

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.¹ 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.²

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

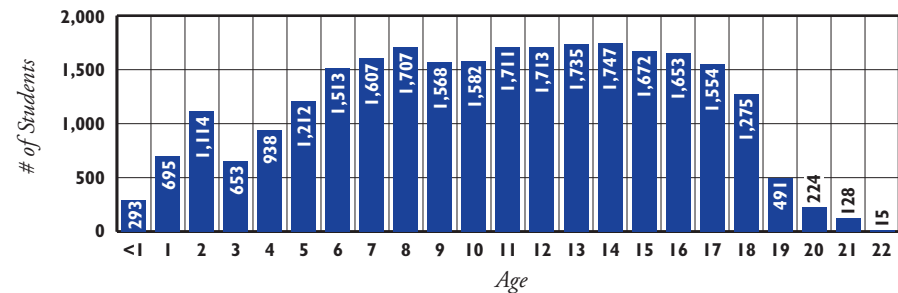
high school, enrolling in post-secondary education programs, and becoming employed as adults.³ Concerns remain that not all children who could benefit from services are identified, that Children of Color are less likely to receive special education services than their white peers, and that special education funding is not adequate.⁴

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.^{5,6} Nationally, about 65% to 75% of juvenile justice-involved youth under age 18 have mental, emotional, behavioral, and/or physical health challenges and 33% qualify for special education.⁷

In Rhode Island, students with disabilities are much less likely to meet or exceed expectations on the *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS)*. In 2021, only 12% of third graders with a disability met or exceeded expectations in ELA and 9% in math, compared with 46% in ELA and 28% in math for students without special education needs.⁸

In Rhode Island, the four-year graduation rate for the class of 2021 was 65% 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.⁹

Students Ages Birth to 22 Receiving Early Intervention and Special Education Services, Rhode Island, June 2021



Source: Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Center for Child and Family Health, Early Intervention enrollment, June 30, 2021. Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Diverse Learners, Special Education Census, June 30, 2021. Includes parentally-placed students.

- ◆ As of June 2021, there were 21,697 students in grades K-12 (16% of all kindergarten through grade 12 students, up from 15% in June 2020) 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 a developmental delay, 7% had an emotional disturbance, 4% had an intellectual disability, and 3% had other disabilities.¹⁰
- ◆ As of June 2021, 73% of students in grades K-12 receiving special education services in Rhode Island were in their regular classroom for 80% of the day or more, 21% were in their regular classroom for less than 80% of the day, 5% were in a separate school, and 1% were in a residential facility, a correctional facility, were home-bound, or were hospitalized.¹¹
- ◆ Of Rhode Island students receiving special education services in June 2021, 66% were boys, 34% were girls, and less than 1% were some other gender. By identified race/ethnicity, 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% were Black, 29% were Hispanic, 1% were Native American, 6% were Two or more races, and 52% were white.¹²
- ◆ In June 2021, 55% of Rhode Island students receiving special education services were low-income (receiving free or reduced-price lunch) and 13% were Multilingual Learners/English Learners.¹³

K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services

Table 45.

K-12 Students Receiving Special Education Services by Primary Disability, Rhode Island, 2021

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	3,346	59	23	45	78	10	97	53	17	382	11%
Bristol Warren	3,036	52	17	15	53	18	161	108	*	433	14%
Burrillville	2,088	42	18	24	48	15	146	33	11	337	16%
Central Falls	2,635	42	73	20	83	30	214	30	19	511	19%
Chariho	2,890	59	35	17	87	*	156	30	16	408	14%
Coventry	4,297	87	49	68	122	32	233	72	19	682	16%
Cranston	10,060	193	87	119	380	43	580	89	41	1,532	15%
Cumberland	4,493	109	31	54	66	36	228	91	46	661	15%
East Greenwich	2,501	47	29	*	78	11	74	40	*	294	12%
East Providence	4,825	110	74	87	174	36	288	82	23	874	18%
Exeter-West Greenwich	1,535	35	15	*	40	*	51	21	*	179	12%
Foster	206	*	0	0	*	0	*	13	*	25	12%
Foster-Glocester	1,130	17	0	*	22	*	52	*	*	112	10%
Glocester	511	*	*	*	11	*	10	30	*	68	13%
Jamestown	632	12	*	*	22	*	17	18	0	79	12%
Johnston	3,119	61	41	22	108	23	206	37	23	521	17%
Lincoln	3,143	78	36	38	84	12	179	52	10	489	16%
Little Compton	310	*	*	*	10	*	14	*	*	38	12%
Middletown	2,020	44	32	38	77	19	103	42	14	369	18%
Narragansett	1,061	17	*	*	34	*	73	20	10	172	16%
New Shoreham	147	*	0	*	10	0	*	*	0	25	17%
Newport	1,909	45	27	26	24	30	172	29	11	364	19%
North Kingstown	3,586	58	37	37	91	10	135	93	16	477	13%
North Providence	3,468	74	40	50	79	22	237	95	20	617	18%
North Smithfield	1,598	24	21	18	38	10	104	28	*	246	15%
Pawtucket	8,293	141	163	67	277	43	634	151	30	1,506	18%
Portsmouth	2,175	42	23	23	81	*	83	40	14	313	14%
Providence	22,355	273	373	267	572	206	1,287	453	106	3,537	16%
Scituate	1,229	17	*	*	24	*	68	30	*	155	13%
Smithfield	2,337	50	22	17	58	*	114	24	10	303	13%
South Kingstown	2,756	49	12	20	89	16	84	38	12	320	12%
Tiverton	1,641	33	28	29	49	11	84	31	*	273	17%
Warwick	8,143	188	161	82	279	54	401	128	40	1,333	16%
West Warwick	3,500	94	71	76	112	35	225	58	14	685	20%
Westerly	2,464	50	42	27	90	10	99	42	18	378	15%
Woonsocket	5,671	171	107	146	331	75	395	221	27	1,473	26%
Charter Schools	9,656	77	112	53	235	24	530	202	21	1,254	13%
State-Operated Schools	1,795	*	*	24	59	*	67	11	64	235	13%
UCAP	124	0	0	0	*	0	14	0	0	15	12%
Department of Corrections	NA	0	0	13	*	0	*	0	0	22	NA
Four Core Cities	38,954	627	716	500	1,263	354	2,530	855	182	7,027	18%
Remainder of State	86,154	1,761	992	971	2,521	503	4,484	1,480	432	13,144	15%
Rhode Island	136,682	2,473	1,821	1,561	4,085	882	7,628	2,548	699	21,697	16%

Source of Data for Table/Methodology

Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), Office for Diverse Learners, Special Education Census June 30, 2021. 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 2020-2021 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 188)