

# K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services

## DEFINITION

*K-12 students receiving special education services* is the percentage of students ages six to 21 who received special education services in Rhode Island public schools or who were placed in private special education programs by their district of residence.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Early and accurately targeted special education services help students with developmental delays and disabilities improve their academic achievement and prevent grade retention.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 17% of U.S. children ages three to 17 have a developmental delay or disability. Children in low-income families, children with non-college-educated mothers, children with rural residences, children with low birthweight, and boys are more likely to have a delay or disability.<sup>2</sup>

The federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* guarantees a free appropriate public education to every child with a disability. Prior to passage of the original 1975 federal law, many children with disabilities were excluded from public school. Since passage, outcomes for children with disabilities have steadily improved. More students with disabilities are being educated in neighborhood schools, included in general education classrooms, reaching proficiency standards, graduating from high school,

enrolling in post-secondary education programs, and becoming employed as adults.<sup>3</sup> Concerns remain that not all children who could benefit from services are identified, that children of color are less likely to receive special education services than their White peers, and special education funding is not adequate.<sup>4</sup>

Despite improvements in high school graduation rates and post-secondary school enrollment, students with disabilities are still less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be suspended than students without disabilities.<sup>5,6</sup>

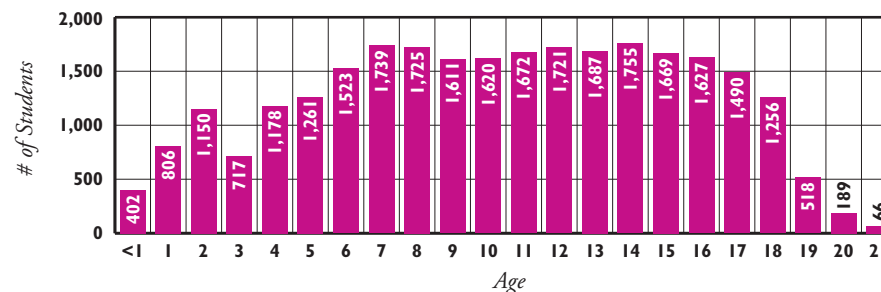
The federal *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* requires states to continue annually reporting the performance of students with disabilities on standardized assessments to inform accountability and action plans.<sup>7</sup>

In Rhode Island, students with disabilities are much less likely to meet or exceed expectations on the *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*. In 2019, of students in grades 3 to 8 with a disability, only 6% met or exceeded expectations in ELA and 5% in math compared with 44% in ELA and 34% in math without special education needs.<sup>8</sup>

In Rhode Island, the four-year graduation rate for the class of 2019 was 64% for students receiving special education services, compared to 88% for students not receiving these services. Some students enrolled in special education may take additional time to graduate.<sup>9</sup>



**Students Ages Birth to 21 Receiving Early Intervention and Special Education Services, Rhode Island, June 2019**



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Center for Child and Family Health, Early Intervention enrollment, June 30, 2019. Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Diverse Learners, Special Education Census, June 30, 2019. Includes parentally-placed students.

- ◆ As of June 2019, there were 21,868 students ages six to 21 (15% of all kindergarten through grade 12 students) receiving special education services through Rhode Island public schools. Thirty-six percent of these students had a learning disability, 19% had a health impairment, 12% had a speech/language disorder, 12% had an autism spectrum disorder, 8% had an emotional disturbance, 7% had a developmental delay, 4% had an intellectual disability, and 3% had other disabilities.<sup>10</sup>
- ◆ As of June 2019, 70% of students ages six to 21 receiving special education services in Rhode Island were in their regular classroom for 80% of the day or more, 23% were in their regular classroom for less than 80% of the day, 4% were in a separate school, and 1% were in a residential facility, a correctional facility, were home-bound, or were hospitalized.<sup>11</sup> Since 2000, the percentage of students ages six to 21 receiving special education services in the U.S. who spent most of the day (80% or more of time) in general education classrooms has increased 34%.<sup>12</sup>
- ◆ Of Rhode Island students receiving special education services in June 2019, 67% were boys and 33% were girls; 52% were low-income (receiving free or reduced-price lunch) and 48% were not low-income; 55% were White, 28% were Hispanic, 10% were Black, 5% were Two or more races, 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% were Native American; and 10% were Multilingual Learners/English Learners.<sup>13</sup>

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Table 45.

