



CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES STUDY: Special Education in the Context of School Reform

Commissioned by the Rhode Island General Assembly in July 1999



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Paul V. Sherlock
Deputy Chair, House Committee on Finance
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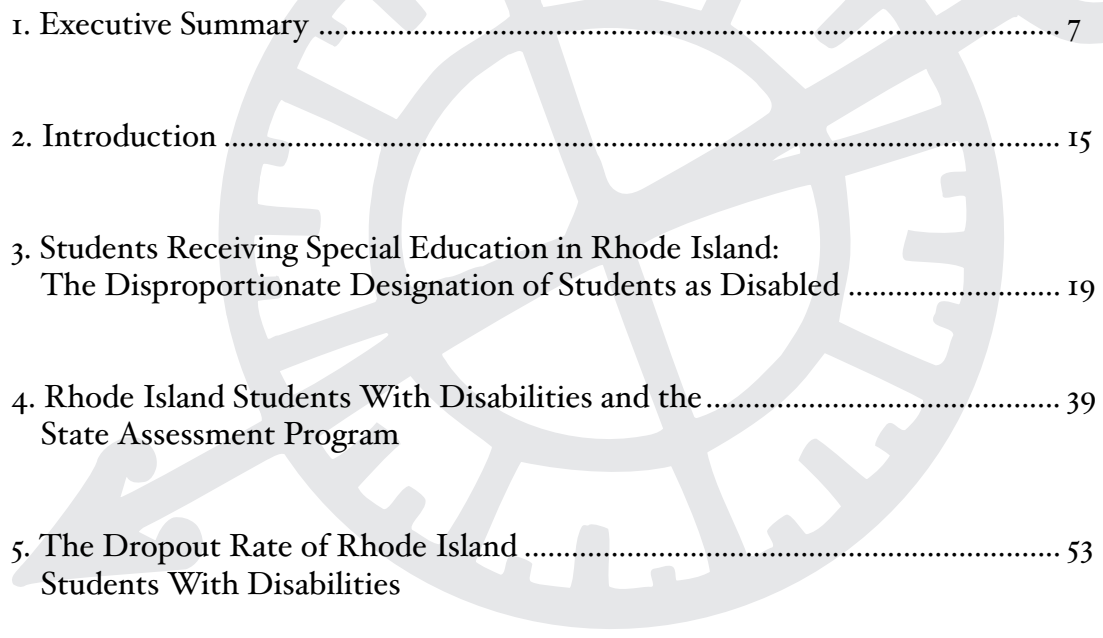
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Children With Disabilities Study: Special Education in the Context of School Reform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of Rhode Island has a proud history of being responsive to the education needs of **all** its students including those with disabilities. Rhode Island was one of the first states in the country to take positive and tangible steps to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Legislation enacted in 1952 required that each school committee in Rhode Island provide special education to satisfy the needs of students with disabilities. In 1963 the Rhode Island General Assembly established a commission to study the needs of students with disabilities. As a result, Rhode Island again was among the first to adopt regulations to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate services designed to meet their unique needs.

It was not until 1975 that the federal government established what is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

More recently in 1997, the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted Article 31, which ushered in the Rhode Island School Improvement Initiative. This budget bill holds districts and schools accountable for student performance results. In 1999, the General Assembly insured the inclusion of special education as a full partner in its school reform agenda. Article 23 of the 2000 fiscal year budget bill requires consideration of students with disabilities in the Rhode Island School Improvement Initiative.

In particular, Section 6 of the Article establishes the Children with Disabilities Study (CDS) to examine special education within the context of school reform. The Study is designed to provide information about children with disabilities and their special education programs in ways that inform the strategic and school improvement processes.

The Children with Disabilities Study requires investigation of the following four areas:

1. Identify factors that influence the disproportionate designation of students as disabled and their special education programming.
2. Describe the performance of students with disabilities on state assessments.
3. Identify the graduation rates of students with disabilities and describe factors that influence graduation. Upon their completion of school, identify the employment status, independent living status, and participation in post-secondary education of students with disabilities and describe educational factors that influence outcomes.
4. Examine federal and state special education funding.

The results of the Study can be summarized under three broad headings: **Accomplishments**, **Challenges** and **Forging Ahead**. A complete description of the Study is provided in the full report.

Accomplishments

Rhode Island has made much progress in its efforts to improve education for its children with disabilities.

- **Access to public education.** The goal of assuring access to public education for children with disabilities has largely been met. Over a twenty-year period there has been a steady increase in the number of school age children receiving special education in Rhode Island, from 13,184 in 1977 to 28,558 in 1997-'98. The most recent census data, as of December 3, 2001, indicates 31,616 Rhode Island students receive special education.
- **Accountability through assessment.** Rhode Island's assessment system is based on the core belief that all students are entitled to strive toward high standards. Therefore all students, including those with disabilities, are held to the same standards and participate in the State Assessment Program. Student results are reported both separately and together and are widely disseminated to schools, parents and the public via a comprehensive statewide analysis report, entitled *Information Works*. Student performance on statewide assessments informs district and school improvement planning.
- **Unified system of school improvement.** The Rhode Island General Assembly through Articles 31 and 23, and the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) through SALT (School Accountability for Learning and Teaching) have teamed up to hold schools accountable for raising student performance and closing equity gaps, including those associated with disability. The cornerstone of this system is a school

improvement planning process designed to strengthen learning and teaching in order to improve results for all children.

- **Exiting special education.** Students enter and exit special education annually. At the primary level (grades K-3), an average of 15% of the students exit special education annually. At the intermediate level (grades 4-6), an average of 18% of the students exit special education annually. At the middle school level (grades 7-9), an average of 32% of the students exit annually. At the senior high level (grades 10-12), an average of 41% of the students exit annually. Twelve different reasons for exiting special education are recorded through the special education census. The most frequent exit reason was that the student moved. Two reasons for exiting special education, “met IEP objectives” and “ineligible for special education,” suggest higher levels of student achievement. Approximately 60% of the exiting students did so for these two reasons.
- **Graduation rates.** The United States Office of Special Education Programs reported that for 1999-2000, 67% of Rhode Island students ages 14-21 with disabilities graduated with a regular high school diploma compared to 77% for Rhode Island students without disabilities.
- **Post school outcomes.** Rhode Island regulations require that students with disabilities, beginning at age fourteen, receive transition services. These services and activities are designed to promote movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, independent living, etc. Individuals with disabilities who actually graduated from high school attain the most positive outcomes. Of the Rhode Island graduates who were interviewed as part of the study sample, 70% are employed, 22% participate in postsecondary education or training, 86% report their health status as good to excellent, 46% participate in community organizations, 48% do volunteer work, 53% are registered to vote, 48% drive, 76% have a savings account, and 11% own their own house.
- **Special education contribution.** Rhode Island cities and towns have demonstrated their commitment to provide a free, appropriate public education to all students with disabilities by contributing increasingly larger amounts of their financial resources to the special education portion of their budgets. More than half of the total expenditures for students with disabilities are used to fund direct instruction and related services. The federal government contributes 10.2% of the additional expenditure to educate a student receiving special education (or \$605 per student).

Challenges

While much progress has been made, Rhode Island faces new challenges for educating students with disabilities as it moves its school improvement agenda forward.

- **Disproportionate designation.** Rhode Island designates from 2.76% to 3.97% more of its students as disabled than the average of the other fifty states and the District of Columbia. In 1997-'98, Rhode Island designated proportionately more of its students as disabled than any other state in the nation. The proportion of students designated as disabled in Rhode Island more than doubled between 1977 and 1997 (7.92% to 18.63%). A twenty-year trend of identifying an increasingly larger percentage of students as disabled is evident.
- **High prevalence disabilities.** Two disabilities, learning disabilities and speech/language impairment, account for nearly all of the difference between the percentage of students designated as disabled in Rhode Island and the national average. These two high prevalence disabilities include approximately 75% of all the students designated as disabled in Rhode Island. The definition and process for identifying students with these disabilities along with apparently limited early identification and instructional intervention outside of special education may be promoting the identification of students having low achievement rather than having a true disability.
- **Distribution by grade level.** The number of students receiving special education peaks in grades three and four and steadily declines thereafter. Many students enrolled in special education during grades three and four were referred while enrolled in earlier grades. Efforts to prevent disabilities should focus on children's early school experiences.
- **Reducing equity gaps.** Accurate reporting of student participation rates in state assessments is essential for determining the effectiveness of practices to address equity gaps. Calculating participation rates using multiple data sets (special education census and state assessment) creates a challenge to the accuracy of participation rates.
- **Measuring performance.** The mobility rates of students entering and exiting special education challenges conventional approaches to measuring performance. Given that higher performing students with disabilities who exit and return to general education are typically replaced by lower performing general education students, the performance gap between special and general education may actually widen across grade levels as the population of students changes.
- **Drop out rate.** Available data indicate that Rhode Island high school students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of high school than are all Rhode Island high school students. The data obtained reveal that for every one hundred students with disabilities who begin the ninth grade, twenty-two are likely to drop out of school within four years. However, existing statewide data must be interpreted cautiously as six of the larger high schools in the state reported that no students with disabilities dropped out. It is quite likely that the drop out rate for students with disabilities is

significantly higher if the drop out data from those high schools were reported accurately.

- **Reporting post school outcomes.** The IDEA of 1997 requires states to report on the post school outcomes achieved by individuals with disabilities including information on employment and postsecondary education. Prior to the Children with Disabilities Study there had not been any statewide efforts to measure these outcomes. A system of collecting and reporting post school outcomes has been pilot tested.
- **Special education data collection.** Information on students with disabilities and special education is currently collected and reported through multiple independent systems. There are major gaps and discrepancies in the information that is collected and what is collected is often unreliable.
- **Expenditures for special education.** The costs for special education continue to rise in Rhode Island. Results from the Rhode Island Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP) indicate that the estimated state average expenditure per special education student for special education services is \$10,198, and the estimated state average general education expenditure per special education student is \$5,410, for a total of \$15,608 (including capital and transportation). Results from the National SEEP indicate that the national average expenditure per special education student for special education services is \$8,080, and the national average general education expenditure per special education student is \$4,394, for a total of \$12,474. The average special education expenditure in Rhode Island varies according to the disability designation of the student and the type and level of special education and related services. Higher expenditures are associated with higher student severity and placement in schools not operated by the public school district where the student resides.

Forging Ahead

It is not enough to be good if you have the ability to be better. While Rhode Island has many accomplishments of which to be proud, new challenges call for new courses of action to be implemented in order to forge ahead with making districts and schools accountable for the performance results of all students including those with disabilities.

- **Unified Approach.** Special and general education are intricately entwined. Improving the performance of all students and closing equity gaps, will require a coordinated educational system with a unified, general and special education approach to school reform.
- **Prevention, early identification and intervention.** The first level of prevention is for all students to be provided with high quality reading instruction in general education. Many of the reading difficulties that result in the identification of children as learning disabled can be prevented through early identification and intervention programs.
- **Professional Development.** Increasing the capacity of general educators to provide research-based, intensive instruction at the primary and intermediate levels for all children who perform at unacceptably low academic levels will better serve all students and also reduce the prevalence of disability in Rhode Island.
- **Identification and over-identification.** In order to assure that only students with disabilities are so designated and receive special education, more policy direction (explicit identification criteria, consistent use of psychometrically precise assessment instruments, etc.) needs to be provided to districts for identifying students as having learning disabilities or speech/language impairments. Documentation for “lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math” must include the effects of early identification, intervention and intensive instructional programs prior to referral and accompany students as they are referred for special education consideration.
- **Improving performance.** Evaluating the effectiveness of school efforts to close equity gaps and improve performance results for children with disabilities will require a data collection system that reliably identifies their participation in statewide assessments.
- **Efficacy of special education.** Given the high student turnover rate, the exclusive use of performance gaps may provide a distorted measure of the effectiveness of special education. Therefore, more sophisticated measures of student learning and program efficacy are warranted.
- **Accuracy of graduation and drop out data.** Postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities are strongly influenced by graduating from high school. Designing a single system for collecting reliable data on the graduation and drop out rates of all students will provide an accurate baseline to measure progress towards increasing graduation rates.

