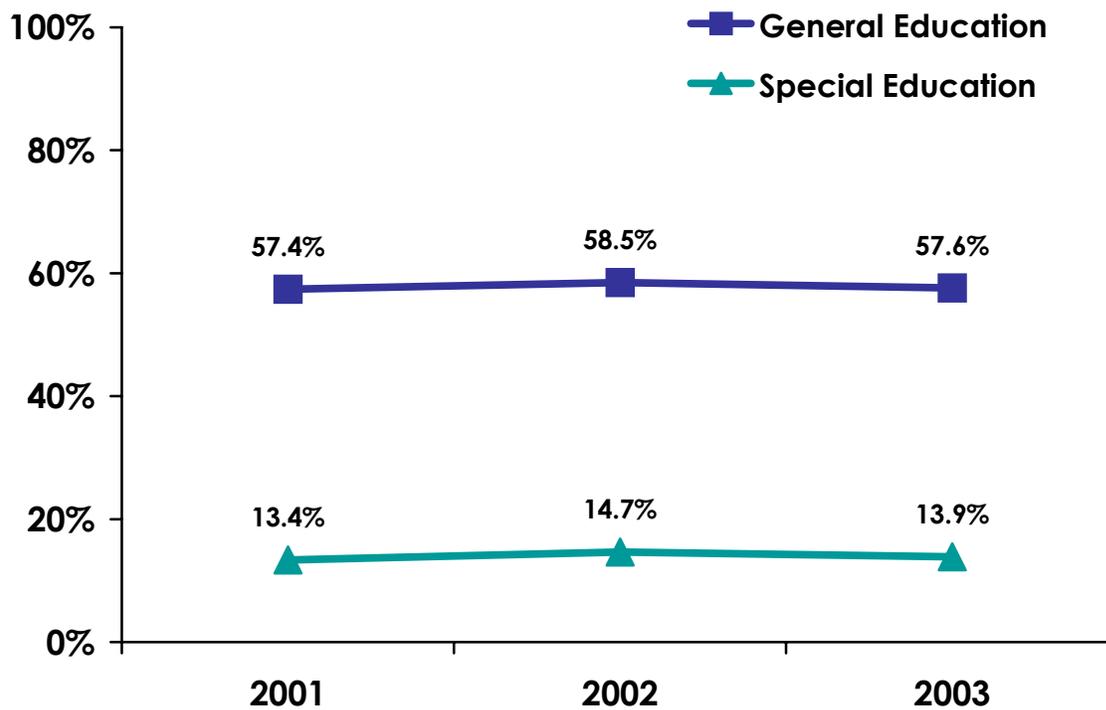


Put brief analysis here.

Note: Dr. Robert Linn (2002) and other researchers state that the combination of these scores across grades and tests provides the most valid indicator of the academic status of a school.

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

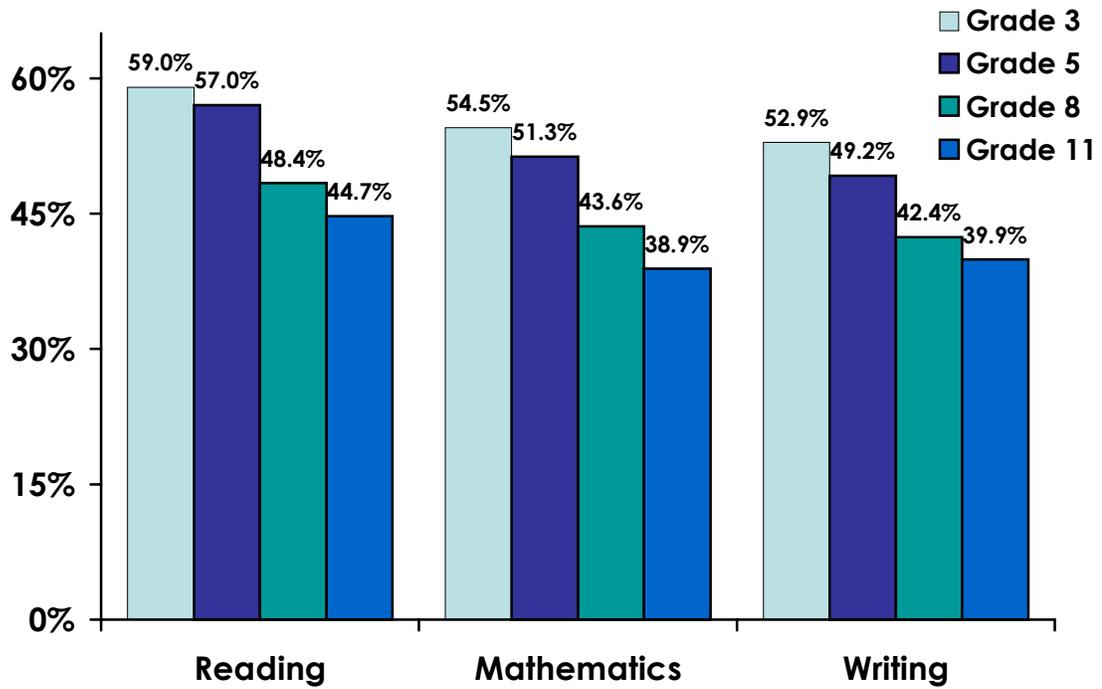
This chart illustrates the percent of students performing at “Meet Standards” or “Exceed Standards”. Combined score: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.



Put brief analysis here.

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

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

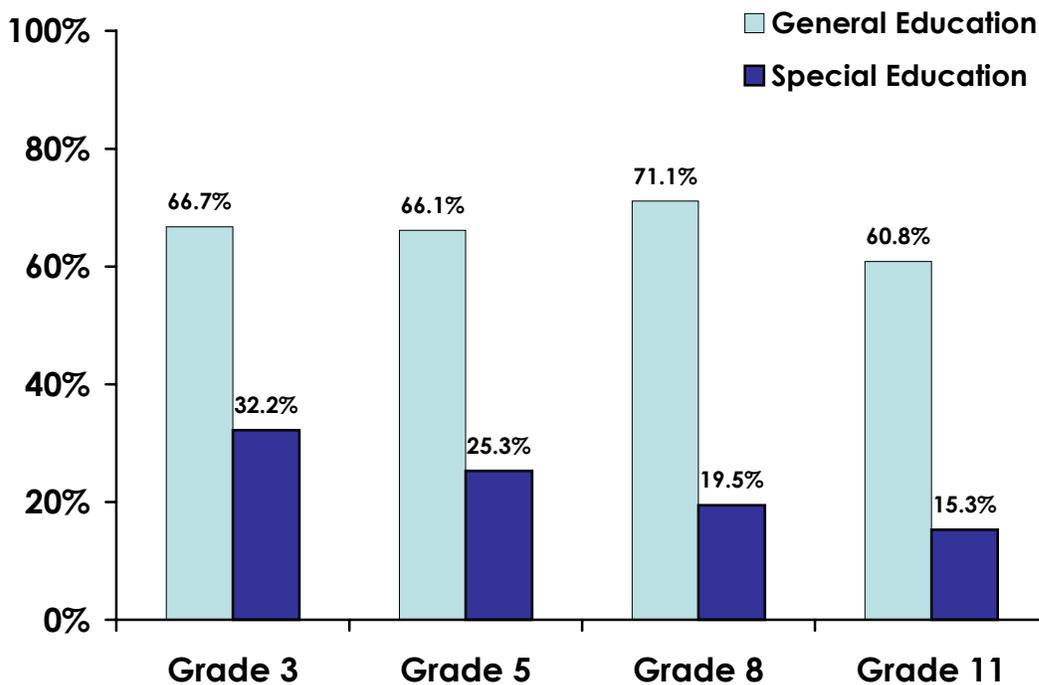


Put brief analysis here.

The data in the following charts reflect the tests required by No Child Left Behind. In these charts one can focus on a particular subject area across multiple grades for the most recent school year, and combined for all grades for the last three school years.

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

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

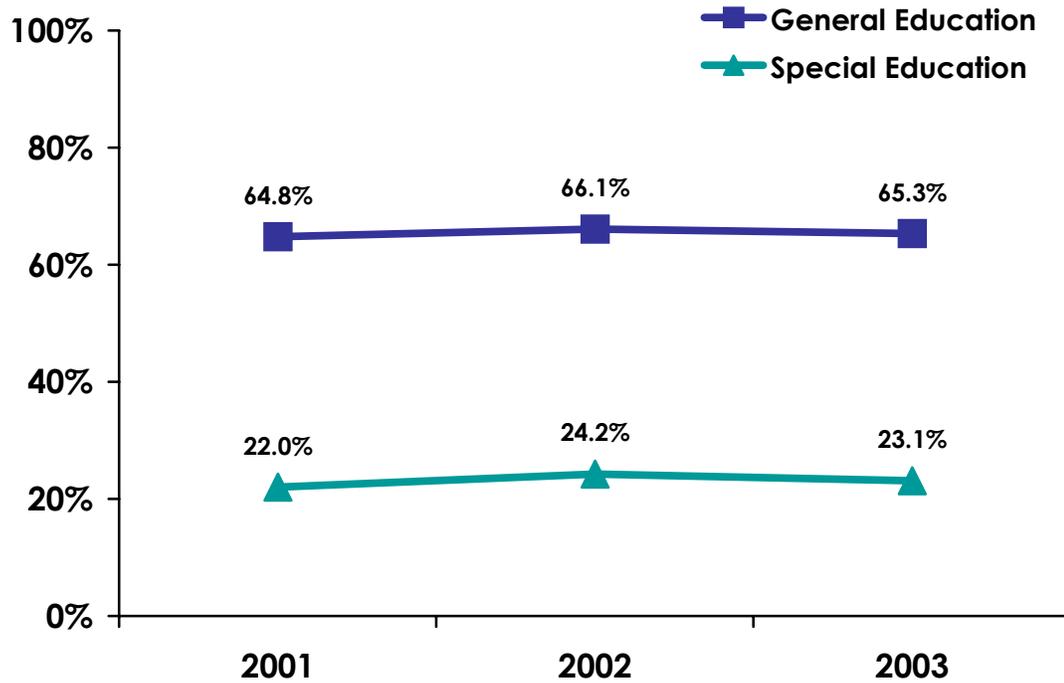


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAB for grade 11

Put brief analysis here.