## Students Ages 6 through 21 Receiving Special Education Services by Primary Disability, Rhode Island, 2019

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL # OF STUDENTS	AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER	DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE	HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	LEARNING DISABILITY	SPEECH/LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT	OTHER	TOTAL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	% STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION
Barrington	3,339	64	11	44	73	10	100	67	20	389	12%
Bristol Warren	3,207	57	18	10	49	18	139	99	*	397	12%
Burrillville	2,270	43	16	21	55	13	139	29	10	326	14%
Central Falls	2,737	45	57	30	98	28	240	47	14	559	20%
Chariho	3,174	61	31	10	86	12	146	42	10	398	13%
Coventry	4,634	90	40	65	118	34	245	81	24	697	15%
Cranston	10,399	191	67	122	395	53	582	91	40	1,541	15%
Cumberland	4,635	101	47	54	80	29	177	103	36	627	14%
East Greenwich	2,522	52	38	16	70	13	70	30	*	296	12%
East Providence	5,262	112	65	85	149	34	296	96	22	859	16%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,605	36	15	*	35	*	43	31	*	177	11%
Foster	256	*	*	0	*	0	*	20	0	31	12%
Foster-Glocester	1,290	21	0	*	19	10	44	*	*	107	8%
Glocester	529	*	*	*	*	*	10	27	*	56	11%
Jamestown	499	12	*	*	17	*	27	21	*	89	18%
Johnston	3,210	59	40	26	126	15	231	39	20	556	17%
Lincoln	3,100	59	42	39	86	12	174	60	17	489	16%
Little Compton	234	*	*	*	12	*	17	*	*	42	18%
Middletown	2,152	43	24	39	76	19	126	38	11	376	17%
Narragansett	1,273	18	15	10	40	*	87	22	12	207	16%
New Shoreham	133	*	*	0	10	0	*	*	0	19	14%
Newport	2,144	48	28	40	52	25	170	36	11	410	19%
North Kingstown	3,939	62	19	38	80	16	146	78	19	458	12%
North Providence	3,524	70	42	49	82	22	237	80	17	599	17%
North Smithfield	1,648	25	12	15	38	10	79	40	*	224	14%
Pawtucket	8,783	127	109	76	249	55	613	174	28	1,431	16%
Portsmouth	2,410	40	12	21	83	*	83	43	*	297	12%
Providence	23,981	272	299	311	562	200	1,483	470	108	3,705	15%
Scituate	1,221	16	*	*	18	*	58	31	*	136	11%
Smithfield	2,405	52	18	18	49	*	148	20	*	323	13%
South Kingstown	2,931	53	13	21	75	18	85	26	14	305	10%
Tiverton	1,755	44	17	27	51	12	89	20	*	268	15%
Warwick	8,712	215	134	107	286	50	434	116	37	1,379	16%
West Warwick	3,568	99	53	95	118	34	233	76	11	719	20%
Westerly	2,683	50	37	34	105	14	104	37	28	409	15%
Woonsocket	6,027	184	112	159	364	77	420	201	30	1,547	26%
Charter Schools	8,428	89	68	59	207	25	494	188	13	1,143	14%
State-Operated Schools	1,780	12	0	28	39	*	73	*	61	220	12%
UCAP	137	0	0	0	*	0	16	0	0	17	12%
Department of Corrections	NA	0	0	*	32	0	*	0	0	40	NA
Four Core Cities	41,527	628	577	576	1,273	360	2,756	892	180	7,242	17%
Remainder of State	90,665	1,805	863	1,030	2,540	512	4,527	1,509	420	13,206	15%
Rhode Island	142,537	2,534	1,508	1,700	4,092	899	7,867	2,594	674	21,868	15%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Office for Diverse Learners, Special Education Census June 30, 2019. Data do not include parentally-placed students. The denominator (number of students) is the "resident average daily membership" (RADM) for grades K-12 in the 2018-2019 school year provided by RIDE.

Due to changes in methodology, *K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services* in this Factbook cannot be compared with Factbooks prior to 2015. Data about preschool students receiving special education services can be found in the *Children Receiving Preschool Special Education Services* indicator.

\* Fewer than 10 students are in this category. Actual numbers are not shown to protect student confidentiality. These students are still counted in district totals and in the four core cities, remainder of the state, and state totals.

NA indicates that no data are available.

Totals of students and percentages of students receiving special education may not sum due to rounding.

The category "other" includes students who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, deaf/blind, multi-handicapped, orthopedically impaired, and/or have traumatic brain injury.

Core cities are Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket.

Charter schools include Achievement First Providence Mayoral Academy, Beacon Charter High School for the Arts, Blackstone Academy, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, Charette High School, The Compass School, Paul Cuffee Charter School, The Greene School, Highlander Charter School, International Charter School, The Hope Academy, Kingston Hill Academy, The Learning Community, Rhode Island Nurses Institute Middle College Charter School, RISE Prep Mayoral Academy, Segue Institute for Learning, Sheila C. "Skip" Nowell Leadership Academy, Southside Elementary Charter School, Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts, and Village Green Virtual Charter School.

State-operated schools are William M. Davies Career & Technical High School, DCYF Schools, Metropolitan Regional Career and Technical Center, and Rhode Island School for the Deaf.

UCAP is the Urban Collaborative Accelerated Program.

(References are on page 187)