

Children Enrolled in Special Education

DEFINITION

Children enrolled in special education is the percentage of students in kindergarten through 12th grade who received special education services in Rhode Island public schools or who were placed in private special education programs by their district of residence. Unless otherwise specified, references to students enrolled in special education in this indicator do not include pre-school children receiving special education services or parentally-placed special education students.

SIGNIFICANCE

Special education and related services are important resources for improving long-term outcomes for children with special needs, including increasing student achievement, graduation rates, participation in postsecondary education and economic success in adulthood.¹

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B mandates that local school districts identify and provide multidisciplinary evaluations for students ages 3 to 21 whom they have reason to believe have disabilities.^{2,3} Once found eligible for special education, a student must be provided with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) laying out goals, outlining specific steps for

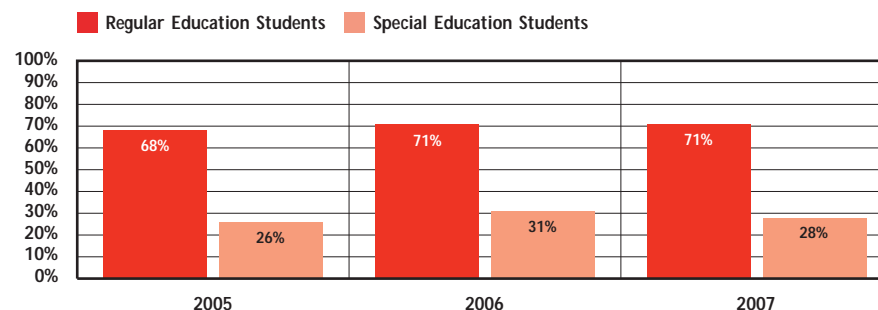
achieving the goals and providing services for the student based on their individual needs. Services described in the IEP must be provided in the least restrictive environment (i.e., to the extent appropriate, the child should receive special education services integrated into a regular education setting with non-disabled children).⁴

In the 2004-2005 school year (the most recent year for which national data were tabulated), Rhode Island had the highest percentage (20%) of public school students identified as disabled and receiving special education services under IDEA in the nation. The national rate was 14%.⁵

In Rhode Island in the 2006-2007 school year, there were 27,345 students enrolled in special education. Forty-three percent (43%) of Rhode Island children enrolled in special education had a learning disability, 19% had a speech impairment, 17% had a health impairment, 11% had an emotional disturbance, 4% had mental retardation, 4% had autism and 3% had other disabilities.⁶

Of the 27,345 students receiving special education services in Rhode Island in the 2006-2007 school year, 71% were White, 17% were Hispanic, 9% were Black, 1% were Asian and 1% were Native American.⁷

4th Grade Reading Proficiency, Regular Education Students & Special Education Students, Rhode Island, 2005 – 2007



Source: Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, *New England Common Assessment Program*, (NECAP) Grade 4, October 2005, October 2006 and October 2007.

- ◆ **In Rhode Island, students with disabilities achieve at lower levels than non-disabled students on the state assessments. In 2007, 28% of special education students were proficient in reading, compared with 71% of regular education students.⁸**
- ◆ **The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) requires states, districts and schools to demonstrate that students with disabilities make “adequate yearly progress” towards proficiency in reading and math. Together with IDEA, NCLB promotes accountability for the achievement of students with disabilities.⁹**
- ◆ **In Rhode Island in the 2006-2007 school year, 38% of the special education students were ages 5-10; 34% were ages 11-14; 27% were ages 15-18; and 1% were ages 19-21.¹⁰**
- ◆ **There were an additional 2,985 pre-school students in Rhode Island receiving special education services during the 2006-2007 school year. Of these children, 48% were receiving speech and language services, 36% had developmental delays, 6% had autism and 10% had other disabilities.¹¹**
- ◆ **Of Rhode Island students receiving special education services, 63% were in a regular class 80% of the day or more, 13% were in a regular class 40%-79% of the day and 18% were in a regular class less than 40% of the day.¹²**

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Table 37.

Kindergarten through 12th Grade Students in Special Education by Primary Disability, Rhode Island, 2006-2007

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006-2007 school year. Office of Special Populations, June 30, 2007. The denominator (number of students) is the "resident average daily membership" for the 2006-2007 school year provided by the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Due to changes in methodology, *Children Enrolled in Special Education* in this Factbook cannot be compared with Factbooks previous to 2008. Previous Factbooks included parentally-placed private school students and pre-school students receiving special education services – these students are no longer included. Children attending schools in other districts (e.g., when no appropriate placement exists in the home district) are listed under the district in which the students reside. An additional 2,985 students ages 3-5 receiving special education services are not included in the table.

NA indicates that fewer than 10 students are in that category; actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. Note that these students are still counted in the total students with disabilities column and in the core cities, remainder of state and state totals.