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

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

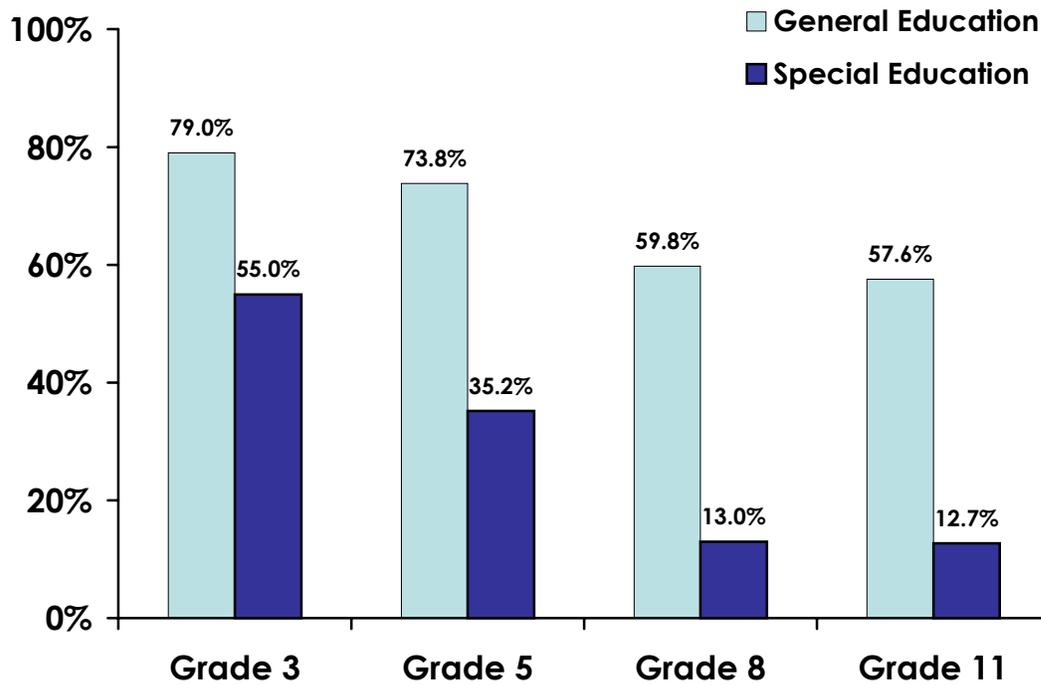


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

**Put brief analysis here.**

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

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

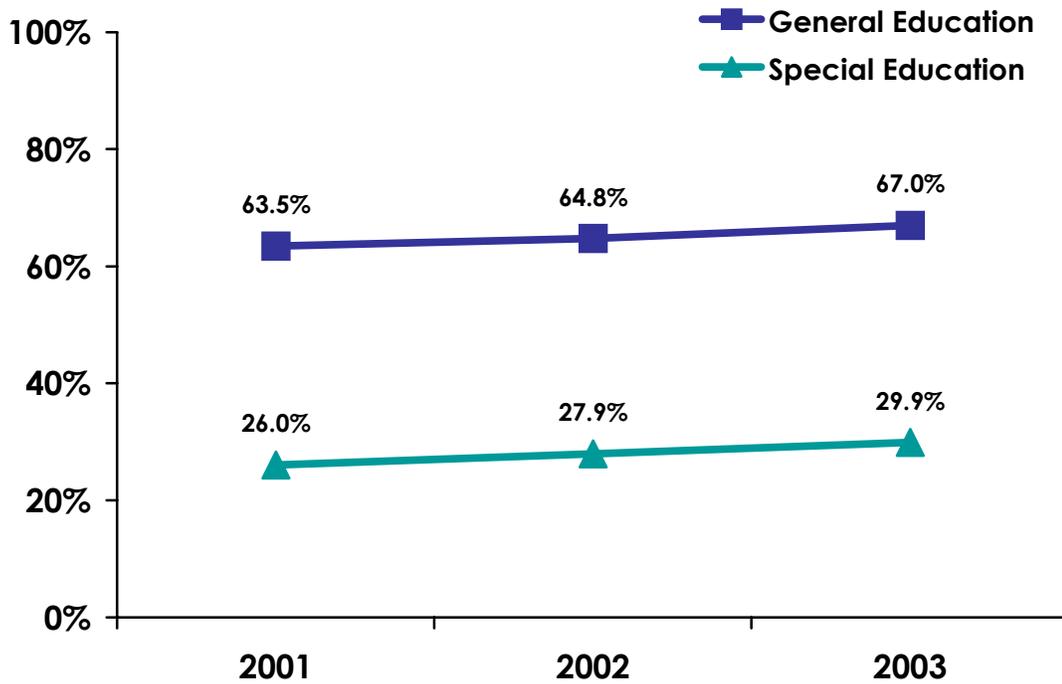


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Put brief analysis here.

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

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

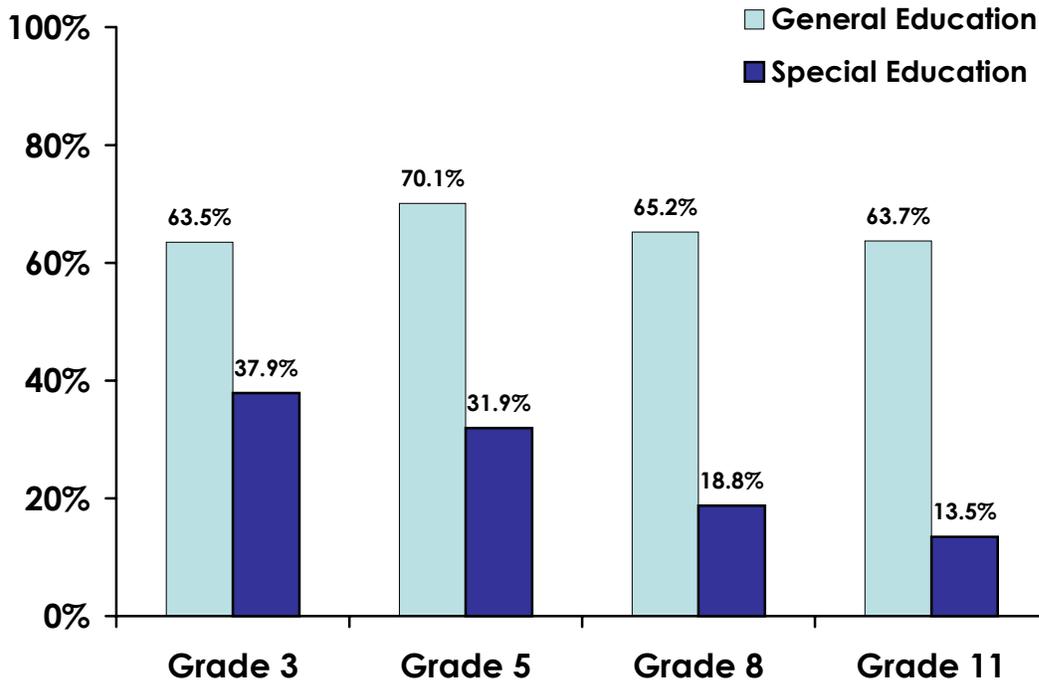


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

**Put brief analysis here.**

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

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

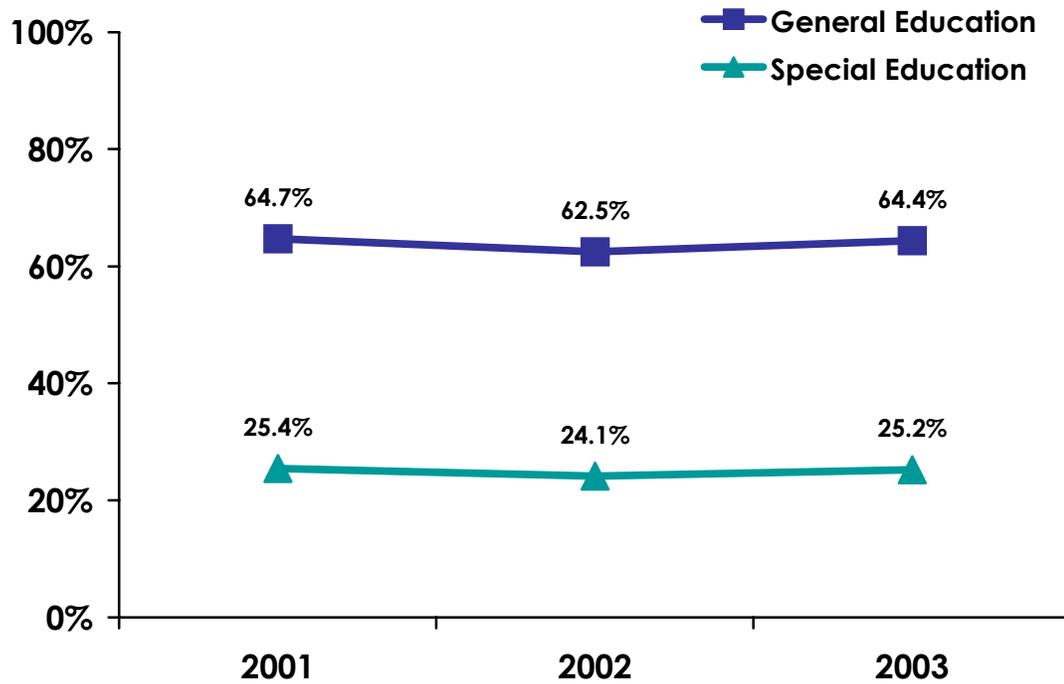


\*ISAT for grades 3, 5 and 8; PSAE for grade 11

Put brief analysis here.

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

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



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

**Put brief analysis here.**

## 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 more progress on multiple performance indicators than those students in a more restrictive, or segregated, environment.

Educational environments can be generally classified into four settings:

1. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general education classroom less than 21% of the time,
2. Students receiving special education or related services outside the general education classroom 21% to 60% of the time,
3. Students receiving special education or 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 these findings by disability and by race.

