

# K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services

## DEFINITION

*K-12 students receiving special education services* is the percentage of students in grades K-12 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 outcomes 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 that special education funding is not adequate.<sup>4</sup>

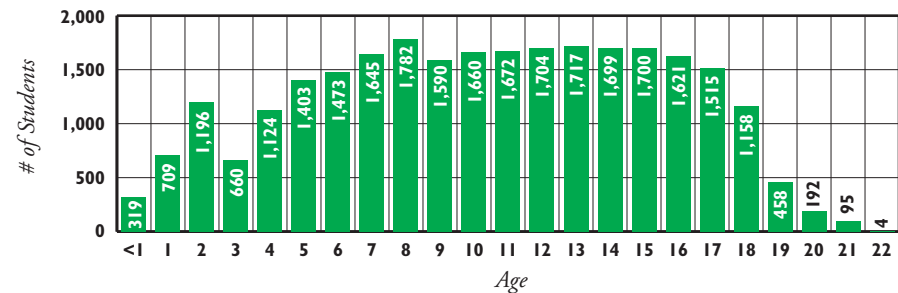
Despite improvements in high school graduation rates and postsecondary school enrollment, students with disabilities are still less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be suspended than students without disabilities.<sup>5,6</sup>

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 for students without special education needs.<sup>8</sup>

In Rhode Island, the four-year graduation rate for the class of 2020 was 63% for students receiving special education services, compared to 87% 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 22 Receiving Early Intervention and Special Education Services, Rhode Island, June 2020**



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Center for Child and Family Health, Early Intervention enrollment, June 30, 2020. Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Diverse Learners, Special Education Census, June 30, 2020. Includes parentally-placed students.

◆ As of June 2020, there were 21,660 students in grades K-12 (15% of all kindergarten through grade 12 students) receiving special education services through Rhode Island public schools. Thirty-five percent of these students had a learning disability, 19% had a health impairment, 12% had a speech/language disorder, 11% had an autism spectrum disorder, 8% had an emotional disturbance, 8% had a developmental delay, 4% had an intellectual disability, and 3% had other disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

◆ As of June 2020, 72% 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, 22% were in their regular classroom for less than 80% of the day, 6% were in a separate school, and 1% were in a residential facility, a correctional facility, were home-bound, or were hospitalized.<sup>11</sup> Between 2000 and 2018, 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 36%.<sup>12</sup>

◆ Of Rhode Island students receiving special education services in June 2020, 66% were boys and 34% were girls; 60% were low-income (receiving free or reduced-price lunch); and 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% were Black, 28% were Hispanic, 1% were Native American, 5% were Two or more races, and 54% were white. Twelve percent were Multilingual Learners/English Learners.<sup>13</sup>

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Table 45.

## K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services by Primary Disability, Rhode Island, 2020

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 IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Barrington	3,395	56	20	44	62	*	91	62	16	359	11%
Bristol Warren	3,118	55	15	12	44	18	149	107	*	408	13%
Burrillville	2,214	47	20	25	60	12	143	24	10	341	15%
Central Falls	2,743	42	69	25	94	29	210	38	18	525	19%
Chariho	2,966	59	40	10	87	*	143	47	11	406	14%
Coventry	4,401	92	42	76	124	34	230	78	18	694	16%
Cranston	10,228	191	88	123	403	45	585	94	44	1,573	15%
Cumberland	4,584	108	41	53	79	31	178	96	37	623	14%
East Greenwich	2,542	49	35	15	74	14	71	28	*	293	12%
East Providence	4,982	108	82	89	161	35	283	83	21	862	17%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,607	36	10	*	37	*	53	18	*	171	11%
Foster	214	*	*	0	0	0	*	17	0	27	13%
Foster-Glocester	1,356	19	0	*	22	*	45	*	*	111	8%
Glocester	552	*	*	0	*	*	10	30	0	62	11%
Jamestown	637	13	*	*	22	*	17	16	*	76	12%
Johnston	3,196	55	49	23	104	19	200	37	20	507	16%
Lincoln	3,131	68	45	34	79	13	179	56	13	487	16%
Little Compton	333	*	*	*	14	*	16	*	*	51	15%
Middletown	2,162	36	27	31	56	17	78	24	*	278	13%
Narragansett	1,130	17	12	10	39	*	71	25	11	188	17%
New Shoreham	133	*	*	0	10	0	*	*	0	20	15%
Newport	2,063	50	17	30	37	26	171	36	11	378	18%
North Kingstown	3,543	59	29	37	88	11	136	85	16	461	13%
North Providence	3,550	68	38	50	77	23	232	84	22	594	17%
North Smithfield	1,635	23	16	20	35	10	87	39	*	234	14%
Pawtucket	8,539	133	137	73	280	53	623	163	32	1,494	17%
Portsmouth	2,277	39	15	24	82	*	82	37	12	298	13%
Providence	23,610	278	358	300	594	204	1,400	454	107	3,695	16%
Scituate	1,189	22	*	*	20	*	60	33	*	150	13%
Smithfield	2,337	45	22	22	59	*	136	22	10	323	14%
South Kingstown	2,888	54	12	22	86	18	87	37	15	331	11%
Tiverton	1,743	39	22	25	52	11	97	26	*	279	16%
Warwick	8,448	202	164	97	266	50	410	124	38	1,351	16%
West Warwick	3,549	77	51	60	90	30	194	36	11	549	15%
Westerly	2,631	57	46	29	104	12	109	48	21	426	16%
Woonsocket	5,937	177	116	159	370	83	414	224	30	1,573	26%
Charter Schools	8,970	80	93	53	212	20	516	203	18	1,195	13%
State-Operated Schools	1,737	11	0	19	45	*	75	*	65	225	13%
UCAP	133	0	0	0	*	0	11	0	0	13	10%
Department of Corrections	NA	0	0	13	11	0	*	0	0	29	NA
Four Core Cities	40,829	630	680	557	1,338	369	2,647	879	187	7,287	18%
Remainder of State	88,732	1,759	970	986	2,482	491	4,352	1,463	408	12,911	15%
Rhode Island	140,401	2,480	1,743	1,628	4,090	882	7,606	2,553	678	21,660	15%

### Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Office for Diverse Learners, Special Education Census June 30, 2020. 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 2019-2020 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)