The category "other" includes: visually impaired/blind, hearing impaired/deaf, multi-handicapped, orthopedically impaired, and traumatic brain injury.

Core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, West Warwick and Woonsocket.

Independent charter schools reported for this indicator are BEACON Charter School, Blackstone Academy Charter School, The Compass School, CVS Highlander Charter School, International Charter School, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community Charter School, and Paul Cuffee Charter School. State-operated schools are William M. Davies Career-Technical High School, DCYF Schools, the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, Metropolitan Career & Technical Center and Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

References

¹ *Improving secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities: A forum – December 5, 2003.* (n.d.). Retrieved from the American Youth Policy Forum on February 11, 2008 from www.aypf.org

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF RESIDENCE	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE	MENTAL RETARDATION	AUTISM	HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	LEARNING DISABILITY	SPEECH DISORDER	DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	OTHER	STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	% STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Barrington	3,409	47	13	33	135	142	120	NA	16	507	15%
Bristol-Warren	3,459	34	34	28	28	199	97	NA	11	432	12%
Burrillville	2,559	46	18	25	106	156	131	0	15	497	19%
Central Falls	3,481	92	53	11	75	464	104	NA	12	814	23%
Charlho	3,572	20	20	30	39	142	130	NA	11	394	11%
Coventry	5,441	48	30	29	85	609	107	0	22	930	17%
Cranston	10,406	169	43	84	355	905	259	10	53	1,878	18%
Cumberland	5,019	89	23	53	266	265	236	NA	26	966	19%
East Greenwich	2,337	21	NA	33	110	85	83	0	NA	347	15%
East Providence	5,654	174	46	43	395	501	261	NA	37	1,458	26%
Exeter-W. Greenwich	2,008	45	13	11	86	115	83	0	NA	359	18%
Foster	287	0	0	0	NA	NA	27	0	0	37	13%
Foster-Glocester	1,566	11	11	NA	32	63	32	0	NA	161	10%
Glocester	657	NA	NA	NA	12	20	44	NA	NA	96	15%
Jamestown	698	NA	NA	14	33	43	15	0	NA	111	16%
Johnston	3,207	77	17	40	188	301	121	NA	18	768	24%
Lincoln	3,258	51	19	32	128	195	74	NA	13	513	16%
Little Compton	459	0	NA	NA	NA	36	20	0	NA	67	15%
Middletown	2,418	44	11	20	78	241	84	NA	12	493	20%
Narragansett	1,513	16	NA	13	27	80	80	NA	NA	229	15%
New Shoreham	140	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0	0	24	17%
Newport	2,249	51	12	29	22	291	73	0	17	495	22%
North Kingstown	4,222	69	22	25	99	295	142	NA	27	682	16%
North Providence	3,206	54	26	22	176	146	136	NA	18	581	18%
North Smithfield	1,860	21	NA	11	49	126	75	0	NA	295	16%
Pawtucket	8,667	141	105	65	149	605	293	NA	27	1,391	16%
Portsmouth	2,810	52	11	37	104	192	129	NA	NA	534	19%
Providence	25,015	700	346	96	263	2,520	753	NA	60	4,743	19%
Scituate	1,767	NA	NA	12	39	71	108	NA	NA	242	14%
Smithfield	2,508	10	10	16	64	122	52	NA	NA	285	11%
South Kingstown	3,794	80	13	43	148	242	156	0	26	708	19%
Tiverton	2,036	25	NA	20	46	232	91	NA	18	437	21%
Warwick	10,841	182	55	83	595	935	367	29	47	2,293	21%
West Warwick	3,613	126	40	14	69	349	141	0	22	761	21%
Westerly	3,466	98	12	38	100	186	125	NA	12	579	17%
Woonsocket	6,239	184	118	52	358	523	232	NA	38	1,509	24%
<i>Charter Schools</i>	<i>1,748</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>231</i>	<i>13%</i>
<i>State-Operated Schools</i>	<i>1,847</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>174</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>483</i>	<i>26%</i>
<i>UCAP</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>Core Cities</i>	<i>49,264</i>	<i>1,294</i>	<i>674</i>	<i>267</i>	<i>936</i>	<i>4,752</i>	<i>1,596</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>9,713</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Remainder of State</i>	<i>94,577</i>	<i>1,498</i>	<i>478</i>	<i>811</i>	<i>3,538</i>	<i>6,656</i>	<i>3,392</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>445</i>	<i>16,903</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Rhode Island</i>	<i>147,575</i>	<i>2,924</i>	<i>1,155</i>	<i>1,091</i>	<i>4,603</i>	<i>11,711</i>	<i>5,068</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>690</i>	<i>27,345</i>	<i>19%</i>

(continued on page 155)