### Desired Result:

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

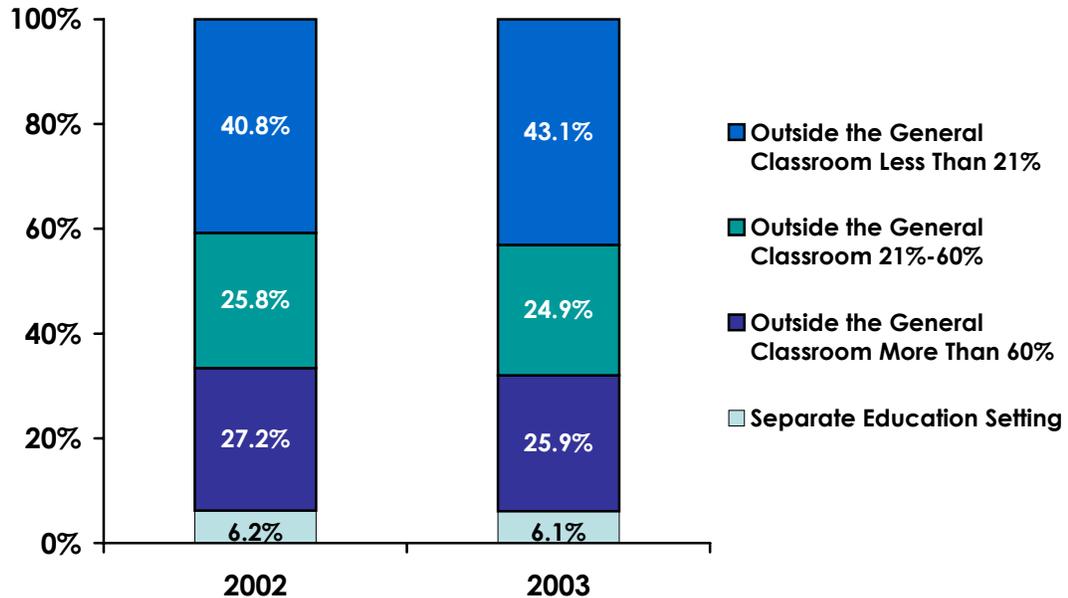
### Observations:

Below are some *sample* observations that could apply to the information presented in this section.

- The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time continues to increase as the percent of students with disabilities receiving their educational program in a separate facility continues to decrease.
- Almost 80% of the students with mental retardation (MR) still remain in separate classroom settings.
- More black students than other racial groups are found in separate settings.

## Placement in a Variety of Educational Environments - 2002 & 2003

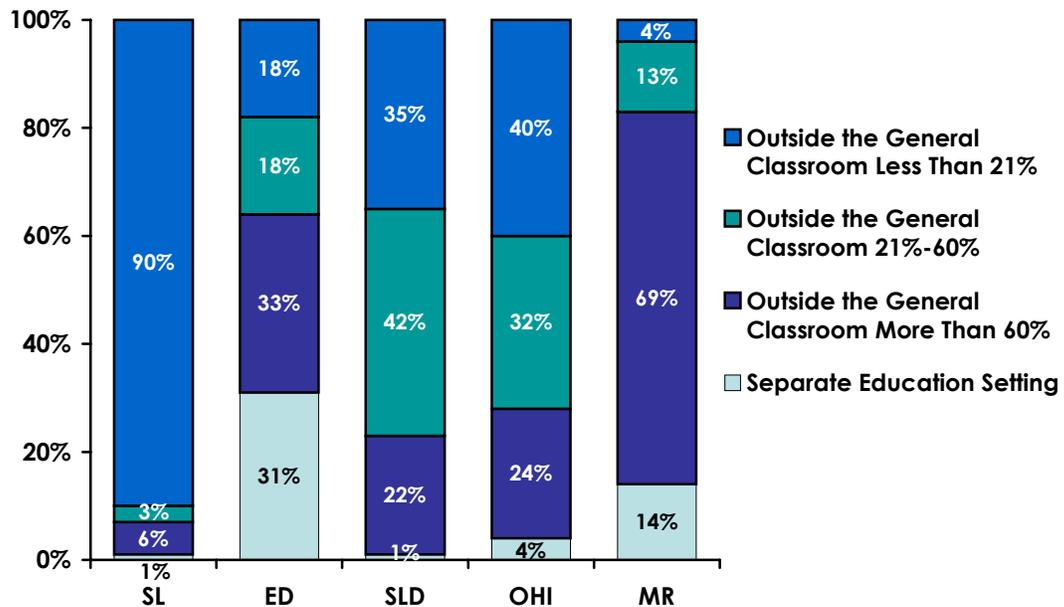
The 2001-2002 school year was the first year that educational environment was recorded using the current categories.



The percent of students receiving special education services outside of the general education classroom less than 21% of the time continues to increase, as the percent of students with disabilities served in a separate facility continues to decrease.

## Educational Environments for Specific Disabilities - 2003

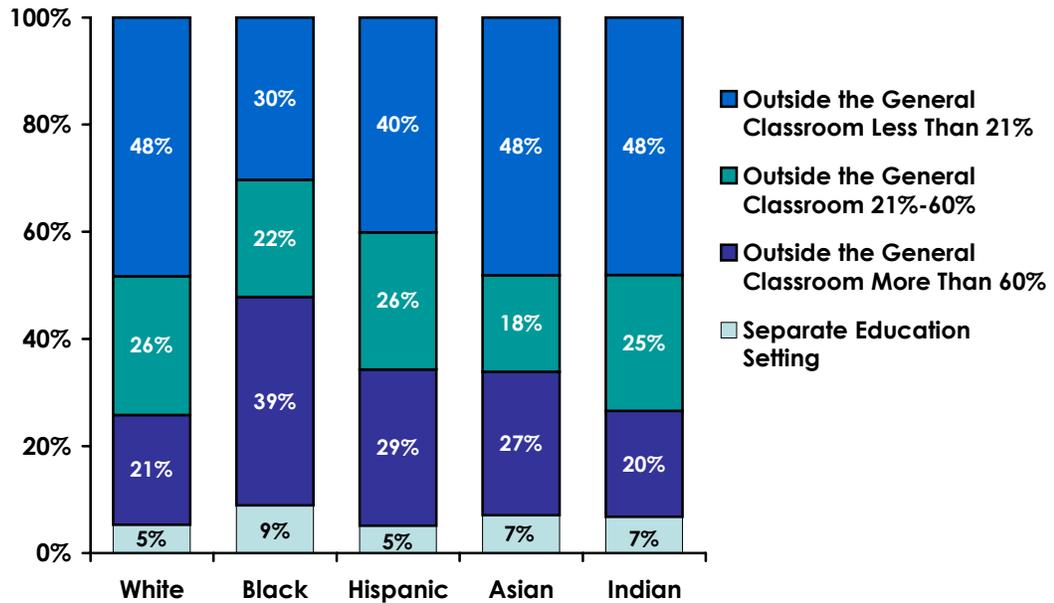
This chart displays student settings by the following five highest incidence disability categories: Speech/Language (SL), Emotional Disturbance (ED), Specific Learning Disorder (SLD), Other Health Impaired (OHI) and Mental Retardation (MR).



Put brief analysis here.

## Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity- 2003

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



Put brief analysis here.

## Glossary

A glossary of terms will be provided at the back of the booklet. Below is a sampling of some of the items that should be included in the 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 2004 State testing.
- **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.
- **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.

Definitions of each of the thirteen disability categories could also go here.

## **Appendix B – Sample LEA Special Education Profile**

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The following is a sample of the proposed *LEA Special Education Profile*.

# 2003 Illinois Special Education Profile

Illinois State Board of Education  
Department of Special Education



**Anytown School District 999**  
Anytown, Illinois

*Member of Southwest Northeastern Special Education Cooperative*

## Section One: Background Information

### Student Population

	Total Enrollment	Students with Disabilities		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian / Pacific Islander	Native American
		Enrollment	Percent					
District	1,545	292	18.9%	61.9%	33.1%	2.1%	2.7%	0.2%
Cooperative	9,346	1,561	16.7%	58.0%	36.4%	2.7%	2.7%	0.1%
State	2,044,539	302,591	14.8%	58.6%	20.7%	17.0%	3.6%	0.2%

### Students with Disabilities

Race / Ethnicity	District		Cooperative		State	
	All Students	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Students with Disabilities
White	62%	56%	58%	55%	59%	63%
Black	33%	42%	36%	41%	21%	23%
Hispanic	2%	1%	6%	3%	17%	12%
Asian/Pacific Islander	3%	<1%	3%	<1%	4%	1%
Native American	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%

### Percent of Students in Each Disability Category

Disability Category	District	Cooperative	State
Autism	<1%	4%	2%
Deaf/Blindness	<1%	1%	1%
Developmental Delay	2%	3%	3%
Emotional Disturbance	24%	18%	8%
Hearing Impairment	<1%	1%	2%
Mental Retardation	12%	13%	14%
Multiple Disabilities	<1%	6%	2%
Orthopedic Impairment	1%	3%	2%
Other Health Impairment	11%	12%	13%
Specific Learning Disability	20%	24%	26%
Speech Language	29%	11%	20%
Traumatic Brain Injury	<1%	2%	4%
Vision Impairment	1%	2%	3%

## Section Two: School Completion

### Graduation Rate

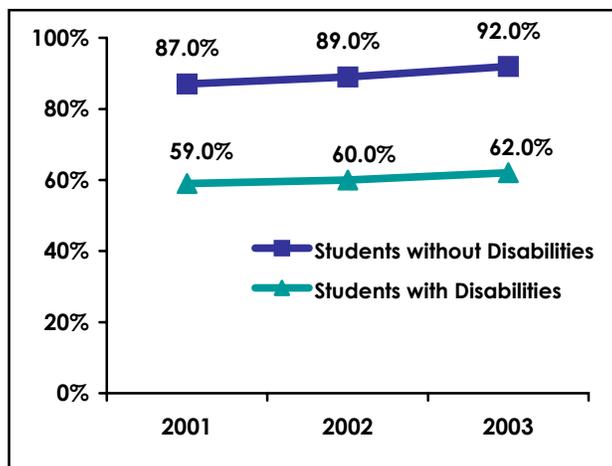
The **Graduation Rate** in Illinois is defined as the percent of the original freshman class who graduated with a standard diploma, adjusted for student transfers and deaths.

#### Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

	2001	2002	2003
District	59%	60%	62%
Cooperative	68%	71%	71%
State	67%	68%	70%

#### Compared to Students without Disabilities

	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Disparity
District	62%	92%	-30%
Cooperative	71%	91%	-20%
State	70%	85%	-15%



### Dropout Rate

A **Dropout** is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school, or who did not re-enroll as expected in the fall.

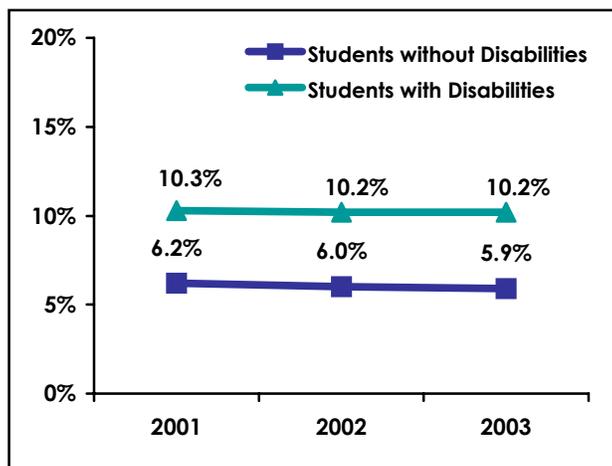
**Dropout Rate** is calculated as a percentage of all students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out.

#### Dropout Rates for Students with Disabilities

	2001	2002	2003
District	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%
Cooperative	9.8%	9.5%	9.7%
State	9.5%	9.2%	9.6%

#### Compared to Students without Disabilities

	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Disparity
District	10.2%	5.9%	4.3%
Cooperative	8.8%	5.5%	3.3%
State	9.4%	5.1%	4.3%



## Section Three: Student Performance

### Participation Rate for State Assessments

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
District	Enrollment*	280	1,230	288	1,240	292	1,253
	Reading	71%	90%	80%	95%	86%	97%
	Mathematics	70%	91%	81%	96%	85%	98%
State	Enrollment*	599,613	72,231	610,328	78,455	616,170	86,222
	Reading	71%	91%	80%	95%	86%	98%
	Mathematics	70%	93%	86%	96%	88%	97%

\*Enrollment in the tested grades on the first day of testing.

### Overall Student Performance

The following table presents the overall percentages of students who scored in the Meets or Exceeds the Illinois Learning Standards performance levels on state assessments. The **Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)** is used to measure achievement of students in grades 3 through 8 for reading, mathematics, writing, science and social science. The **Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)** is used to measure the same achievement for students in grade 11.

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
District		41%	56%	40%	58%	42%	59%
State		45%	59%	47%	60%	49%	61%

### 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. The table below presents the percentages of students who scored in the Progressing or Attaining performance levels.

		Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Science
3	District	39%	38%	39%		
	State	45%	42%	42%		
4	District				32%	30%
	State				32%	31%
5	District	40%	40%	37%		
	State	42%	43%	39%		
7	District				26%	22%
	State				28%	27%
8	District	40%	41%	38%		
	State	45%	44%	42%		
11	District	30%	30%	22%	30%	28%
	State	31%	33%	24%	29%	26%

## Student Performance by Subject

The following tables show student performance by subject area for Reading, Mathematics and Writing for the past three years. Each table displays the percentage of students who scored in the Meets or Exceeds performance levels.

### Student Performance in Reading

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

### Student Performance in Mathematics

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

### Student Performance in Writing

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

## Section Four: Educational Environment

Educational environment refers to the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education and related services in classes or schools with their non-disabled peers. Research has shown that students with disabilities who are educated in the *least restrictive environment* show more progress on multiple performance indicators than those students in a more restrictive, or segregated, environment.

Educational environments can be generally classified into four settings:

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

### Percent of Students with Disabilities in Various Educational Environments

	2002				2003			
	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
District	32%	13%	45%	10%	37%	14%	40%	9%
Cooperative	41%	13%	38%	8%	41%	11%	39%	9%
State	38%	14%	39%	9%	43%	12%	36%	8%

### Educational Environments for Selected Disability Categories

	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
Emotional Disturbance	18%	18%	33%	31%
Mental Retardation	4%	13%	69%	14%
Other Health Impaired	40%	32%	24%	5%
Specific Learning Disorder	35%	42%	22%	1%
Speech / Language	90%	3%	7%	1%

### Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity

	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
White	48%	26%	21%	5%
Black	30%	22%	39%	9%
Hispanic	40%	26%	29%	5%
Asian / Pacific Islander	48%	18%	26%	7%
Native American	48%	25%	20%	7%

## **Appendix C – Sample Special Education Monitoring Profile**

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The following is a sample of the proposed *Special Education Monitoring Profile*, used by ISBE Special Education Services staff to review the performance of specific LEAs.

# Special Education Services Monitoring Profile – 2003

Illinois State Board of Education

**District Name:** Anytown School District 999

**Joint Agreement:** Southwest Northeastern Special Education Cooperative

## Student Population

	Total Enrollment	Students with Disabilities	
		Number	Percent
District	1,545	292	18.9%
Cooperative	9,346	1560	16.7%
State	2,044,539	302,591	14.8%

## Summary of Critical Performance Indicators

	District	Benchmark	Rank	Percent
Graduation Rate	62.0%	65%	571	36%
Graduation Rate Gap	30.0%	*	493	45%
Dropout Rate	10.2%	*	670	25%
Assessment Participation				
Reading Assessments	97.0%	95%	127	86%
Math Assessments	98.0%	95%	115	87%
Assessment Performance				
Reading Assessments	40.0%	40%	105	88%
Math Assessments	40.0%	40%	104	88%
Least Restrictive Environment				
Elementary School				
Outside < 21% of the Time	44.2%	48.5%	381	57%
Separate Facility	7.1%	*	704	21%
High School				
Outside < 21% of the Time	19.3%	27.5%	532	40%
Separate Facility	14.5%	*	637	29%

## Percent of Students in Each Disability Category

Disability Category	District		Cooperative		State
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Autism	2	<1%	59	4%	2%
Deaf/Blindness	2	<1%	13	1%	1%
Developmental Delay	5	2%	45	3%	3%
Emotional Disturbance	69	24%	277	18%	11%
Hearing Impairment	2	<1%	12	1%	2%
Mental Retardation	34	12%	199	13%	14%
Multiple Disabilities	1	<1%	93	6%	2%
Orthopedic Impairment	2	1%	45	3%	2%
Other Health Impairment	31	11%	186	12%	13%
Specific Learning Disability	57	20%	374	24%	26%
Speech Language	84	29%	201	13%	20%
Traumatic Brain Injury	1	<1%	29	2%	4%
Vision Impairment	2	1%	27	2%	3%

## Racial/Ethnic Proportionality of Students with Disabilities by Disability and LRE Categories

Racial/ethnic proportionality refers to the percentage of students in a racial/ethnic group within a subgroup compared to their percentage in the total population. If the percentage in a subgroup is different from that of the total population, it is considered to be disproportional.

For example, if a particular racial/ethnic group accounts for 50% of the total population, but presents 60% of the special education population, the special education percentage is disproportional, with a *disparity* of 10 percentage points.

The table below shows racial/ethnic proportionality for all students with disabilities, for each disability category, and for each LRE category. A percentage is disproportionate if it differs from the percentage for Total District Population at the top of each column.

	White		Black		Hispanic		Asian/Pacific Islander		Native American	
<b>Total District Population</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>
Students w/Disabilities	162	56%	124	42%	3	1%	2	<1%	1	<1%
<b>Disability Category</b>										
Autism	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Deaf/Blindness	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Developmental Delay	3	60%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Emotional Disturbance*	25	36%	44	64%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Hearing Impairment	2	100%		0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mental Retardation*	14	41%	19	56%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Multiple Disabilities	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Orthopedic Impairment	2	100%		0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Health Impairment*	18	58%	11	35%	0	0%	1	3%	1	3%
Specific Learning Disability*	32	56%	24	42%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Speech Language*	61	73%	22	26%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Traumatic Brain Injury	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Vision Impairment	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%
<b>LRE Category</b>										
Outside < 21%*	78	66%	37	32%	1	<1%	1	<1%	1	<1%
Outside 21%-60%	42	59%	27	38%	1	1%	1	1%	0	0%
Outside > 60%	34	41%	48	58%	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Separate Facility*	8	42%	11	58%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

\*Critical Performance Indicators

## Graduation Rate

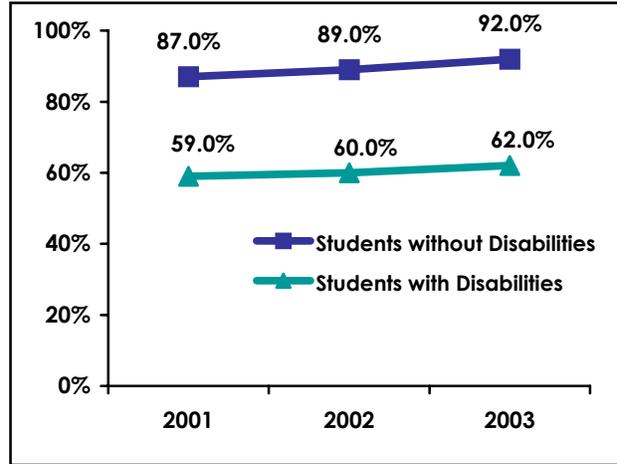
The **Graduation Rate** in Illinois is defined as the percent of the original freshman class who graduated with a standard diploma, adjusted for student transfers and deaths.

### Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities

	2001	2002	2003
District	59%	60%	62%
Cooperative	68%	71%	71%
State	67%	68%	70%

### Compared to Students without Disabilities

	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Disparity
District	62%	92%	-30%
Cooperative	71%	91%	-20%
State	70%	85%	-15%



## Dropout Rate

A **Dropout** is defined as any child enrolled in grades 9 through 12 whose name has been removed from the district-housed roster for any reason other than death, extended illness, graduation, or completion of a program of studies and who has not transferred to another public or private school, or who did not re-enroll as expected in the fall.

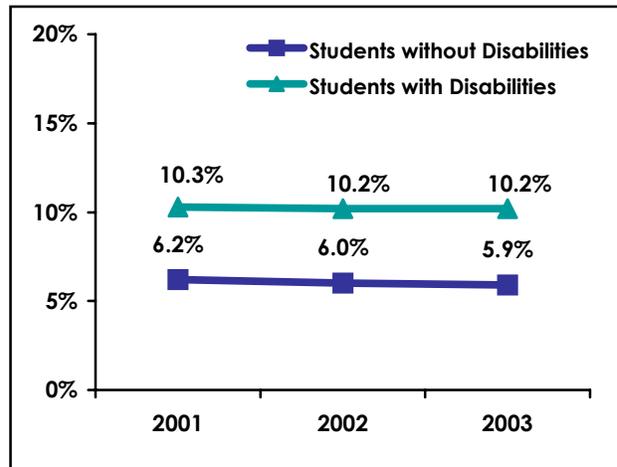
**Dropout Rate** is calculated as a percentage of all students in grades 9 through 12 who dropped out.

### Dropout Rates for Students with Disabilities

	2001	2002	2003
District	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%
Cooperative	9.8%	9.5%	9.7%
State	9.5%	9.2%	9.6%

### Compared to Students without Disabilities

	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Disparity
District	10.2%	5.9%	4.3%
Cooperative	8.8%	5.5%	3.3%
State	9.4%	5.1%	4.3%



## Participation Rate for State Assessments

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
District	Enrollment*	280	1,230	288	1,240	292	1,253
	Reading	71%	90%	80%	95%	86%	97%
	Mathematics	70%	91%	81%	96%	85%	98%
State	Enrollment*	599,613	72,231	610,328	78,455	616,170	86,222
	Reading	71%	91%	80%	95%	86%	98%
	Mathematics	70%	93%	86%	96%	88%	97%

\*Enrollment in the tested grades on the first day of testing.

## Student Enrollment Compared with FACTS and Actual Students Tested

The following table shows the enrollment on the first day of the state tests for the grades tested, as reported by the schools in the district, compared with the student counts reported in FACTS and the actual number of students tested.

2002			2003		
Students with Disabilities Enrollment	FACTS Student Count	Students with Disabilities Tested	Students with Disabilities Enrollment	FACTS Student Count	Students with Disabilities Tested
288	295	290	292	310	292

## Students with Disabilities Tested with Accommodations (ISAT, PSAE & IMAGE)

	2002			2003		
	Students with Disabilities Tested	Students with Accommodations	Percent with Accommodations	Students with Disabilities Tested	Students with Accommodations	Percent with Accommodations
District	290	192	66%	292	172	59%
Cooperative	1,120	765	68%	1,366	893	65%
State	117,926	77,571	66%	123,137	87,121	71%

## Overall Student Performance

The following table presents the overall percentages of students who scored in the Meets or Exceeds the Illinois Learning Standards performance levels on state assessments. The **Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)** is used to measure achievement of students in grades 3 through 8 for reading, mathematics, writing, science and social science. The **Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE)** is used to measure the same achievement for students in grade 11.

	2001		2002		2003	
	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
District	41%	56%	40%	58%	42%	59%
State	45%	59%	47%	60%	49%	61%

## 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. The table below presents the percentages of students who scored in the Progressing or Attaining performance levels.

		Reading	Math	Writing	Science	Social Science
3	District	39%	38%	39%		
	State	45%	42%	42%		
4	District				32%	30%
	State				32%	31%
5	District	40%	40%	37%		
	State	42%	43%	39%		
7	District				26%	22%
	State				28%	27%
8	District	40%	41%	38%		
	State	45%	44%	42%		
11	District	30%	30%	22%	30%	28%
	State	31%	33%	24%	29%	26%

## Student Performance by Subject

The following tables show student performance by subject area for Reading, Mathematics and Writing for the past three years. Each table displays the percentage of students who scored in the Meets or Exceeds performance levels.

### Student Performance in Reading

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

### Student Performance in Mathematics

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

### Student Performance in Writing

		2001		2002		2003	
		Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities	Students with Disabilities	Students without Disabilities
3	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
5	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
8	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
11	District	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%
	State	40%	60%	40%	60%	40%	60%

## Percent of Students with Disabilities in Various Educational Environments

	2002				2003			
	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
District	32%	13%	45%	10%	37%	14%	40%	9%
Cooperative	41%	13%	38%	8%	41%	11%	39%	9%
State	38%	14%	39%	9%	43%	12%	36%	8%

## Educational Environments for Selected Disability Categories

	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
Autism	18%	14%	50%	18%
Deaf/Blindness	13%	8%	50%	28%
Developmental Delay	17%	7%	65%	11%
Emotional Disturbance	18%	18%	33%	31%
Hearing Impairment	34%	15%	39%	12%
Mental Retardation	4%	13%	69%	14%
Multiple Disabilities	6%	9%	57%	27%
Orthopedic Impairment	35%	18%	37%	9%
Other Health Impaired	40%	32%	24%	5%
Specific Learning Disorder	35%	42%	22%	1%
Speech / Language	90%	3%	7%	1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	22%	26%	40%	12%
Visual Impairment	51%	19%	20%	10%

## Educational Environments by Race/Ethnicity

	Outside < 21%	Outside 21-60%	Outside > 60%	Separate Facility
White	48%	26%	21%	5%
Black	30%	22%	39%	9%
Hispanic	33%	33%	33%	0%
Asian / Pacific Islander	50%	50%	0%	0%
Native American	100%	0%	0%	0%

## Appendix D – Distribution List for the Annual Report

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Below is a preliminary list of potential recipients of the Annual State Report on Special Education Performance:

- All Directors at ISBE,
- Key directors at DCFS, DHS, ORS, the Council for Developmental Disabilities and other State agencies (particularly those with which we have interagency relationships),
- The Governor’s office, (e.g., Deputy Chief Of Staff For Education)
- Our representatives at the U.S. Department of Education,
- Corey H. parties (ten total),
- District Superintendents, Special Education Directors or Department Chairs, and Regional Superintendents,
- All or key legislators,
- State Special Education Advisory Council and other advisory councils,
- Leaders of key advocacy groups,
- Parent Training and Information (PTI) centers,
- Special Education Bilingual Subcommittee, and
- Other State Directors (e.g., 7-Pak Consortium of Large States members)



## Appendix E – 7-Pak Consortium of Large States Survey Results

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### Data Collection

1. Please describe the methods you use to collect statewide special education data.
  - Submission of paper forms
  - Web-based data collection
  - Submission of electronic files through non-Web means (e.g. dial-in)

#### California

- Submission of paper forms **Yes**
- Web-based data collection **No**
- Submission of electronic files through non-Web means (e.g. dial-in) **Yes; e-mail**

#### Florida

Florida uses an Automated Student Data Base System for the collection of individual student data for all students in Florida. The Data Bases are stored at Northwest Regional Data Center (NWRDC) and districts submit data from their local data base to NWRDC using the Florida Information Resource Network (FIRN) connection. Data are submitted at various times during the year. There are four full-time equivalent (FTE) survey weeks (surveys 1-4); a survey for collecting previous school year and end-of-year information (survey 5) and a survey specifically for exceptional student education (ESE) information (survey 9). For more information about the automated student database go to <http://www.firn.edu/doe/eias/dataweb/database.htm>.

Assessment data are reported for individual students separately. National Computer Systems (NCS) is responsible for the administration, scoring, and reporting of Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) results. The University of Miami is responsible for the collection and reporting of alternate assessment data. In both of these cases, the contractor receives individual student answer sheets for scoring and reporting purposes.

#### New York

New York State uses a web-based data collection system to collect aggregated data from school districts on five forms. Two forms have a due date in December and three forms are due in August. Our system hardware includes a Windows NT operating system with IIS (Internet Information Server) for the web server with an Oracle database running on a UNIX server.

Our software application is developed in-house using Microsoft Active Server Pages (VBScript, JavaScript, HTML, XML) connecting to an Oracle database. Visual Basic programs connect to the database to manipulate, upload, and extract data.

Edit checks are built into the web-based data reporting system to ensure data are technically error free.

Our State assessment data are collected at the individual student level, but without a student identifier number that remains with the student over time and that is unique within the state. We are working towards developing an individual student level data system that will give us the ability to track individual student performance over time and the ability to collect all the required student level data through a single system. The current system for collecting State assessment data for elementary and middle school students is called the LEAP system, and the system to collect assessment data for high school students as well as other high school completion data is called STEP. State assessment data are submitted electronically to the Department through the regional information centers, located throughout the State, and from the large five cities. The regional information centers work with schools to correct errors identified by the LEAP and STEP software. The Department completes additional verification procedures before data are finalized for publication.

Additional information regarding the LEAP reporting system may be found at:  
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/leap/home.html>

Additional information regarding the STEP reporting system may be found at:  
<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/STEP/home.html>

### Ohio

Ohio captures all student level data, including all information for students with disabilities electronically through the Educational Management Information System (EMIS). Districts report student, staff, building and district level data to the state six (6) times per year.

### Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) collects special education data twice a year from 29 Intermediate Units (IU) using a comma-delineated file. PDE also collects from preschool programs and State Correctional Adult and Juvenile Facilities using the same type of file. Each IU is responsible for collecting data from each school district/charter school within their jurisdiction. Each IU determines how they collect data. They collect data from excel-files, terminals, web-based.submission, and paper collection.

2. What kinds of problems have you encountered in collecting data from LEAs, and what measures have you taken to address them?

### California

Problem with on-time submission from some districts – We send repeated reminders via e-mail and can withhold part of the District Superintendent's salary for if a district does not meet the final deadline.