- **Measuring post school outcomes.** Rhode Island is currently piloting a system for collecting employment, postsecondary education, independent living, community participation and other post school outcomes for individuals with disabilities. A two-tiered data system is potentially an effective means for collecting and reporting this information. The first tier would collect the IDEA required information on all students on a biannual basis. The second tier would collect more detailed information on a sample of the total population. This second tier would allow for analysis of the influence of a variety of school practices on post school outcomes.
- **Expenditures for special education.** Increases in special education spending result from higher per pupil spending *and rising numbers of students receiving special education*. Effective research-based prevention and early intervention programs would better serve all students. These proactive measures, in conjunction with clear, consistent identification criteria for special education eligibility will reduce the numbers of students designated as disabled in Rhode Island. Any human and financial resources recouped should be reallocated to support prevention and intervention activities. Although federal funds support 10.2% of the costs for providing special education services in Rhode Island, this represents only 25% of the federal support promised when the federal law was initially enacted in 1975.
- **Expenditures related to student severity and level of service.** Given the increase in expenditures associated with disability designation and type and level of special education service, more attention should be focused on effective service delivery models for children with low incidence disabilities and disabilities severely compromising function.
- **The overall need for a comprehensive, reliable data collection system.** Many questions in this study could not be adequately answered because of the absence of data and/or the inaccuracy in collection and reporting. A new statewide information management system is needed to collect, report and analyze reliable data that informs decision-making and ensures system accountability. It is recommended that this be a single unified system with an individual student identifier that includes both general and special education information. Better data in such areas as student performance, post school outcomes and the effectiveness and costs of special education will help educators, parents and policy makers make better decisions on improving results for all students including those with disabilities.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The State of Rhode Island has a proud history of being responsive to the educational needs of all its students including those with disabilities. Rhode Island was one of the first states in the country to take positive and tangible steps to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Legislation enacted in 1952 required that each school committee in Rhode Island provide special education to satisfy the needs of students with disabilities.

In February of 1961, the Rhode Island Board of Education requested the Rhode Island General Assembly to establish a commission to study the needs of students with disabilities and how these needs could best be met. The result was the formation of the Rhode Island Legislative Commission to study the Education of Handicapped Youth. Its report to the Legislature in March of 1963 formed the basis for the Regulations on Education of Handicapped Children, which were adopted by the Board of Education on December 19, 1963. Rhode Island was among the first states to adopt regulations to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate education and services designed to meet their unique needs. It was not until 1975 that the federal government established what is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

School Reform

Over the years, the focus in both general and special education has shifted from access to education to accountability for results. School reform efforts in Rhode Island began in earnest in 1994 when the Board of Regents adopted its ALL KIDS Agenda. In 1995 the governor and commissioner of education convened the Rhode Island Goals 2000 Panel, which developed the Rhode Island Comprehensive Education Strategy (CES), an action plan to improve student and school performance. In March 1996, a statewide task force created a blueprint for implementing the CES called School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT). SALT is school based and focuses on three central areas: student learning, performance and achievement; teaching and learning; and the school as a learning community.

In 1997, in an effort to strengthen accountability and improve student performance, the Rhode Island General Assembly enacted a budget bill, Article 31, which required a Rhode Island school improvement initiative. The CES and SALT blueprint were written into this state legislation. In 1998, Article 31 was revised by the legislature to drive change by holding districts and schools accountable for student performance results.

Article 31 includes the following provisions:

- Rigorous standards in terms of student performance on state tests;
- State assessments that are referenced to curriculum frameworks and administered to students at specific grade levels;
- SALT surveys and SALT school reviews;
- Information about students' performance on the assessments and the results of SALT surveys and school reviews provided to parents and the public;
- School district strategic plans and school improvement plans that identify actions to improve student learning;
- Progressive intervention strategies to assist schools and districts that continue to fall short on performance goals outlined in the district's strategic plan.

The effectiveness of actions to improve student learning is evaluated through student performance on State assessments and through SALT surveys and school reviews. These results inform the next cycle of strategic and school improvement planning.

In 1999, the General Assembly insured the inclusion of special education as a full partner in its school reform agenda by enacting Article 23 of the 2000 fiscal year budget bill that requires consideration of students with disabilities in the Rhode Island school improvement initiative. District strategic plans shall “be designed to improve student achievement with emphasis on closing the performance gaps among students such as the performance gaps correlated with poverty, gender, language background and disability” (lines 28 and 29, page one; line 1, page two).

Strategic plans shall include the “establishment of student intervention teams to address the instructional needs of diverse learners ...” (lines 1 and 2 page two). And, “each strategic plan shall include the development of interagency agreements for the coordination of services among state and local agencies responsible for service to children and families. These agreements shall address the identification and provision of services to preschool children with disabilities and children and youth with behavioral health care needs” (lines 18 – 21, page two).

Children with Disabilities Study

The Rhode Island General Assembly clearly expressed its intent for special education to be part of the Rhode Island school improvement process with another key provision in Article 23. Section 6 of the Article commissioned, for the second time in state history, a study to examine special education. The *Children with Disabilities Study* (CDS) was specifically established “to review special education within the context of school reform.”

Much has changed since the first study was commissioned over thirty-eight years ago.

The intent of the current study is to provide information about children with disabilities and their special education programs in ways that inform the strategic and school improvement processes.

Legislation establishing the Children with Disabilities Study requires investigation of the following four areas:

- Identify factors that influence the disproportionate designation of students as disabled and their special education programs.
- Describe the performance of students with disabilities on state assessments.
- Identify the graduation rates of students with disabilities and describe factors that influence graduation. Upon their completion of school, identify the employment status, independent living status, and participation in post-secondary education of students with disabilities and describe educational factors that influence outcomes.
- Examine federal and state special education funding.

The Rhode Island House of Representatives designated the Honorable Paul V. Sherlock, Professor of Special Education at Rhode Island College, as the Study Director. Two study groups guided the examination of special education within the context of school reform: a Legislative Study Group and a Professional Implementation Group. A total of 23 individuals representing a broad range of constituents with diverse perspectives participated in the Study activities. These individuals represented the Rhode Island General Assembly, institutions of higher education, the RIDE, the Office of Special Needs, the Association of Rhode Island Administrators of Special Education, Superintendents of Schools, the Parent Support Network, the State Special Education Advisory Committee, the Parent Information Network, the Rhode Island Technical Assistance Project, the University Affiliated Program, the Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and the National Educational Association of Rhode Island.

The framework of the Study includes six sub-studies to address the four areas identified in the legislation. Two separate studies address graduation rates and post school outcomes. In conducting the sub-studies, gaps and inaccuracies in collecting and reporting data were discovered. Hence there was a parallel interest in building the capacity of the system to provide accurate and complete information to be used in continuously improving the educational opportunities and performance of children with disabilities. These issues were both addressed with an additional study investigating a special education management information system. The six sub-studies and their authors are identified below:

1. *Students Receiving Special Education in Rhode Island:
The Disproportionate Designation of Students as Disabled*
Author: Dr. Richard L. Dickson
2. *Rhode Island Students With Disabilities and the State Assessment Program*
Author: Dr. Richard L. Dickson and Dr. Crist H. Costa
3. *The Dropout Rate of Rhode Island Students With Disabilities*
Author: Dr. Richard L. Dickson and Dr. Crist H. Costa
4. *Longitudinal Study of Post School Outcomes*
Author: Dr. Anthony Antosh
5. *A Special Education Management Information System for Program Leadership and Management*
Author: Dr. Richard L. Dickson
6. *Rhode Island Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP) Report*
Author: The American Institute for Research through the Center for Special Education Finance conducted the special education funding study through its Special Education Expenditures Project (SEEP).

The sub-studies were conducted between 2000 and 2002. This report of the Children with Disabilities Study is based on the results of the six sub-studies. Each individual study is presented in its entirety in the subsequent chapters of the report.

Children with Disabilities Study

Students Receiving Special Education in Rhode Island The Disproportionate Designation of Students as Disabled

Richard L. Dickson, Associate Director
September 2001

Educators and policy makers have expressed concern about the cost of special education. The number of children who receive special education influences its cost. This study describes the number of children who receive special education in Rhode Island relative to all other states and the District of Columbia (DC). Longitudinal trends are presented with Rhode Island special education census data. The relationship of poverty to disability in Rhode Island is explored. The special education policies of states similar to Rhode Island on educationally relevant indices are analyzed. Recommendations for policy development and disability prevention are provided.

Rhode Island relative to all other states

To determine the proportion of Rhode Island children receiving special education relative to all other states and DC, national special education census data were reviewed. These data are collected by the United States Office of Special Education Programs and presented in Annual Reports to Congress. Data presented in three recent Annual Reports to Congress (1995 - '96; 1996-'97; and 1997-'98) were analyzed. The percentages of children ages 6 to 21 and ages 6 to 17 served under IDEA Part B, receiving special education, are presented for the three years. Data are presented for Rhode Island and the average of the fifty states and DC. Differences between Rhode Island and the average of the fifty states and DC are presented for three years. Data for children ages 6-21 are presented in Table One.

Table One
Percentage of Children Age 6-21
Served Under IDEA, Part B

	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Rhode Island	11.26	11.73	12.08
50 states and D.C.	8.50	8.62	8.75
Difference between 50 states/D.C. and RI	2.76	3.11	3.33

When compared with the fifty states and D.C., from 2.76% to 3.33% more of Rhode Island's children ages 6-21 receive special education. Relative to the other states and DC, Rhode Island ranked second only to Massachusetts in two of the three years. Rhode Island ranked first in the proportion of its children receiving special education in the 1997-98 report to Congress.

Similar results for children ages 6-17 can be observed in Table Two. For this age group, Rhode Island exceeds the national average over three years by an increasingly larger percentage, from 3.21% to 3.97%. With this age group, Rhode Island again ranked second only to Massachusetts in two of the three years. Rhode Island ranked first in the proportion of its children receiving special education in the 1997-98 report to Congress.

Table Two
Percentage of Children Age 6-17
Served Under IDEA, Part B

	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Rhode Island	13.80	14.42	14.92
Massachusetts	14.53	14.44	14.50
50 states and D.C.	10.59	10.78	10.95
Difference between 50 states/D.C. and RI	3.21	3.64	3.97

The Annual Reports to Congress were used to identify the specific disability conditions that contribute to differences between the percentage of children in Rhode Island and the other states and DC. Differences between the percentage of children designated as learning disabled in Rhode Island and in the fifty states plus DC were calculated for each of the three referent years with each age cohort. These differences were also calculated for speech/language impairments, mental retardation, and emotional disturbance/behavior disorders.

Table Three identifies the contributions by disability condition to differences between Rhode Island the other fifty states for children ages 6 – 17 during the referent years.

Table Three
Differences in the Percentage of Children Ages 6-17 Served in
Rhode Island and 50 States and D.C. Under IDEA, Part B

	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998
Learning Disabilities	3.03	3.17	3.32
Speech/Language Impairments	.46	.60	.55
Mental Retardation	(.55)	(.54)	(.52)
Emotional Disturbances/Behavior			
Disabilities	.17	.22	.30
All Disabilities	3.21	3.64	3.97
LD+SLI+MR+ED/BD	3.11	3.45	3.65

During the three referent years for children age 6 – 17, 3.21%, 3.64%, and 3.97% more Rhode Island children receive special education than the average of the fifty states and DC. Three disability conditions, learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, and behavior disorders account for nearly all of the differences between Rhode Island and the other fifty states and DC. Learning disabilities and speech/language impairments contribute most to the differences between the percentages of students receiving special education in Rhode Island and the other fifty states. Relative to the other fifty states and DC, Rhode Island identifies slightly more students with behavior disorders and fewer students with mental retardation.