Occasional problems with data coding errors – Checks are built into the code structure of the data gathering software and aggregate results are analyzed for errors. Anomalies are discussed with individual districts who then send corrections, if needed. We provide statewide training in using the software and coding twice each year (more trainings are scheduled beginning fall 2003). In addition, we provide technical assistance directly to individual districts on demand. The manual for the data system is published on-line and includes extensive instructions on coding.

### Florida

Data base manuals and technical assistance efforts provide districts with consistent directions. Edits are built into the automated student database. State validation and exception reports are produced and districts are given time to correct errors. Additionally, districts may undergo a data quality review process conducted by staff from Education Information and Accountability Services.

### New York

We routinely have LEAs that do not submit data by the due dates and in spite of edit checks, submit data that contain errors. We use a persistent dunning process that includes communicating with LEAs via e-mail, regular mail, fax, and telephone to request the missing data and we offer technical assistance during this process, as needed. We also use an aggressive approach to contact LEAs and ask them to make the necessary corrections to their data, again offering technical assistance as needed. Occasionally, we need to contact the superintendent or our monitoring staff to request their involvement if schools are particularly non-responding.

We also have LEAs that do not always understand the reporting criteria and definitions and even though they submit data that are technically error-free, the data are inaccurate. Our remedy for this is to clarify directions and definitions annually, based on our record of the types of questions we receive during the year. Also, based on local needs assessments, our Special Education Training and Resource Centers host training sessions on special education data and invite all LEAs in their region to attend. It is typical to conduct 3-4 training sessions annually across the State.

Our monitoring staff are also active in providing technical assistance to LEAs regarding special education data, for example, during the Fall of the 02-03 school year, the Special Education Quality Assurance Regional Associates trained Special Education Director/Chairperson Groups across the state on accurate gathering and reporting of special education data. The training materials were developed jointly with involvement of all appropriate offices within the Department. Records were kept to ensure that this

was done in every region of the State. In addition, also during the 02-03 school year, Department staff met with the special education data managers of each of the Big 4 cities to point out common data reporting errors and to discuss procedural changes designed to avoid them in the future.

### Ohio

Due to the sheer volume of the data, the Department has developed very scripted aggregation routines which districts must comply with in order for their data to be accepted. As such, data collection problems are kept to a minimum.

### Pennsylvania

Verification/accuracy of data and duplicates. In order to resolve the problem, PDE created a statewide advisory committee, a comprehensive Resource Guide, and statewide trainings for all data managers at the IU and school district/charter school level.

3. Do you collect data at the school (building) level? District?

### California

We collect data at the student level. Each record includes codes for the District of Service, District of Residence (when different) and School of attendance.

### Florida

All data are collected at the individual student level. These data can then be aggregated at school level and district level.

### New York

Special education data are only collected at the District level, except that State assessment data for all students, including students with disabilities is collected at the individual student level and can be aggregated to the school or district level.

Once our individual student-level data system is developed, we will be able to aggregate special education data at any level.

### Ohio

As noted above data is collected at the building level.

### Pennsylvania

PDE collects data at the state, district, building, and student level.

4. Do you collect social security number (if provided) as a data element? (This is not referring to the use of SSN as a required student identifier in your data systems.) If so, how successful are you at obtaining SSN from parents?

### California

Yes. Statewide, about 40% of the student records submitted include SSN. The percent from each district varies widely; some districts report no SSNs while others approach 100%.

### Florida

Social Security Numbers are used as student identification numbers, when available. In other cases, districts assign a district identification number.

### New York

No. We do not plan to collect the SSN as the student identifier for our individual student level data collection system that is under development.

### Ohio

ODE is prohibited by state law from securing any student level information which could be used to identify a student.

### Pennsylvania

No. Each school district uses their own ID. If no ID is provided, the IU will assign an ID to the student.

### Focused Monitoring

1. Do you do focused monitoring? If so, please describe your use of focused monitoring.

#### California

Yes. California uses focused monitoring. Based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other data, the Special Education Division (SED) conducts focused monitoring in several ways.

**Verification Reviews:** SED selects districts for an onsite SED Verification Review based on Key Performance Indicators deemed most critical by SED's KPI Stakeholder Group. The KPIs used for 2002-03 and for 2003-2004 selection include the following KPIs:

- Increased amount of time students are placed in general education
- Increased average performance of students with disabilities taking STAR (This language will be revamped to align with California's definitions of AYP)
- Increased average performance of students with disabilities on measures of literacy

The Verification Review also uses a focused monitoring approach that is customized for each school district based on data. All KPI data (see all KPIs in question 3) are used as well as parent input, compliance complaint data, due process findings, and other academic achievement data such as California's Academic Performance Index. Using this data, SED designs a customized monitoring plan for each district. SED also uses trend data on key areas of noncompliance with IDEA found at the systemic and student level (SED calls them core areas). All Verification reviews include monitoring of these areas that are problematic statewide. KPIs are also coordinated/aligned to specific requirements of IDEA. Verification Reports provide the district with a summary of noncompliant findings in relationship to the Key Performance (eight areas-KPIs) and accompanying corrective actions at a student and systemic level. Additionally, in 2002-2003, SED began a specialized educational benefit student record review that determines if the IEP was reasonably calculated for education benefit. (See graphic at end of survey for further detail)

**Special Education Self Reviews:** Approximately 250 districts (one-fourth of California schools districts) annually conduct a special education self-review. Similar in method to the Verification Review, each district develops a monitoring plan approved by SED that is based on Key Performance Indicators, parent input, and other data for their self review. (See graphic at end of survey for further detail)

**Facilitated District Reviews:** SED provides a highly focused monitoring and technical assistance approach over a three year period with selected districts whose Key Performance Indicators are in the lowest quartile. These districts volunteer for SED assistance and receive grants to support improvement in Key Performance Indicators as well as correct areas of noncompliance found in the Verification Review and other data. Additionally, these Facilitated districts receive intense assistance in improving student outcomes through a SED contract with Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE). RCOE provides an intensive leadership development program and onsite technical

assistance and support for a selected school site and district team for improved student academic achievement. This is a focused approach that uses a district profile of student achievement data (district, site, classroom level, curriculum area(s) and is currently incorporating KPI data into the site report). The focus on achievement is conducted by the Riverside County Achievement Teams (RCAT+) who are expert and experienced professionals that conduct program evaluation (Phase I) and program improvement (Phase II) modules. SED assigned consultants to Facilitated districts participate with the RCAT in providing technical assistance in correction of noncompliance and program improvement areas noted in each district's Key Performance Indicators. This project is called the QAP project and includes a strong infusion of special education focus into the overall general education focus to ensure all students achieve state and district standards.

**Statewide Monitoring-Annual IEPs and Three-Year Reevaluations:** Another focused monitoring approach conducted by SED is the use of data from CASEMIS (California Special Education Management Information System). SED monitors annual IEP timelines and three-year reevaluations for every district (1000+) in California twice a year (December and June). Noncompliance is noted and letters with data information is provided to district Superintendents and cc's to the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) for correction of noncompliance with timelines for correction.

### Florida

Yes. The purpose of the focused monitoring process is to establish a methodology that will target our monitoring interventions based on key data indicators identified as significant for educational outcomes for students with disabilities. Through this process, we will use such data to inform the monitoring process, thereby implementing a strategic approach to intervention, the commitment of resources, and improved student outcomes.

Focused monitoring is only one of the methods of monitoring used in Florida. Activities conducted in a focused monitoring visit include the following:

- pre-visit communication with the district exceptional student education (ESE) administrator
- parent, teacher, and student surveys
- pre-staffing review by Bureau staff, during which individual school sites will be selected
- a review of records of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted conducted by Bureau staff
- review of selected district forms
- review of the matrix of services document for students assigned a matrix value of 254 or 255
- district and school level interviews
- parent, teacher, and student focus groups
- case studies at selected schools
- classroom visits at selected schools
- daily debriefings with district ESE director or designee

We also use continuous improvement monitoring and have begun implementing follow-up monitoring. Continuous improvement monitoring is a form of focused monitoring, as LEAs are required to select an indicator, based on data, on which to focus their intensive efforts for improvement.

### New York

Over the past two years, the NYS Education Department, Office for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disability (VESID)/Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) has piloted and implemented the Quality Assurance Focused Review process, which is designed to ensure that regulatory areas of greatest significance to successful student outcomes are targeted for review. Areas of noncompliance and district practices are analyzed to improve the effectiveness of district programs and to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Three focused review protocols are being utilized during the 2003-04 school year. The Least Restrictive Environment protocol is designed to improve outcomes based on current district performance and data regarding the placement of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The Achievement protocol is designed to improve student performance as reported by the district on State assessments. The Student Exiting/Transition protocol is designed to improve outcomes regarding exiting/transition for students with disabilities following graduation.

Focused reviews are designed to be performed by the SEQA Regional Associate and a small district team, including, at a minimum, a special education administrator, a special education teacher and a general education staff member. The team reviews and evaluates the district's performance in important regulatory and programmatic areas relative to specific outcome measures. Team activities include IEP team meeting observations, staff and student interviews, class visitations, record review, and a parent forum and parent survey.

The goal of each Quality Assurance Focused Review is to make programs more effective, to impact on outcomes for students and to ensure compliance in key procedural areas determined to be most closely related to performance.

### Ohio

Ohio is in the process of working with the National Monitoring Center to develop and implement a focused monitoring process. Full implementation will be completed by the 04-05 school year.

### Pennsylvania

Yes. During the 2003-04 school year, Pennsylvania will be piloting a monitoring process that models the Federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) monitoring system. The focused monitoring system will analyze the following data criteria: graduation rates, drop-out rates, participation rates in statewide assessments, performance on statewide assessments, disproportionality, and least restrictive environment.

2. How does focused monitoring fit in with an overall monitoring approach, including compliance monitoring?

### California

Focused monitoring is a major component of SED's Quality Assurance Process. Focused monitoring connects and aligns compliance requirements with Key Performance Indicators as described in question 1. Compliance with IDEA and positive student outcomes is not mutually exclusive.