Because of the way they are calculated, the percentages of students identified as disabled in the Annual Reports to Congress differ from the percentages presented in the Rhode Island Special Education Census Reports. Differences in calculating percentages in the Annual Reports to Congress and the Rhode Island Special Education Census are presented in Figure One.

Figure One
Differences Between Percentages in Annual Reports to Congress
And Rhode Island Special Education Census

Annual Reports to Congress Rhode	Island Special Education Census
December SPED Census divided by Estimated Residential Populations	June SPED Census divided by Resident Average Daily Membership

The numerator used in the Annual Reports to Congress is the number of students receiving special education in December. The numerator used in the Rhode Island Special Education Census is the number of students receiving special education in June. Differences between the December and June census figures are relatively small.

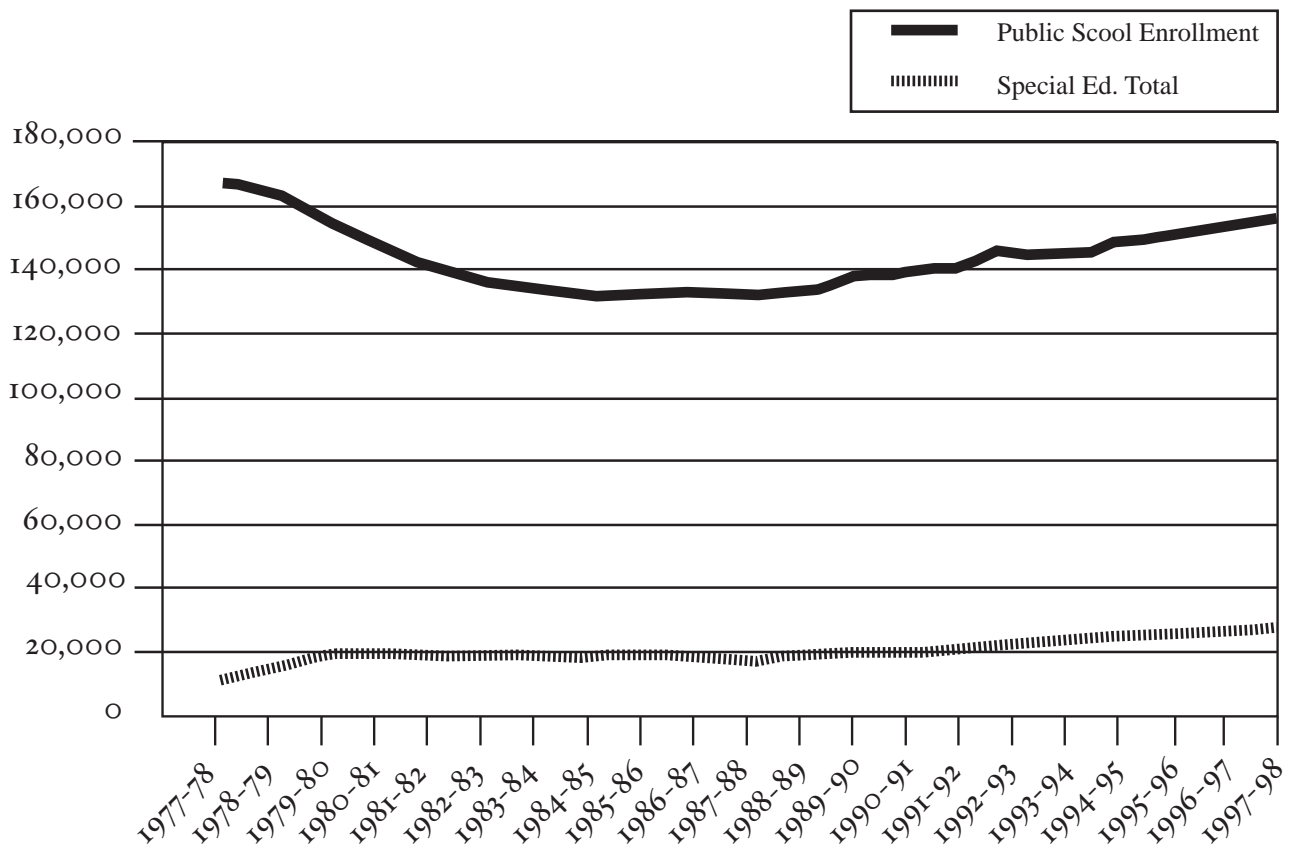
The denominator used in the Annual Reports to Congress is “estimated residential population”. The number of school age children used in the “estimated residential population” is derived from data collected by the U.S. Bureau of Census every ten years. This number estimates all students within a designated age cohort including those attending public, parochial, and private schools. The denominator used in the Rhode Island Special Education Census is “resident average daily membership”. This figure includes students enrolled in public schools only.

The denominator used in the Annual Reports to Congress is larger than the denominator used in the Rhode Island Special Education Census. Therefore, the percentage of students designated as disabled in the Annual Reports is lower than the percentage reported in the Rhode Island Special Education Census.

Rhode Island trends

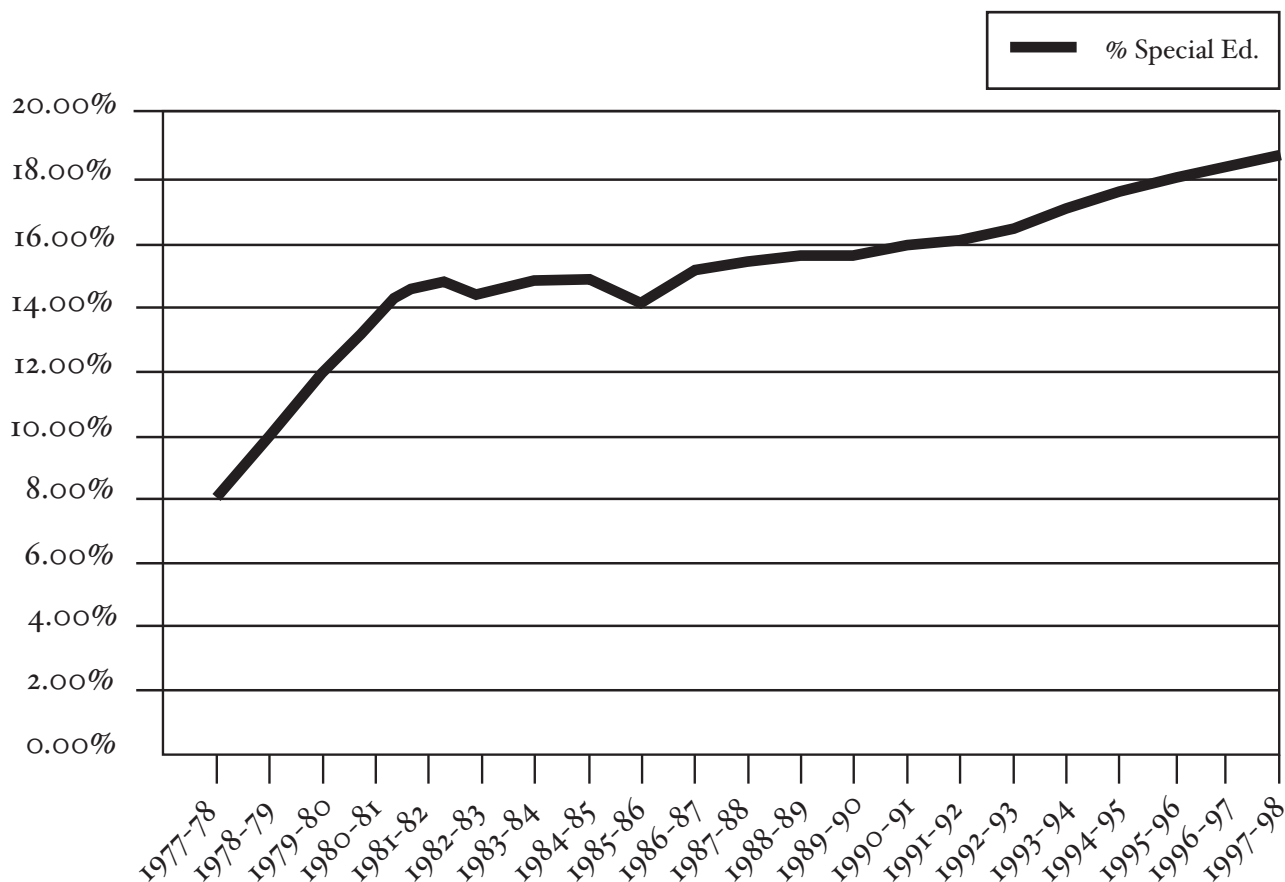
An overview of Rhode Island Special Education Census data over twenty years, from 1977—’78 to 1997—’98, is presented in Figure Two. The number of students enrolled in public school and the number of students receiving special education are provided.

Figure Two - Public School Enrollments and Special Education for twenty years in Rhode Island



Public school enrollment declined from 166,390 students in 1977-78 to a low of 133,450 students in 1985-86. It has gradually increased to 153,293 students in 1997-98. As public school enrollments decreased from 1985-86 and gradually increased, the special education enrollment steadily increased. The percentage of students receiving special education over twenty years in Rhode Island is presented in Figure Three.

Figure Three - Percentage in Special Education

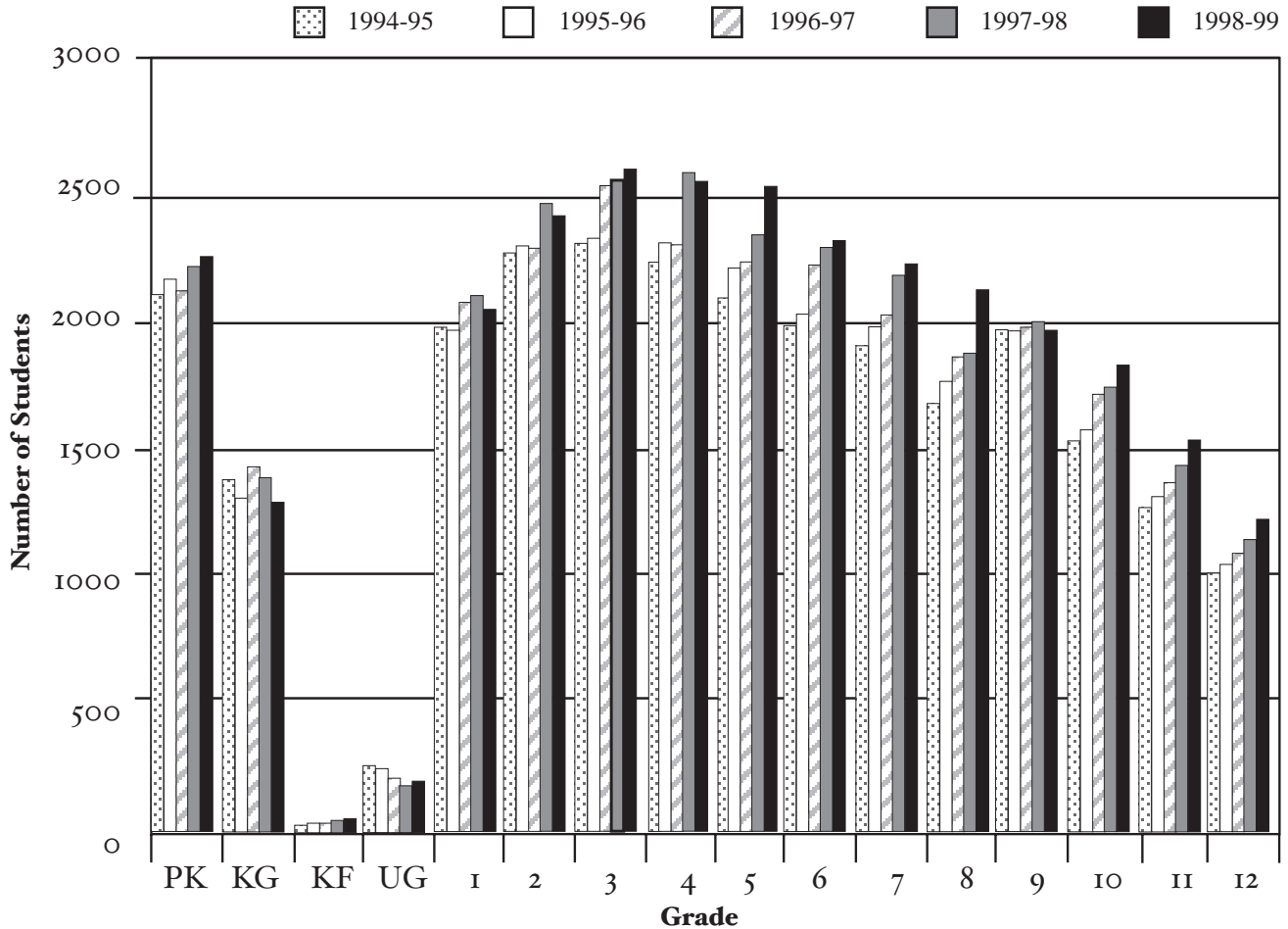


In 1977, 7.92% of public school students received special education; 13,184 students received special education and the resident average daily membership was 166,390 students. In 1997 — '98, 18.63% of the students were received special education; 28,558 students received special education and the resident average daily membership was 153,293 students.

The largest increase in the proportion of students receiving special education occurred from 1977 through 1983. During these years, the number of students receiving special education increased as the resident average daily membership decreased. Over the twenty-year period, an increasingly larger proportionate of Rhode Island's school age children received special education.

The distribution of students in special education by grade level was identified from the Rhode Island Special Education Census. Five years of census data, from 1994-95 to 1998-99 are presented as bar graphs in Figure Four.

Figure Four - Special Education Students by Grade



Three, four and five year old children receiving special education are clustered in PK (pre-kindergarten) graphs. The UG bars include children who are not assigned to a grade and are designated ungraded.

The number of students receiving special education peaks in grades three and four and steadily declines thereafter. Many students enrolled in special education during grades three and four were referred while enrolled in earlier grades. Efforts to prevent disabilities should focus on children’s early school experiences.

Poverty and disability are positively correlated. A higher proportion of children from economically impoverished families experience disabilities than children from economically advantaged families. Longitudinal estimates indicate a significant increase in the rate of childhood disability over the past fourteen years. The locus of increased risk for disability was among constituencies defined by poverty and single parent headed families (Fujiura and Yamaki, 2000). To explore the influence of poverty on the proportion of Rhode Island children receiving special education, state census data were reviewed. Using the four recent school years of data, school districts were stratified by disability prevalence. Districts were sorted from highest to lowest in terms of the proportion of students receiving special education. The five highest and lowest prevalence districts in the state were identified. The five districts closest to the state average were identified as medium prevalence districts. Districts in prevalence clusters are presented in Table Four.

Table Four
Rhode Island School Districts with High, Medium, and Low Percentages of
Students with Disabilities

High Prevalence Districts

Central Falls	23.29%
Johnston	22.77%
Newport	21.24%
Narragansett	21.12%
Woonsocket	21.03%

Medium Prevalence Districts

Tiverton	17.27%
Cumberland	17.80%
Middletown	18.05%
Barrington	18.26%
Exeter-West Greenwich	18.26%

Low Prevalence Districts

Lincoln	11.92%
Smithfield	14.45%
Providence	15.00%
Chariho	15.29%
North Smithfield	15.34%

According to Kids Count, more than fifteen percent of the children in Rhode Island’s core cities live in poverty. The core cities are Central Falls, Newport, Pawtucket, Providence, and Woonsocket. The number of children coming to school from families living in poverty may partially account for the presence of Central Falls, Newport, and Woonsocket as high prevalence districts. Johnston and Narragansett as high prevalence districts and Providence as a low prevalence district contradict a positive correlation between poverty and disability in Rhode Island school districts. Poverty alone does not account for the distribution of students by school district receiving special education in Rhode Island. In addition to poverty, other factors appear to influence the prevalence and distribution of disability in Rhode Island.

Special education regulations and designations of students as disabled

Rhode Island leads the nation in the proportion of its students receiving special education. The difference between the proportion of Rhode special education students and the special education students of the fifty states and DC is almost completely accounted for by two disabilities, learning disabilities and speech/language impairments. States' special education regulations may influence the number of students designated as either learning disabled or speech/language impaired and receiving special education.

To explore this possibility, prevalence data reported in three recent OSEP Annual Reports to Congress were analyzed to identify those states where the smallest proportions of students received special education. Data were reported for two age cohorts, six through seventeen and three through twenty-one years. Low prevalence states were listed. On measures important to education, states comparable to Rhode Island were identified by the Rhode Island Public Expenditures Council. Five states comparable to Rhode Island were selected from the low prevalence states: California, Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Because of the guidance Connecticut provides to districts for identifying disabilities, its special education policies also were analyzed. The percentages of students receiving special education in the low prevalence states and Rhode Island are presented in Table Five.

Table Five
Prevalence of Students with Disabilities
In Five States Comparable to Rhode Island
Over Three Years
1995-1996 to 1997-1998

	Students Between 6 and 17 years		Students Between 6 and 21	
	All	LD	All	LD
California	9.10%	5.54%	7.27%	4.40%
Michigan	9.74%	4.66%	7.86%	3.75%
Minnesota	10.00%	4.33%	8.12%	3.48%
Pennsylvania	9.39%	4.84%	7.64%	3.94%
Washington	9.44%	4.33%	7.56%	3.55%
Rhode Island	14.48%	8.68%	11.69%	7.04%

The special education regulations of these states were analyzed relative to the definitions and identification criteria for the high prevalence disabilities, the processes used in designating students with high prevalence disabilities, pre-referral strategies, and documentation for the use of remedial programming. Results of this analysis may be found in Appendix A.

Four states provide more direction than Rhode Island for identifying learning disabilities. Three states (California, Minnesota, and Washington) use a formula for determining the presence of a severe discrepancy between anticipated achievement and actual achievement, commonly referred to as the IQ-achievement discrepancy. One state, Pennsylvania, uses an extensive definition and criteria for identifying learning disabilities.

Three states (California, Minnesota, Pennsylvania) provide more direction for identifying students with speech/language impairments. California provides a psychometrically based definition for language disorders. Minnesota uses operational definitions and identification criteria. Pennsylvania requires the impairments to adversely affect academic achievement.

Results of policy analyses indicate that the proportion of Rhode Island students designated as learning disabled or speech/language impaired may be reduced through implementation of more rigorous identification procedures. Implementation of rigorous procedures will reduce the number of children eligible for special education. Reducing the number of children eligible for special education can contain special education costs. However, implementation of this process has implications for all students who experience school difficulty.

Referral for special education consideration is the single most significant school action that influences disability designations. Once referred, there is a very high probability that a student will be designated as disabled and receive special education. (Dickson and Costa, 1981; Dickson, 1991) Students are referred for special education; they are designated as disabled; and, they receive special education because they experience learning difficulties and require more intensive instruction than has been available through their general education experiences. Learning disabilities account for more than half of the children receiving special education in Rhode Island.

“Approximately 80 percent of children with LD have primary difficulty with reading” (Lyon, 2001). Many of the reading difficulties that result in the identification of children as learning disabled can be prevented through early identification and intervention programs. Indeed, without early identification and intervention, “children who get off to a poor start in reading rarely catch up” (Lyon, 2001,p.270).

The current Rhode Island criteria and process for determining learning disabilities require revision. They are indefensible in three respects. One, the definition and process promote the identification of children with academic difficulties just as these difficulties are becoming intractable, in the third and fourth grades. Two, the current process provides minimal guidance to educators in determining the presence or absence of specific learning disabilities. And, three, the definition and process are weak conceptually.

The cost of special education can be contained through promulgation of rigorous identification criteria and procedures for learning disabilities and speech/language impairments. Increased rigor will influence the identification of fewer children with these disabilities and, hence,

contain special education costs. Special education cost containment should not occur at the expense of children who require early identification and intervention programs. The Children with Disabilities Study has recommendations in two parts. Part one recommendations relate to the prevention of disabilities. Part two recommendations relate to identification procedures and criteria.

The recommendations

Part one

The first level of intervention for all students is provided through high quality reading instruction provided in general education classrooms.

Intervention programs that provide empirically -based intensive instruction in reading beginning at the kindergarten and first grade levels are required.

The capacity to provide research-based intensive instructional programs at the primary and intermediate levels for all children who perform at unacceptably low academic levels must be expanded.

Documentation for the “lack of appropriate instruction in reading or math” (section 300.534 (b)(1)(i) of the Rhode Island Special Education Regulations) must include the effects of early identification - intervention and intensive instructional programs and accompany students as they are referred for special education consideration.

Part two

Decisions about the designation of students as learning disabled must be directed through a consistent process for determining the presence of a “severe discrepancy” between anticipated and actual achievement.

To more accurately identify the actual achievement of students in kindergarten, first, and second grades, reliable measures must be identified and disseminated. Indicators of students learning potential in addition to IQ scores must be used.

The process may emphasize standard scores, must encourage the use of reliable assessment instruments, and should address statistical phenomena like regression to the mean and standard error of measurement.

A precise description of a student’s reading difficulties must be provided for referred students. This process must be practically and conceptually related to early identification and intervention in reading.

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Appendix A

Administrative Rules for Special Education

Definitions of High Prevalence Disabilities

Student Identification Process

State	Behavioral Disorder	Specific Learning Disability	Mental and Retardation Developmental Delay (3 to 6 years)	Speech or Language Impairment	Pre-Referral Process	Screening Program	Types of Evaluation
California	Same as RI except does not contain the socially maladjusted exclusion clause.	Same definition as RI. Criteria for determining "severe discrepancy" are explicit. "A severe discrepancy is demonstrated by: first, converting into common standard scores, using a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, the achievement test score and the ability test score to be compared;	MR definition same as RI. DD not explicitly identified as such; however, for children birth to four years and nine months, a definition is provided.	The language or speech disorder is more explicitly defined as inclusive of articulation, fluency, or voice disorders with definition of each. Language disorder is defined as follows. "A pupil has an expressive or receptive language disorder when he or she meets one of the following criteria (A) The pupil scores at least 1.5 standard			

State	Behavioral Disorder	Specific Learning Disability	Mental and Retardation Developmental Delay (3 to 6 years)	Speech or Language Impairment	Pre-Referral Process	Screening Program	Types of Evaluation
		<p>second, computing the difference between these common standard scores; and third, comparing this computed difference to the standard criterion which is the product of 1.5 multiplied by the standard deviation of the distribution of computed differences of students taking these achievement and disability tests. A computed difference which equals or exceeds this standard criterion, adjusted by one standard error of measurement, the adjustment not to exceed 4 common</p>		<p>deviations below the mean, or below the 7th percentile, for his or her chronological age or developmental level on two or more standardized tests in one or more of the following areas of language development; morphology; syntax, semantics, or pragmatics. When standardized tests are considered to be invalid for the specific pupil, the expected language performance level shall be determined by alternative means as specified on</p>			

State	Behavioral Disorder	Specific Learning Disability	Mental and Retardation Developmental Delay (3 to 6 years)	Speech or Language Impairment	Pre-Referral Process	Screening Program	Types of Evaluation
Connecticut Revised September, 1986; amended April, 1991	"Socially and emotionally maladjusted" is similar to the RI definition (04/24/91). The definition contained a qualifying term for "socially maladjusted" that was eliminated in the amendment.	The definition for "identifiable learning disability" is similar to RI. In the Comment Section to the 1986 Regulations: "Please note that the state department of education has published a guideline document on learning disabilities."	No definition for developmental delay. "A 'mentally retarded child' means one who, by reason of retarded mental development, is not capable of profiting from the educational programs of the public school established for the normal child." (4/24/91 amendment).	Slightly more specific than RI as "Impaired language" is defined (09/86)	Before a child is referred to a planning and placement team, alternative procedures and programs in regular education shall be explored and, where appropriate, implemented." (09/86)		"Each board of education shall ensure that a complete evaluation study is conducted for each child referred who may require special education and related services. The evaluation study shall include reports concerning the child's educational progress, structured observation, and such psychological, medical developmental and social evaluations as may be appropriate in determining the nature and scope of the child's exceptionality." (04/24/91).