### Florida

Compliance monitoring is a part of the focused monitoring process. The system is designed to emphasize improved outcomes and educational benefits for students while continuing to conduct those activities necessary to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws, rules, and regulations. LEA forms and student records are monitored for compliance.

### New York

The core of each focused monitoring protocol is the identification of those compliance areas that are believed to be most closely aligned with Key Performance Indicator data and where appropriate performance by the district/program will have the greatest impact on student outcomes. Focusing greater time and effort on activities related to identified priority areas means that other compliance areas are not specifically examined through the focused review process. However, other means exist for addressing procedural areas that are not necessarily addressed in the focused reviews. These include monthly regional meetings with school district directors of special education to alert them to new requirements and assist them in coming into compliance. Quality Assurance staff regularly review data to determine regional need for staff development/technical assistance in compliance areas. That assistance might be provided directly by SEQA staff or by the Special Education Training and Resource Center (SETRC) network, which has trainers stationed throughout the State for this purpose. In addition, the complaint management process addresses procedural violations in specific school districts, and investigations often lead to systemic compliance assurance plans.

Individually tailored reviews are performed, when determined to be needed, as indicated by district data, and SEQA experience with the district. Such a review might focus, as an example, on just district notices/consents or just the IEP team meeting process.

Finally, some districts are deemed so dysfunctional in the area of special education that a Performance Review will be scheduled rather than a Focused Review. The Performance Review is focused on procedural compliance and is much more comprehensive in its approach.

### Ohio

Focused monitoring will replace our current system of compliance monitoring and will be work in concert with our fiscal monitoring program.

### Pennsylvania

During the 2003-04 school year, a total of 50 school districts will participate in the current system of Cyclical Monitoring for Continuous Improvement (CMCI). An additional 75 school districts will be identified by the Bureau based on the combined OSEP and NCLB data criteria, including Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The additional 75 school districts will be notified in the Fall of 2003 of their selection. Trainings will be scheduled for the 75 selected districts regarding the monitoring at that time.

### 3. What are your Critical/Key Performance Indicators for focused monitoring?

#### California

It's important to note that all KPIs are aligned to SED's goals. The KPIs with an asterisk \*) are the KPIs used for Verification Review selection and Facilitated district selection. The current Key Performance Indicators are:

Goal #1: The unique needs for specially designed instruction will be accurately identified for all students with disabilities.

**KPI:**

- Improved equity of access to special education across ethnicity and socioeconomic status, by disability.

Goal #2: All students with disabilities will be served or taught by fully qualified personnel.

**KPI:**

- Increased percentage of fully certified staff

Goal #3: All students with disabilities will be successfully integrated with nondisabled peers throughout their educational experience.

**KPIs:**

- \*Increased amount of time students are placed in general education
- Decreased percentage of students with disabilities expelled or suspended to parity with general education students

Goal #4: All students with disabilities will meet high standards for academic and non-academic skills.

**KPIs:**

- Increased percentage of students with disabilities participating in STAR (State Testing and Reporting)
- \*Increased average performance of students with disabilities taking STAR (This language will be revamped to align with California's definitions of AYP)
- Increased percentage of students exiting with a diploma
- Increased percentage of students in special education returning to general education and making grade-level progress
- Decreased percentage of students dropping out
- \*Increased average performance of students with disabilities on measures of literacy

Goal #5: All students with disabilities will successfully participate in preparation for the workplace and living independently.

### KPI:

- Key Performance Indicator is being developed.

### Florida

The identified indicators and the sources of the data used are

- percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular classes (i.e., spending at least 80% of the school day with their non-disabled peers) [Data source: Survey 9]
- dropout rate for students with disabilities [Data source: Survey 5]
- percentage of students with disabilities exiting with a standard diploma [Data source: Survey 5]
- participation in statewide assessments by students with disabilities [Data sources: performance data from the assessment files and Survey 3 enrollment data]

### New York

- State assessment results at grade 4 and grade 8 in math and English Language Arts
- Regents (Exit) examination results in math and English
- Percentage of students earning high school diploma
- Integration in regular education classes
- Placement in separate settings
- Percentage of students with disabilities who have post-school plans
- Students with disabilities transition to post-secondary education and employment at the same rate as their nondisabled peers.

Data related to overrepresentation of minorities are reported by school districts to the Department, and issues related to those data are blended into the three focused review protocols. The Department is considering the development of an additional key performance indicator that would measure access of students with disabilities (regardless of the setting in which they are provided special education services) to the general education curriculum.

### Ohio

Critical/Key Performance indicators will be selected by our Focused Monitoring workgroup during a meeting on August 12<sup>th</sup>. [Ohio did not reply to a subsequent request for an update on the results of the August 12 meeting. *MSF&W*]

### Pennsylvania

Graduation rates, drop-out rates, participation rates in statewide assessments, performance on statewide assessments, disproportionality, least restrictive environment, and Adequate Yearly Progress.

4. How automated is the process of collecting and organizing performance indicators? For example, is this a manual process in which staff must collect data from disparate systems, or can reports that show performance indicators be generated automatically?

### California

The SED process of collecting and organizing performance indicators requires SED staff to utilize a variety of data sources from disparate systems in order to generate Key Performance Indicators. SED publicly posts KPIs (data reports) for every school district and annually updates and posts this data on website (exceptions include districts with less than 100 student enrollment). Collecting, analyzing, and organizing the KPIs are a major workload for SED staff. (See the sections on *Data Collection* and *Data Reporting* for additional information)

### Florida

Florida uses an Automated Student Data Base System for the collection of individual student data for all students in Florida.

### New York

Performance indicators are defined and computed at the State level, based on annual data collection. Reports containing the computations are prepared annually and shared with appropriate Department staff to use in conjunction with their monitoring and technical assistance activities. A historical record of key indicators data is updated annually for every school district for trend analysis and is used to identify school districts for various types of focused monitoring. Department staff also has access to the most current year of data that is submitted by school districts through the web-based reporting system and may compute some key indicators for the most current school year.

Key indicator data related to State assessments are updated annually and are available on the Department's website in the form of school report cards and comprehensive assessment reports.

### Ohio

The EMIS system will collect the raw data which will then be migrated into relational database software for further manipulation and analysis.

### Pennsylvania

Most of the reports are generated automatically for the LEAs. Pennsylvania uses the data school districts submit for federal reporting, organizes the data using a web site, and LEAs complete some data elements before the monitoring visit. Once the visit is completed, all data collected is entered into our system and a report is generated with the findings, steps to correct areas of non-compliance, timelines, etc.

### 5. How do you determine which LEAs are monitored and when?

#### California

Proposed selection process for districts to undergo a focused monitoring review starting in fiscal year 2003-04

California's intent is to have districts identified and notified by September 15, 2003. In the best case, measures based on June 2003 CASEMIS data cannot be available until sometime in November 2003. Rather than delay the selection process, we made the decision to use the older June 2002 information. Past experience suggests that the quartiles into which districts fall do not vary much from one year to the next; thus, the list of districts in the pool will not vary much by using measures based on June 2002 rather than June 2003 data.

Data from June 2003 will be processed quickly after all districts have submitted their CASEMIS data and data are available from the 2003 STAR testing cycle. In the best case, 2003 based KPI measures should be available by the time monitoring plans are being written.

Districts in either or both of the following categories will **NOT** be in the selection pool for 2003-04:

1. Districts undergoing a self-review during 2003-04, or
2. Districts still undergoing reviews (Verification or Facilitated) initiated in a prior year.

The selection process for 2003-04 will be much the same as that used for 2002-03 selections. A timeline for events will be made available when it is completed and approved. The steps, in sequence order are:

1. Array districts into size-group and district-type clusters (group-type),
2. Calculate the following measures using data from the June 2002 KPI cycle:
  - A. Mean scale reading scores on the SAT-9 at the 4<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades,
  - B. Overall percent above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile on the SAT-9, and
  - C. Percent of students removed from the general education classroom less than 20% of the time or more than 80% of the time,
3. Array districts on these measures within group-types,
4. Assign districts (in group-sizes 2 through 5) in lowest quartile on any of the measures to the selection pool,
5. Count the number of times each district falls in the lowest quartile on all of the selection measures and sort the list in descending order on this count,
6. Randomly select at least one district each from size-groups 6 and 7 and add them to the selection pool,
7. Meet with FMTA managers to make final draft list of districts to be monitored taking into account:
  - A. Including districts from all group-types,
  - B. Considering other information, such as complaint history or unsuccessful self-review,

- C. Including the required California Youth Authority (CYA) sites identified in a separate process,
- D. Including Los Angeles USD in the list,
- 8. Review and approval of final selection by SED Director and 5th Floor (Superintendent of Public Instruction),
- 9. Notify districts.

Districts will **NOT** be notified of selection (or non-selection) until:

1. Step 8 is completed, and
2. **the SED Director gives specific instructions to notify districts.**

### Florida

A review of the data associated with the four identified indicators is completed. Districts are rank-ordered by each of the indicators. Previous data profiles also may be utilized to identify district trends. Districts are then selected for focused monitoring based on their rank order. If a district was monitored in the previous two years, the next district on the list will be selected.

Focused monitoring activities are conducted over the course of a calendar year. LEAs are given the opportunity to provide input into the time of the visit based on their district schedules.

### New York

The following factors are involved in making this determination:

- Current and relevant key performance indicator data
- When the LEA was last reviewed and the type of review performed
- Department staff recommendations based on experience with the LEA
- Whether the LEA has requested a review
- Consideration of other Department activities currently ongoing in the LEA
- History of substantiated complaints against the LEA
- Regional district superintendent recommendations

### Ohio

To be determined by stakeholder group

### Pennsylvania

See question 2.

### Post-exit Follow-up

1. Do you have any means of tracking students post-exit?
  - Employment
  - Post-secondary education

#### California

Yes, we have a means of tracking students after they exit school. Baseline data is collected while students are still enrolled in school, then we collect follow-up data one and two years after they leave their high school programs.