Michigan Revised (10/15/90; 4/9/97)	“Emotionally impaired”...definition is the same as RI.”	Same as RI; criteria and report content are the same as RI	Three levels of mentally impaired with identification criteria for each – severely, trainable, educable. – “Primary impaired” is the same as RI developmentally delayed.	More descriptive of the types of speech and language impairments, but not more stringent than RI.	Review regular education- based pre- referral interventions required by Minnesota Statutes. These Statutes relate to a first grade preparedness program and assurance of mastery programs. The general guideline for the	Multidisciplinary evaluation process are described. Similar to RI. The IEP Planning Committee makes eligibility decisions. IEP may be written at the same meeting of Committee may be reconvened.
Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning	The definition is very different from the RI definition. Behavioral clusters are identified; severely aggressive or impulsive behaviors; severely withdrawn or anxious behaviors; severely disordered thought processes. Inclusionary and exclusionary clauses are stated. Identification	“Psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language” are described in the definition. Retains areas of performance and exclusionary clause from the RI definition. Identification criteria follow the definition. LD- Must meet requirements in the definition; severe discrepancy is defined as “1.75 standards deviations below	Definition for mental retardation is the same as RI. Criteria for mild- moderate and severe-profound are provided with the criteria. These definitions are significant for class sizes.	Each speech impairment (articulation, fluency, voice) and language impairment are operationally defined with identification criteria listed as part of the definition. Review student’s performance in nine specific areas.		

State	Behavioral Disorder	Specific Learning Disability	Mental and Retardation Developmental Delay (3 to 6 years)	Speech or Language Impairment	Pre-Referral Process	Screening Program	Types of Evaluation
Pennsylvania Chapter 342 (Effective 1990) Reviewed.	criteria follow the definition. BD- There is fairly extensive list of data requirements with an effort to define "to marked degree" and "over a prolonged period of time" relative to the behavioral clusters in the definition.	the mean of a distribution of difference scores for the general population of individuals at the pupil's chronological age."			educational assessment must document use of two pre-referral strategies.		
	Same as Rhode Island	A chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration or demonstration of language, spoken or written, or of nonverbal activities." (p4) Requires severe	Developmental delay is limited to students in Ex. The mental retardation definition is more general than RI. The term does not include a person with an IQ equal to or greater than 80.	Impairments of language, voice, fluency or articulation that are not due to sensory impairment or developmental delay, but which are present to such a degree that academic achievement is affected and the condition is		Screening shall include procedures that lead to intervention by the intensive support teacher/support team (IST). Three levels of screening required. IST/T described over three pages of regulations.	Referral for multidisciplinary evaluation shall be made when special education referral criteria have been met. A student's instructional program shall be evaluated in terms of its ability to allow the student to reach certain minimum

		<p>discrepancy in the seven areas. The term includes specific deficits in receptive and expressive language and deficiencies in initiating or sustaining attention, impulsivity, and other specific conceptual and thinking difficulties, such as nonverbal reasoning, integrating problems, motor coordination and social perception” (p5) Emphasis added.</p>		<p>significantly disabling to the affected person. (p5) Emphasis added.</p>		<p>competency levels in performance. The multidisciplinary evaluation has very specific guidelines and outcomes for students suspected of academic skills problems, low functioning students, and students with multiple disabilities. A comprehensive evaluation report is required. Re-evaluations are required every two years. Washington These rules have been revised since 1997 and probably are not in effect.</p>
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State	Behavioral Disorder	Specific Learning Disability	Mental and Retardation Developmental Delay (3 to 6 years)	Speech or Language Impairment	Pre-Referral Process	Screening Program	Types of Evaluation
<p>Washington</p> <p>These rules have been revised since 1997 and probably are not in effect.</p>	<p>Same definition as RI</p>	<p>Definition is the same as RI. Eligibility criteria are the same as RI except for the use of discrepancy tables for determining severe discrepancy. "The superintendent of public instruction shall develop and publish tables for the purpose of determining a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and academic achievement. Such tables shall be developed on the basis of a regressed standard score discrepancy</p>	<p>The definition of mental retardation is essentially the same as RI. Specific definitions of developmentally delayed birth to three, three to six and six to nine years are presented. The six to nine definitions applies, at the discretion of the district, for three years only to students who were identified as DD when in the three to six year age range. DD eligibility criteria are applied in five areas.</p>	<p>Same as RI</p>		<p>Identified as Child Find (172-100). Referrals (102) section includes a general description that identifies sources of referral and time lines within the referral through evaluation process.</p>	<p>General evaluation guidelines are stated. Specific evaluation procedures for students with suspected learning disabilities are similar to those of RI. The documentation of determination of disability section (10905) states: "A student may not be determined to be a special education student if the determinant factor for that decision is a lack of instruction in reading or math." Documentation for a learning disability is similar to RI.</p>

Children with Disabilities Study

Rhode Island Students with Disabilities and The State Assessment Program

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Introduction

IDEA '97 requires the development of educational goals for children with disabilities that are consistent, to the maximum extent appropriate, with the goals and standards established for all children. In Rhode Island, the Outcomes and Indicators Design Group addressed this requirement. The Design Group examined the educational goals for students with disabilities developed by the National Center for Educational Outcomes (NCEO) relative to Rhode Island's Common Core of Learning Goals and the curriculum frameworks related to these Goals. Many similarities among the NCEO outcomes for students with disabilities and the Common Core of Learning Goals for all children were identified. A case study approach was used to assess the appropriateness of curriculum frameworks for students with disabilities. Based on its analyses, the Design Group concluded that "students with disabilities should be taught the same general content as all students in Rhode Island including extended skills as appropriate". The phrase, "extended skills as appropriate", reflects the recognition that some students with disabilities require instruction in areas that are not explicitly referenced either in the Common Core of Learning Goals or the curriculum frameworks. Work done by participants in sessions at the 1998 Special Education Summer Leadership Institute provided confirmation for the Design Group's conclusions. Students with disabilities should be taught the same general content as all students. And, students with disabilities require instruction in areas not explicitly described in the curriculum frameworks.

Tests used in the Rhode Island Assessment Program are based on the content of the curriculum frameworks. All students, including those with disabilities, must participate in the State Assessment Program. Consistent with IDEA '97, the performance of students with disabilities on the state assessments must be reported with the results of all students and separately. Performance on State Assessments can provide an indication of student learning.

Standard reporting of state assessment results for students with disabilities can be misleading. Participation rates and transitions between regular and special education affect reports of assessment results. The first part of this study describes the complexities of determining

participation rates for students with disabilities. The second part of this study describes the transitions of students between regular and special education.

Participation rates on state assessments

Reports of assessment results vary over time as a function of the students who participate in assessments. Accurate interpretation of state assessment results for students with disabilities requires knowledge of the rates at which they participate the assessments. Participation rates are essential for interpreting results, identifying equity gaps like those related to disability, and determining the effectiveness of practices stated in strategic plans for addressing equity gaps. To date, participation rates of Rhode Island students with disabilities have not been reported.

The way in which participation rates are calculated can produce spurious results and, consequently, inaccurate interpretations. Illustratively, a report on participation rates of students with disabilities in the 1998 State Assessment Program was presented to the Children with Disabilities Study Professional Implementation Group. Two data sets were used to calculate participation rates, the State Assessment results and the special education census. The participation rates of students with disabilities on the fourth grade math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments were calculated. The number of students identified as having an IEP on the math or ELA test booklet was divided by the number of students identified as fourth graders in the special education census. Using this approach, fourth grade math test booklets were returned by 81% of the students with disabilities and a math test score was calculated for 72% of these students. Fourth grade ELA test booklets were returned by 78% of the students with disabilities and an ELA test score was calculated for 66% of these students (Office of Assessment, 2001).

Dickson and Costa (2001) employed a different approach to participation rates. In their approach, variation in participation rates is a function of “matched and unmatched student records” in the Special Education Census and the State Assessment data sets. Efforts to match records used the students’ initials and dates of birth. “Matched records” resulted from connecting a student’s record from the special education census to math and/or ELA test booklets in the State Assessment Program. “Unmatched records” resulted from the absence of a connection between a student’s records in the special education census and on the math or ELA test booklet in the State Assessment Program.

In the “matched records”:

- 129 students tagged with an IEP on their ELA test booklet were not so identified on their math test booklet;
- 590 students were tagged with an IEP on their math test booklet, but not on their ELA test booklet;
- 641 students identified as disabled in the special education census took an assessment, but were not tagged with an IEP on their test booklet.

Similar variation was evident in the “unmatched records”:

- In the special education census, 669 students were identified as fourth graders and did not participate in the fourth grade assessment.
- 171 students who took the math assessment were tagged with an IEP and could not be matched in the special education census.
- 539 students who took the ELA assessment were tagged with an IEP and could not be found in the special education census.
- Of the students whose math and ELA records matched, 282 students were tagged as having an IEP and could not be found in the special education census.

In the matched records of students who participated in the fourth grade math and/or ELA assessments, students were distributed among the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh grades in the special education census. If the denominator used to calculate participation rates is the number of students identified as fourth graders in the special education census, the denominator is totally inaccurate.

In these unmatched records, there were 992 students (171 + 539 + 282), who were tagged with an IEP on their test booklets and could not be found in the special education census.

Variations in both matched and unmatched records raise substantial alarm about simplistic approaches to calculating participation rates of students with disabilities in the RI State Assessment Program. The participation of many students with disabilities (n = 641) in the fourth grade State Assessment Program is not signified by an IEP tag on their test booklet(s). And, there are many students who are tagged as having an IEP on their test booklet(s) (n = 992) whose record could not be found anywhere in the special education census.

An indeterminate level of variation in matched and unmatched student records results from inaccuracies in recording student identifiers (first initial, last initial, DOB) on the test booklet, in the special education census, or both on the booklet and in the census. Using a common student identifier may reduce variation. However, electronic transfer of the student identifiers and electronic error checks are essential to increasing the accuracy of student identifiers.

Dividing the number of test takers at a grade level who are tagged as having an IEP by the number of students at that grade level in the special education census yields totally inaccurate participation rates. Simply requiring all Rhode Island children, including those with disabilities, to participate in the state assessment program is hollow and illusory if those who did participate are indistinguishable from those who should participate.

Increasingly more reliable participation rates will result only from the availability of more accurate data. Reliable participation rates can provide a basis for meaningful interpretation of students with disabilities performance on State Assessments. Meaningful interpretation of State Assessment results can prompt constructive program development and professional development activities. And, these activities can decrease equity gaps related to disability.

Lamentably, reliable and valid data to use in determine equity gaps relative to disability and in evaluating efforts to reduce such gaps currently are not availability.

Students entering and exiting special education

The number of students entering and exiting special education has long been misunderstood. The common conviction has been that once they enter, students remain in special education for the duration of their educational careers.

Using a large longitudinal data base, a recent study “examined the effect that transitions between regular and special education across grades had on performance trends for the special education population” (Bielinski and Ysseldyke, 2000). Results of this study indicate that the highest achieving students left special education and returned to general education. The lowest performing general education students who had become eligible for special education replaced them in special education. “The result was a substantial increase in the performance gap over time between regular education and special education students across grades.”

This study identifies mobility rates of students exiting and entering special education across grade levels. The study uses data collected through the special education census for four years from 1997 through 2000. Because of previously expressed reservations about the reliability of student identifiers, tracking the transitions of individual students was not attempted. General aggregations of student cohorts for four years are reported. An assumption of this cohort model is that students in one grade during 1997 are in the next higher grade during 1998 and then the next higher grade in 1999. So, students in the first grade in 1997 are assumed to be in the second grade during 1998, the third grade in 1999 and the fourth grade in 2000.

The total number of students served in a given year, the total number of students who exited from special education, and exit ratios are reported. The difference between the “total served” and the “total exits” is reported as the “returning entrants”; the “new entrants” is the difference between the “returning entrants” and the “total served” for the subsequent year.

Reasons for exiting special education are reported alphabetically from A through S. The letter, J, is omitted from the alphabetic range as it is used as a default category for clerical errors. Reasons for exiting special education related to each letter follow:

- A Moved, known to be continuing in special education
- B IEP objectives met
- C Exited at parents request
- D Deceased
- E Exit indicated by reassessment results
- F Dropped out
- G Graduated with a diploma
- H Reached age 21 and did not receive a diploma or certificate of completion
- I Transferred to a correctional facility, DCYF placement, of non-approved special education facility
- K Moved and not known to be continuing in another educational program
- L Graduated with a certificate of completion
- S New exit code not identified in the 1994 manual

Results

In Table I, special education census data are presented in student cohorts consisting of four grade levels. Due to the structure of the data set, student cohorts decrease by one year from grade 10 through 12.

Table 1
Grade Cohorts

		PK Cohort														B&E						
Year	Files Served	Total		Ratio	Returning		New		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E	B&E Totals
		Total	Exits		Entrants	Entrants	Entrants	Entrants														
PK	Totals	1,489	217	14.6%	-	-	68	35	8	1	89	1	-	-	-	-	13	1	1	-	124	57%
KG	Totals	1,017	90	8.8%	1,272	(255)	23	20	3	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	60	67%
1	Totals	1,983	374	18.9%	927	1,056	135	119	5	-	97	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	2	-	216	58%
2	Totals	2,380	543	22.8%	1,609	771	205	159	4	-	157	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	3	-	316	58%
	Sum	6,869	1,224	65%	3,808	1,572	431	333	20	1	383	1	-	-	-	4	44	6	-	1	716	240%
	Mean	1,717	306	16%	952	393	108	83	5	0	96	0	-	-	-	1	11	2	-	0	179	60%
KF/KG Cohort																						
Year	Files Served	Total		Ratio	Returning		New		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E	B&E Totals
		Total	Exits		Entrants	Entrants	Entrants	Entrants														
KG	Totals	1,334	174	13%	-	-	69	35	4	1	60	1	-	-	-	-	3	1	-	-	95	55%
1	Totals	1,827	196	11%	1,160	667	48	49	4	-	80	1	-	-	-	-	12	2	-	-	129	66%
2	Totals	2,328	400	17%	1,631	697	148	133	6	1	108	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	241	60%
3	Totals	2,669	516	19%	1,928	741	194	147	8	1	158	1	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	305	59%
	Sum	8,158	1,286	60%	4,719	2,105	459	364	22	3	406	3	-	-	-	21	8	-	-	-	770	240%
	Mean	2,040	322	15%	1,180	526	115	91	6	1	102	1	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	193	60%

Grade 1 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals	
1	2,064	347	17%	-	-	94	118	4	1	122	1	-	-	-	6	1	-	240	69%
2	2,199	191	9%	1,717	482	53	62	3	-	70	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	132	69%
3	2,567	483	19%	2,008	558	183	152	4	-	128	1	-	-	15	-	-	-	280	58%
4	2,706	621	23%	2,084	622	208	197	11	1	188	-	-	-	13	3	-	-	385	62%
Sum	9,536	1,642	67%	5,809	1,663	538	529	22	2	508	2	-	1	36	4	-	-	1,037	258%
Mean	2,384	411	17%	1,452	416	135	132	6	1	127	1	-	0	9	1	-	-	259	65%

Grade 2 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals	
2	2,257	424	19%	-	-	134	156	8	-	117	1	-	-	-	8	-	-	273	64%
3	2,521	228	9%	1,833	688	56	79	2	-	87	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	166	73%
4	2,537	514	20%	2,293	244	195	166	7	-	118	-	-	-	26	2	-	-	284	55%
5	2,578	527	20%	2,023	555	185	160	14	3	161	1	-	-	1	2	-	-	321	61%
Sum	9,893	1,693	69%	6,149	1,487	570	561	31	3	483	2	-	4	35	4	-	-	1,044	253%
Mean	2,473	423	17%	1,537	372	143	140	8	1	121	1	-	1	9	1	-	-	261	63%

Grade 3 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals	
3	2,535	445	18%	-	-	161	174	8	-	95	1	-	-	3	3	-	-	269	60%
4	2,499	270	11%	2,090	409	63	93	4	-	89	-	-	20	1	-	-	-	182	67%
5	2,502	523	21%	2,229	273	201	188	5	-	119	-	-	-	9	1	-	-	307	59%
6	2,597	581	22%	1,979	618	208	134	11	-	209	1	-	-	18	-	-	-	343	59%
Sum	10,133	1,819	72%	6,298	1,300	633	589	28	-	512	2	-	20	31	4	-	-	1,101	246%
Mean	2,533	455	18%	1,575	325	158	147	7	-	128	1	-	5	8	1	-	-	275	61%

Grade 4 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants													B&E Totals		
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S				
4	Totals	2,351	523	22%	-	175	202	8	-	121	1	-	-	13	3	-	-	323	62%
5	Totals	2,391	231	10%	1,828	563	64	71	7	-	88	-	-	1	-	-	-	159	69%
6	Totals	2,597	581	22%	2,160	437	208	134	11	-	209	1	-	18	-	-	-	343	59%
7	Totals	2,350	516	22%	2,016	334	190	116	10	1	171	1	1	-	26	-	-	287	56%
Sum		9,689	1,851	76%	6,004	1,334	637	523	36	1	589	3	1	-	58	3	-	1,112	245%
Mean		2,422	463	19%	1,501	334	159	131	9	0	147	1	0	-	15	1	-	278	61%

Grade 5 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants													B&E Totals		
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S				
5	Totals	2,270	516	23%	-	179	203	8	1	119	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	322	62%
6	Totals	2,170	187	9%	1,754	416	59	49	6	-	61	-	-	12	-	-	-	110	59%
7	Totals	2,154	532	25%	1,983	171	176	142	12	-	159	1	-	41	1	-	-	301	57%
8	Totals	2,080	436	21%	1,622	458	189	85	16	-	127	2	1	-	15	-	-	212	49%
Sum		8,674	1,671	77%	5,359	1,045	603	479	42	1	466	3	1	-	74	1	-	945	226%
Mean		2,169	418	19%	1,340	261	151	120	11	0	117	1	0	-	19	0	-	236	57%

Grade 6 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants													B&E Totals		
				A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S				
6	Totals	2,142	457	21%	-	182	141	15	-	105	1	-	-	12	1	-	-	246	54%
7	Totals	2,108	487	23%	1,685	423	176	123	14	1	139	3	-	29	1	-	-	262	54%
8	Totals	2,080	414	20%	1,621	459	167	122	12	-	82	1	-	30	-	-	-	204	49%
9	Totals	2,293	580	25%	1,666	627	197	71	28	-	167	42	3	-	71	1	-	238	41%
Sum		8,623	1,938	90%	4,972	1,509	722	457	69	1	493	47	3	-	142	3	-	950	198%
Mean		2,156	485	22%	1,243	377	181	114	17	0	123	12	1	-	36	1	-	238	49%

Grade 7 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals
1997	1,948	519	27%	-	-	197	142	19	-	129	-	-	-	30	2	-	-	271
1998	1,989	355	18%	1,429	560	145	112	14	-	57	3	-	5	19	-	-	-	169
1999	1,781	897	50%	1,634	147	219	104	23	1	163	73	277	-	36	2	-	-	267
2000	1,818	466	26%	884	934	131	49	26	2	117	88	1	1	43	8	-	-	166
Sum	7,536	2,237	120%	3,947	1,641	692	407	82	3	466	164	278	6	128	12	-	-	873
Mean	1,884	559	30%	987	410	173	102	20	1	117	41	69	2	32	3	-	-	218

Grade 8 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals
1997	1,902	415	22%	-	-	181	99	14	1	86	1	-	-	33	-	-	-	185
1998	1,763	843	48%	1,487	276	191	116	21	4	129	70	272	0	32	6	2	-	245
1999	1,784	773	43%	920	864	182	89	33	1	76	112	239	-	40	0	-	-	166
2000	1,555	375	24%	1,011	544	81	57	14	-	80	100	3	3	34	3	-	-	137
Sum	7,004	2,405	137%	3,419	1,683	635	361	83	5	371	283	514	3	138	9	2	-	732
Mean	1,751	601	34%	855	421	159	90	21	1	93	71	128	1	35	2	1	-	183

Grade 9 Cohort

Year	Files Served	Total Exits	Ratio	Returning Entrants	New Entrants	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S	B&E Totals
1997	1,854	746	40%	-	-	184	81	27	3	111	80	220	2	34	4	1	-	192
1998	1,766	780	44%	1,108	658	176	114	27	3	58	112	253	11	21	2	2	-	172
1999	1,500	559	37%	986	514	138	72	18	2	48	86	173	-	19	3	-	-	120
2000	1,309	1,173	90%	941	368	116	62	9	-	69	109	761	19	27	-	1	-	131
Sum	6,429	3,258	211%	3,035	1,540	614	329	82	8	285	387	1,407	32	101	10	4	-	614
Mean	1,607	815	53%	759	385	154	82	21	2	71	97	352	8	25	2	1	-	154

Grade 10 Cohort

Year	Total			Returning Entrants	New Entrants	B&E													B&E Totals	
	Files Served	Exits	Ratio			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S			
10	Totals	1,731	785	45%	-	-	186	97	22	2	85	117	231	2	40	2	1	-	182	23%
11	Totals	1,498	504	34%	946	552	115	78	13	2	31	77	163	0	20	5	1	-	109	22%
12	Totals	1,362	619	45%	994	368	124	77	21	1	49	94	228	1	22	2	-	-	126	20%
	Sum	4,591	1,908	124%	1,939	921	425	252	55	5	165	288	622	3	83	9	2	-	417	65%
	Mean	1,530	636	41%	646	307	142	84	18	2	55	96	207	1	28	3	1	-	139	22%

Grade 11 Cohort

Year	Total			Returning Entrants	New Entrants	B&E													B&E Totals	
	Files Served	Exits	Ratio			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S			
11	Totals	1,394	618	44%	-	-	146	65	20	1	54	113	183	1	31	3	0	-	120	19%
12	Totals	1,277	456	36%	776	501	89	65	12	2	31	61	166	0	18	2	10	-	95	21%
	Sum	2,671	1,074	80%	776	501	235	130	32	3	85	174	349	2	48	5	11	-	215	40%
	Mean	1,336	537	40%	388	251	118	65	16	2	42	87	175	1	24	3	5	-	107	20%

Grade 12 Cohort

Year	Total			Returning Entrants	New Entrants	B&E													B&E Totals	
	Files Served	Exits	Ratio			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	K	L	S			
12	Totals	1,207	1,173	97%	-	-	116	62	9	-	69	109	761	19	27	-	1	-	131	11%
	Sum	1,207	1,173	97%	-	-	116	62	9	-	69	109	761	19	27	-	1	-	131	11%
	Mean	1,207	1,173	97%	-	-	116	62	9	-	69	109	761	19	27	-	1	-	131	11%

These census data indicate an active process of students exiting from and entering Rhode Island special education programs. The average annual special education exit rate ranges from 15% in the KF/KG Cohort to 53% in the Grade 9 Cohort. At the primary level (grades K-3), an average of 15% of the students exit special education annually. At the intermediate level (grades 4-6), an average of 18% of the students exit special education annually. At the middle school level (grades 7-9), an average of 32% of the students exit annually. At the senior high level (grades 10-12), an average of 41% of the students exit annually.