#### Florida

The Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP) within the Florida Department of Education is an interagency data collection system that obtains follow-up data on former students, including students with disabilities. FETPIP collects data that describe the employment, military enlistment, incarceration, public assistance participation, and continuing education experience of the participants being followed. It accomplishes its data collection by electronically linking participant files to the administrative records of state and federal agencies. Again, these data are collected at the individual student level and may be aggregated for students with disabilities. For more information about FETPIP, go to <http://www.firm.edu/doe/weois/fetpip/fmain.htm>.

#### New York

Yes. The New York State Education Department Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities is tracking representative samples of two classes of special and general education graduates over a six year period of time. Data was gathered from students of the class of 2000 and 2001 in their last month of their senior year in high school. Follow-along interviews with these former seniors are being conducted at one, three and five years out of school to determine how post-school transitions occur and change in areas of community living, working and postsecondary education. The tracking process is called the Longitudinal Post School Indicators Study (LPSI).

#### Ohio

On a large scale Ohio does not track students post exit. However, we are working with Kent State University and one of our regional SERRC centers to track students post exit on a small scale. Our hope is to be able to replicate their work across the state.

#### Pennsylvania

Tracking student post-exit data is not a state mandate in Pennsylvania. However, most intermediate units and/or school districts do track students after graduation via surveys or phone calls.

2. Do you use post-exit surveys?

- Please describe how they are administered.
- How effective are they? For example, what percentage of surveys is returned and are the data considered accurate?
- How expensive are they to administer?

### California

Yes, we use an exit survey. WorkAbility I has in place an annual data collection system designed to review and analyze individual site data, and combined regional and state WA I site data. The system is comprised of a computer reporting format design to generate reports at the local level and regional and state level reports when consolidated by the state. The individual student data collected includes baseline data, follow-up data and follow-along data spanning the baseline and two follow-up years. Data collected includes demographic, disability, educational setting, vocational courses, employment placement (subsidized and/or unsubsidized), educational and employment status at the end of year reporting period, future plans and other pertinent data while the student is in school. Post school data include employment status, post-secondary education and/or training, living situation, type of interagency services received, leisure activities and type of community services used. Data is collected annually, analyzed and compiled into a written report. We receive surveys on 80% of the students who participated in the program one and two years after they leave the system.

How expensive are they to administer? Each WorkAbility site that receives a grant utilize a percentage of their budget to cover the cost of conducting the survey. It's difficult to determine exactly how expensive. Conducting the survey involves a telephone interview, entering data and submitting the information to the state.

### Florida

No.

### New York

Yes. LPSI interviewers gather information about post-school community living activities, involvement with community services, use of assistive technology and accommodations, participation in postsecondary education, employment status, as well as perceptions regarding how well their high school experiences prepared them for critical tasks of living, learning and earning. Mailed forms of the survey are used if personal contact cannot be made.

### Ohio

NA

### Pennsylvania

See question 1

3. Do you have any means of tracking exiting students using actual employment (state employment systems) or enrollment (college/university systems) data? If so, please explain.

### California

Yes, we have a means of tracking exiting students using the state Employment Development Department database. We are close to finalizing an agreement with them and future plans include accessing the Department of Rehabilitation's database and the community college systems database.

### Florida

Yes. Among the data pooled by FETPIP are records from the Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation (wage reports from employer payrolls throughout Florida), the U.S. Department of Defense (rank/pay grade), U.S. Office of Personnel Management (federal government employees) and education enrollment records including public schools, community colleges, public universities, and the office of student financial assistance.

### New York

Not at this time.

### Ohio

NA

### Pennsylvania

PDE received an "OVR Grant" to start working during the 2003-04 school year in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. This collaboration will be looking at the tracking of exiting students in selected areas.

### **Parental Involvement**

1. Goal 4 of the Illinois Continuous Improvement Plan for Special Education states: "Illinois will increase the meaningful, effective involvement of families in the educational process of children with disabilities as measured by analyses of survey data and progress from baselines to be established in 2002-2003." Does your state have any means of measuring parental involvement? If so, please explain.

#### California

California does not have a statewide measure of parental involvement. A parent focus group component is part of the Special Education Self Review. Parent input is solicited to ensure parents understand their rights and services. During verification reviews a contractor with the Department, Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS), facilitates parent focus groups. In addition, California is the recipient of a federally funded State Improvement Grant (SIG) and a focus of the grant has been to increase parental participation.

#### Florida

Through Florida's focused monitoring activities, parents in identified districts are surveyed and participate in focus groups in order to obtain their input on the districts' effectiveness. All parents of students with disabilities and students who are gifted in the district are mailed a survey to complete. In addition, an invitation is extended to all the above referenced parents to attend a focus group. These measures provide valuable information about parental perceptions regarding their children's education and their involvement in that process.

Florida school districts use a portion of their Part B monies to implement a parent services project which includes developing and sustaining a district level parent advisory committee. Other activities include parent training activities and resources. A database about activities is maintained at the state.

Florida's Parent Training Information Center, Family Network on Disabilities (FND), is a partner in the State Improvement Grant. Through this partnership, FND is developing a parent survey and database to address parent perceptions of teacher effectiveness and parent involvement.

#### New York

Special Education Quality Assurance staff measure this in two different ways. Every program review includes a survey that is typically sent to every parent of a child with a disability in the district, and VESID contracts with a private firm to tally and report on all results, and these are included in the final report to the district. Eleven statements are presented for response, including, "I am welcome in my child's school when I visit or attend meetings;" and "I feel that I am an equal partner with my child's teachers and other service providers when we plan my child's program." In addition, each focused review includes a parent forum. Two approaches are used. In the first, only the parents of the students used in the case study are invited. In the second, all parents of students with disabilities in the district are invited. An additional variable agreed to in advance is

whether district staff will be present. If present, these staff play no role in the forum except to listen and observe. Standard questions are discussed, which are provided to the parents in advance of the parent forum. The results of the parent forum are included in the final report.

### Ohio

Currently we do not have a method for securing said information relating to parental involvement.

### Pennsylvania

Yes, via the IEP process. This information is verified when LEAs are monitored. In addition, Pennsylvania partners with the state Parent Training and Information Projects, Parent Education Network (PEN) to provide training and support to parents. Parents are included in all training activities sponsored by the state. Parent Education Network's comprehensive training plan focuses on joint training activities relating to the appropriate delivery of special education programs and services. All activities encourage positive communication and partnerships between parents and professionals serving special education students. All workshops and conferences are evaluated using evaluation surveys to produce data that measured levels of participant satisfaction and the impact of the information have on changing participants' behavior or beliefs. During 2002, 562 parents, professionals, and interested persons received assistance from the PEN educational consultants. In addition 5,000 guides, fact sheets, quick reference cards, handbooks, and brochures were distributed.

## Reporting of Results

1. What methods do you use for reporting special education results/progress to the public?
  - Special Education school/district profiles
  - Statewide results
  - Printed publications
  - Web-based reports
  - Press releases

### California

- Special Education school/district profiles  
Profiles by district of residence are posted to the website
- Statewide results  
A Statistical Summary of Special Education Data, District Profiles and results of statewide assessment results are posted to the web
- Printed publications  
District profiles, and results on Key Performance Indicator measures are available upon request
- Web-based reports  
District profiles, the Statistical Summary, reports of enrollment by selected variables, and results of statewide assessment
- Press releases  
Infrequently as warranted

### Florida

Florida produces annual LEA profiles that report on key data indicators. The profiles are printed and multiple copies are distributed to districts. The profiles are posted on the website at [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/datapage.htm) District monitoring reports may also be found on the website.

An annual data book is produced for the Administrators Management Meeting which includes data on various topics, such as assessment, expenditures, and disproportionality. Enclosed is the data book from September, 2002.

In addition, Florida will be posting reports from focused monitoring visits to [www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/](http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/).

### New York

New York State publishes an Annual Performance Report on Educational and Vocational Services and Results for Individuals with Disabilities that contains individual school district data on key performance indicators and Statewide data summaries. We plan to only publish a streamlined and redesigned edition of this publication on the Department's web site in the future.

A smaller, more succinct brochure entitled “Pocketbook of Goals and Results for Individuals with Disabilities” is published annually and provides an update on most of the State’s key performance indicators.

We also produce reports containing multi-year trend data on special education key performance indicators for Department staff and these are made available to the public upon request. It is anticipated that these reports will also be posted on Department’s web site in the future.

Our school report cards that contain State assessment results for all students and students with disabilities are posted on our web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/home.html>

The Fiscal Accountability Supplement and some special education key indicators data for each school district may also be found at the above web site.

### Ohio

The Department uses statewide, district and building accountability reports and local “report cards” to reporting special education results/progress to the public.

### Pennsylvania

Reports related to the progress of students are available in different ways:

- Standard & Poor’s (S&P) School Evaluations: Online publication of each school in Pennsylvania. Special Education data is forwarded to S&P and added to the reports every year.
- Special Education Data Reports: Printed copy of data collected sent to every school district/charter school, so they can review their data and see how they are doing in comparison to the state averages.
- Penn Data Statistical Summary: A yearly publication of students with disabilities in Pennsylvania. Currently, Pennsylvania has over 12 years of data available online for the public.
- Other: Special Education data is also forwarded to other Bureaus within PDE for reporting purposes.

2. Could you please provide us with copies of your public reports?

### California

All public reports are available at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/sed/>

Additional links to some of the data:

STAR:

<http://star.cde.ca.gov/star2002/report.asp?CDSCode=00000000000000000000&CL=10>

SABE: <http://www2.ctb.com/SABE2STAR/>

AYP: [http://ayp.cde.ca.gov/2002base/2003AYP\\_State\\_p1.asp](http://ayp.cde.ca.gov/2002base/2003AYP_State_p1.asp)

CAHSEE: <http://cahsee.cde.ca.gov/2002/ExitProg1.asp?cYear=2001-02&cChoice=ExitProg1&cAdmin=C&tDate=000000&Pageno=1>

API: <http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/APIPage2.html>

### Florida

See #1, above.

### New York

Our school report cards that contain State assessment results for all students and students with disabilities are posted on our web site at

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/home.html>

### Ohio

A sample of the accountability and local report card reports can be accessed at the following web page:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard/default.asp>

### Pennsylvania

Some of the reports can be found on the PDE website at [www.pde.state.pa.us](http://www.pde.state.pa.us).