Twelve different reasons for exiting special education are recorded through the special education census. The most frequent exit reason was that the student moved from the reporting district to another district and is known to be continuing in special education. Two reasons for exiting special education suggest higher levels of student achievement, met IEP objectives and ineligible for special education. Approximately 60% of the exiting students did so for these two reasons. A large number of students dropout from grades nine through twelve.

In Table II, exit ratios are presented numerically and graphically. The numerical data and the graph show exit ratios across cohorts clustering around 20% per year. The most notable exception to this clustering occurs with the Grade 9 Cohort during 2000. In this cohort, the ninth graders are twelfth graders in the year 2000. From Table I, 761 students who are twelfth graders in 2000 graduated with a diploma.

Table 2-Exit Ratios

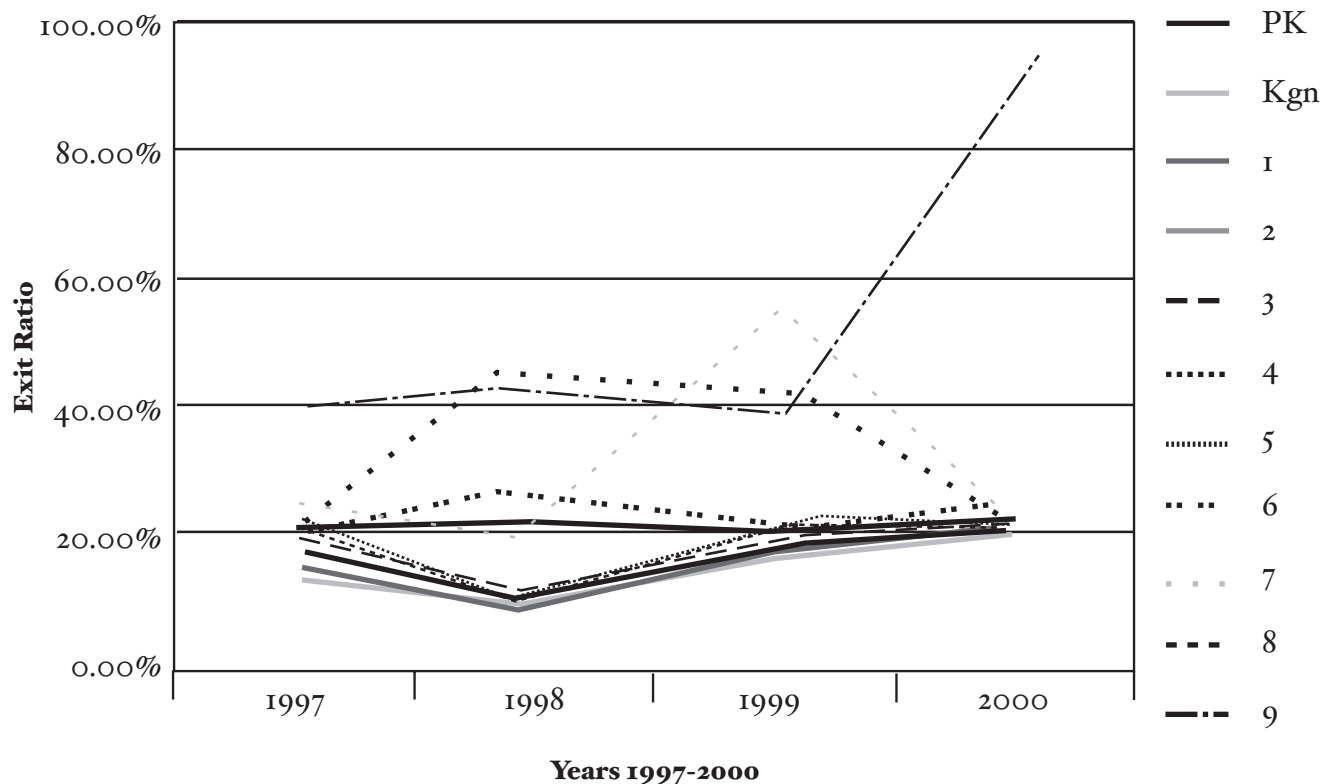


Table 2-Exit Ratios Continued

	1997	1998	1999	2000
PK	0.15	0.09	0.19	0.23
Kgn	0.13	0.11	0.17	0.19
1	0.17	0.09	0.19	0.23
2	0.19	0.09	0.20	0.20
3	0.18	0.11	0.21	0.22
4	0.22	0.10	0.22	0.22
5	0.23	0.09	0.25	0.21
6	0.21	0.23	0.20	0.25
7	0.27	0.18	0.50	0.26
8	0.22	0.48	0.43	0.24
9	0.40	0.44	0.37	0.90

Discussion

A significant segment of the special education population exits from and enters special education annually. The most frequent reason for exiting a district's special education program is moving to another district and entering its special education program. Efficiently transferring records enables uninterrupted special education experiences for these students. Inefficient records transfer interrupts children's educational experiences and may prompt unnecessary testing and time consuming meetings. The efficiency and effectiveness with which student records are transferred from district to district is an area for future study.

Students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through seventh grade frequently exit from special education either because IEP goals are met or because exit is indicated as the result of a reassessment. That is, the results of a reassessment indicate that the student does not have a disability and is no longer eligible for special education. Exiting for these reasons suggests the effectiveness of special education. Exiting for these reasons implies that the most competent special education students return to general education. If more competent students are replaced in special education by less competent students, then the performance of students with disabilities on state assessments may decrease from fourth to the eighth grades. This decrease may result from the effectiveness, rather than the ineffectiveness of special education as more competent students are exiting special education for general education.

From the available data, it is not possible to determine that the highest achieving students left special education and were replaced by the lowest performing general education students. Results of this study do identify a high student turnover in special education and suggest that the higher performing students exit to general education.

Performance trends of students with disabilities across grade levels should be interpreted cautiously because the population of students in special education constantly changes. If the higher performing special education students exit and are replaced by lower performing general education students then the performance gap between special and general education students should widen across grade levels. If a widening gap in test performance develops, it may result from changing student populations in special and general education. The comparative effectiveness of general education relative to special education cannot be concluded from a widening gap, should one develop.

Student performance on state assessments is the major indicator of school effectiveness. Increases in school effectiveness over time are indications of successful school reform in Rhode Island. Special education and students with disabilities cannot be included in the Rhode Island educational reform process with out more sophisticated measures of student learning and program effectiveness.

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Children with Disabilities Study

The Drop-out Rate Of Rhode Island Students With Disabilities

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Introduction

In Rhode Island, the drop out rate is calculated with data on a cohort of students when it is enrolled in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. A drop out rate is calculated for the student cohort at each of these grade levels. Calculations consider the class size at each grade and the grade levels at which students drop out. The drop out rate for each grade is calculated, aggregated, and reported as a total drop out rate for that group of students at the end of four years. Based on school data collected on the cohort of **all** Rhode Island students who graduated at the end of the 1999 school year, the drop out rate was **16.98%** (Information Works 2000).

Special education census data were used in calculating the drop out rate for students with disabilities. Because of differences in the way special education census data are collected and reported, the drop out rate for students with disabilities was calculated slightly differently than the calculations for all students. Data reported in June rather than October were used. Data on students with disabilities who dropped out during the school year and over the summer were aggregated. Because the grade levels at which students with disabilities who dropped out over the summer were not available, the total number of “summer drop outs” was distributed proportionate to students who dropped out during the school year. For example, 146 students with disabilities dropped out in the summer of 1996. During the 1996-'97 school year, 294 students with disabilities dropped out. Of these 294 students, approximately 15% dropped out in the ninth grade, 28% in the tenth grade, 30% in the eleventh grade, and 27% in the twelfth grade. The 146 students who dropped out during the summer of 1996 were allocated to a particular grade in proportion to the actual grades at which the 294 students dropped out during the 1996-'97 school year. The same process of proportionately allocating summer dropouts across grade levels was used with 1997-'98, 1998-99, and 1999-'00 data. Special education census data were transmitted to the Children with Disabilities Study from the Rhode Island Department of Education in three files. Files A and C included all students with disabilities. File B contained only students with disabilities who dropped out during the summer. Drop out rates of public school students with disabilities across four grade levels

(ninth through twelfth) and for four years (1997 to 2000) are presented in Table 1. Drop out rates for the cohort of students as it moved from ninth through twelfth grades are presented in Table 2.

Table 1

**Drop Out Rates of Public School Students with Disabilities
Across Four Grade Levels
During Four School Years**

1997 results

Grades	N of public school student disabilities	A/C – Files Dropouts Regular Year	B-File Dropouts Summer	Total Dropouts	Dropout Ratio
9	1854	42	21	63	3.41%
10	1731	77	39	116	6.69%
11	1394	81	41	122	8.74%
12	1207	74	37	111	9.22%

1998 results

Grades	N of public school student disabilities	A/C – Files Dropouts Regular Year	B-File Dropouts Summer	Total Dropouts	Dropout Ratio
9	1763	24	19	43	2.46%
10	1766	69	56	125	7.07%
11	1498	49	40	89	5.92%
12	1277	36	29	65	5.10%

1999 results

Grades	N of public school student disabilities	A/C – Files Dropouts Regular Year	B-File Dropouts Summer	Total Dropouts	Dropout Ratio
9	1781	25	18	43	2.40%
10	1784	71	50	121	6.80%
11	1500	56	40	96	6.38%
12	1362	61	43	104	7.65%

2000 results

Grades	N of public school student disabilities	A/C – Files Dropouts Regular Year	B-File Dropouts Summer	Total Dropouts	Dropout Ratio
9	2293	37	16	53	2.30%
10	1818	67	28	95	5.24%
11	1555	80	34	114	7.32%
12	1309	55	23	78	5.98%

Table 2

Grades/ Year	N of public school student disabilities	A/C – Files Dropouts Regular Year	B-File Dropouts Summer	Total Dropouts	Dropout Ratio
9 - 1997	1854	42	21	63	3.41%
10 - 1998	1766	69	56	125	7.07%
11 - 1999	1500	56	40	96	6.38%
12 - 2000	1309	55	23	78	5.98%
					22.84%

Discussion

On average, 3.35% of the students with disabilities dropped out while enrolled in the ninth grade or during the summer following their ninth grade. When the same cohort of students was enrolled in the tenth grade or during the summer following their tenth grade, 6.68% dropped out; when in the eleventh grade 6.19% of these students dropped out; and when this cohort of students was enrolled in the twelfth grade, 6.20% dropped out. So, the total drop rate for students with disabilities who began the ninth grade in Fall 1997 and were to complete the twelfth grade in the Spring of 2000 is 22.42% (3.35% + 6.68% + 6.19% + 6.20%).

The drop out rate for Rhode Island for all students who began the ninth grade in the Fall of 1996 is 16.98. The drop out rate for Rhode Island students with disabilities began the ninth grade in the Fall of 1997 is 22.42%. Rhode Island high school students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of high school than are all Rhode Island high school students. For every one hundred students with disabilities who begin the ninth grade, twenty-two are likely to drop out of school within four years.

Using special education census data and the same process employed in these analyses, the drop out rate for students with disabilities reported in 1999 was 31.49%. In the 1999 cohort analysis, the number of students with disabilities who dropped out was slightly higher than in this analysis, 401 to 392, and the total number of students with disabilities was lower, 5871 to 7107. As the number of students with disabilities remained relatively constant and the total number of students with disabilities decreased, the percentage of dropouts in 1999 increased.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), conducted by SRI International from 1987 through 1993, describes the experiences and outcomes of youth with disabilities nationally during secondary school and early adulthood. "NLTS data suggest that 38% of students with disabilities who left school did so by dropping out; 30% enrolled in high school but did not finish, and 8% dropped out before entering high school." So the available drop out data on Rhode Island students with disabilities indicate that they drop out of school at rates that are lower than students with disabilities in the United States.

Drop out rates for students with disabilities from demographically similar school districts are highly variable. Some school districts with relatively large high school special education enrollments report very low drop out rates despite much higher drop out rates for all students from the same high schools. Highly variable drop out data raise questions about the reliability of drop out rates calculated with data collected through the special education census.

To explore the reliability of dropout data for students with disabilities used in this report, the dropout rates for all students and for students with disabilities were compared by high school. These comparisons are presented in Appendix A of this report.

In Appendix A, the dropout rates for all students were acquired from INFO Works 2000. The dropout rates for students with disabilities were calculated consistent with the procedure described in this report. The third column of data is presented to provide a sense for the size of the high school special education programs and the raw number of students who drop out. It contains a simple aggregate of the number of dropouts and the number of students with disabilities at the high schools. Because of the cohort approach to calculating dropout, the

total number of dropouts divided by the total number of students does not equal the percentage of dropouts.

Six high schools which enroll comparatively large numbers of students with disabilities report that none of these students dropout. Conversations with special education department chairs and special education administrators in these districts support the inaccuracy of these data. Students with disabilities do dropout of these high schools even though the dropout status of these students is not evident in the special education census.

Special education census data usually are entered in the Special Education Administration Office. Drop out data for all students are entered in the High School Administration Office. Many of these offices are not networked and the systems are not interactive so drop out data entered in the High School Office may not be transmitted to the Special Education Office.

School districts that maintain their own special education management information systems are less reliant on the State special education census data for decision-making and, perhaps, less concerned with the accuracy of data that have limited utility for the district. Highly variable drop out data should prompt concern about the truthfulness of drop out rates for students with disabilities. It is quite likely that the dropout rate for students with disabilities is significantly higher than the figure reported.

Given these very serious limitations, the existing statewide data on drop out rates for students with disabilities must be interpreted cautiously. Individual school districts, which have confidence in their drop out data collection and reporting procedures, should carefully consider their drop out rates and what should be done about them. Student demographic factors like socioeconomic status and ethnicity are highly related to dropping out (Garnier, Stein, and Jacobs; 1997). However, educators cannot change these student factors so they should focus on factors that can be influenced. Early and sustained support improves school engagement when continued into high school with students who experience learning and behavioral disabilities (Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, and Hurley; 1998). Improving student engagement decreases drop out; engagement also increases learning. The support that promotes student engagement requires implementation in Rhode Island schools. Strategies for improving the continued enrollment of students with disabilities exist. They should be used!

CDS Recommendation for data collection and reporting

Collect data on the dropout rates for children with disabilities through the same process as the dropout data for all students are collected. Report drop out rates for students with disabilities by school in INFOWORKS.

Appendix A**Dropout Rates by High School for ALL Students and for Students with Disabilities**

High School	INFO Works 2000 All students	SPED Census Students w/disabilities (SWD)	High School S WD
Barrington	5.69%	7.30%	112
Burrillville	10.21%	42.93%	122
Central Falls	NA	5.80%	161
Coventry	14.08%	-0-	309
Cranston East	16.02%	-0-	271
Cranston West	13.80%	-0-	206
Cumberland	7.80%	6.99%	240
East Greenwich	16.61%	10.00%	110
East Providence	4.38%	21.95%	84
Johnston	11.82%	13.05%	166
Lincoln	6.48%	-0-	95
Davies	13.07%	NA	NA
Middletown	5.27%	10.82%	116
Narragansett	9.33%	28.08	87
Rogers	12.99%	24.45%	171
North Kingstown	8.97%	12.74%	226
North Providence	15.04%	9.23%	131
North Smithfield	NA	10.00%	56
Tolman	30.06%	31.10%	167
Shea	38.24%	44.10%	116

Portsmouth	4.99%	11.27%	118
Central	44.38%	21.92%	289
Hope	29.83%	18.31%	213
Mount Pleasant	28.34%	14.65%	193
Classical	0.40%	-0-	3
Alternate LP	25.87%	-0-	12
Feinstein	33.30%	-0-	24
Chamber of Com	21.17%	33.00%	22
RISDeaf	NA	-0-	42
Metropolitan	NA	-0-	17
Scituate	8.11%	7.14%	57
Smithfield	8.51%	9.33%	84
South Kingstown	13.76%	19.38%	145
Tiverton	14.72%	9.54%	118
Warwick Vets	9.20%	-0-	124
Pilgrim	7.17%	-0-	195
Toll Gate	7.71%	-0-	115
Westerly	10.75%	16.61%	216
West Warwick	17.72%	6.90%	126
Woonsocket	15.44%	31.53%	308
Mt. Hope	18.67%	13.44%	129
Exeter-WGreenwich	15.49%	7.74%	109
Charlton	14.37%	13.39%	155
Ponagansett	11.37%	10.11%	118

Career Tech

Charlton	10.00%	-0-	31
Cranston	4.00%	-0-	27
East Providence	NA	122.05%	86
Hanley	12.00%	36.67%	25
Newport	2.00%	-0-	2
Warwick	1.00%	-0-	3
Woonsocket	5.00%	-0-	0

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Children with Disabilities Study

Longitudinal Study of Transition and Post School Outcomes

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I. Origins and Purposes of the Study

This study originated with the with the Rhode Island Transition Independence Employment (RITIE) Project, Rhode Island's Systems Change Project in Transition. The study was merged with the Children with Disabilities Study to provide a mechanism for tracking the outcomes achieved by students in transition and by students with IEPs who have either graduated from high school or dropped out or ceased contact with their local school districts. There are three primary purposes to this study:

1. To describe the outcomes achieved by students in transition and by students with IEPs in post school settings.
2. To examine the relationship between those outcomes and a select number of school practices.
3. To examine changes in outcomes over time.

This report contains primarily descriptive information about 563 individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. This report also includes some beginning analysis of the relationship between the outcomes described in the study and a select number of school practices. This is an ongoing study. There are still interviews being conducted to round out the sample in a small number of school districts and with individuals who have low incidence disabilities. During Summer, 2002 we will reinterview a number of persons to examine how their transition and post school experiences have changed. This updated study will be released in Fall, 2002.

II. The Sample

The original intent was to sample between 5 – 10% of students with IEPs currently enrolled in Rhode Island high schools and persons who had either graduated or ceased contact (by dropping out or turning 21). A straight 10% random sample was selected from the current students in every high school in Rhode Island and from post school individuals who had attended those high schools. The number of persons actually interviewed represents about

60% of the original sample. The smaller percent is the result of two issues. First, a large percentage of students who had graduated or ceased contact are no longer living at the addresses provided by the school districts; thus, were unable to be located. Second, the study is dependent on local school districts providing contact information and obtaining permission to interview current students. A limited number of school districts, although cooperative, have been slow in providing the needed information.

The sample can be described in several ways. First, the sample (current number interviewed) includes:

- 288 students currently enrolled in high school 51% of the sample
- 196 individuals who graduated from high school 35% of the sample
- 79 individuals who dropped out or ceased contact 14% of the sample.

Second, the sample includes individuals with a range of disabilities. The comparison given below demonstrates that the sample represents the larger population of students with disabilities.

	Sample Distribution	Special Education Census (12-21)
Learning Disabilities	65.8%	64.4%
Behavior Disorders	7.8%	11.7%
Speech Impaired	5.8%	6.0%
Mental Retardation	5.2%	5.4%
Other Health Impaired	6.9%	8.1%
Physically Handicapped	2.4%	
Hearing Impaired	2.6%	
Other or Missing	3.5%	

The sample distribution is comparable to the disability incidence figures for secondary aged students presented in the Rhode Island Special Education Census. These census figures are from the 1999-2000 (the year the study was initiated).

III. Data Collection

The interview protocol was designed by a committee of state agency personnel, higher education faculty, administrators, teachers, and parents. The content for the interview was modeled on the National Longitudinal Transition Study, but also included items of interest to the committee. The interview seeks information about the individual's participation in several school practices and information about eight outcome domains.

A sample was selected for each school using names provided by the Rhode Island Department of Education. Families of current students were contacted to obtain permission to interview their child. Graduates and individuals who ceased contact were contacted directly. Each participant was interviewed either in person or by telephone. The interviews were conducted either by school personnel or by interviewers from the Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities. Although all the interviewers were trained, there were a limited number of discrepancies in how the data was recorded and in completeness of the information; thus, in most domains there is a small percentage of responses that are missing or not useable.

The remaining sections of this report summarize the descriptive information that was gathered through these interviews.

IV. Participation in Selected School Practices

The following twelve tables describe the participation of individuals who have disabilities in a variety of school activities. Approximately 60% of the respondents describe themselves as spending more than half their time in the regular classroom and learning essentially the same curriculum as general education students. Participants felt accepted by both general education teachers and by general education peers. Participants described a mismatch between how they learn and how their teachers teach. 40% report participation in extracurricular activities, but only 14% report participation in school sponsored service projects. Only 30% of graduates and current students participated in vocational or technical training in school; only 8% of persons who dropped out or ceased contact participated in such training. More than 40% of all participants had some real work experience in real work sites. Current students know more about their transition plans and participated more in developing those plans than the individuals who had graduated or dropped out in earlier years. More current students attend their IEPS and engage in planning before the IEP than either the students who graduated or the students who dropped out. The students who dropped out had the least participation in planning.

Table 1 – Time in the Regular Classroom

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
None	4.0%	7.0%	6.0%
0 – 25%	10.0%	11.0%	12.0%
25 – 50%	11.0%	11.0%	19.0%
50 – 75%	15.0%	20.0%	23.0%
75 – 100%	47.0%	42.0%	36.0%
No Answer/Missing	13.0%	8.0%	3.0%

Table 2 – Learn the Same Curriculum as General Education Students

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Same	53.1%	56.3%	49.8%
Same with Modified Evaluation/Assignments	20.0%	18.8%	22.4%
Modified Content	8.0%	9.4%	13.7%
Functional Application	3.0%	1.6%	5.8%
Different Curriculum	5.0%	1.6%	6.6%
No Answer/Missing	10.0%	12.5%	1.7%

Table 3 – Accepted by General Education Peers

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Not at All	5.6%	6.3%	2.5%
A little	29.0%	14.1%	18.3%
A lot	56.0%	65.6%	76.3%
No Answer/Missing	9.0%	14.1%	2.9%

Table 4 – Accepted by General Education Teachers

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Not at All	2.1%	6.3%	1.7%
A little	24.0%	14.0%	20.0%
A lot	64.0%	69.0%	75.0%
No Answer/Missing	10.0%	11.0%	3.0%

Table 5 – How Do You Learn Best How Do Your Teachers Teach

	Graduates	Teachers	Ceased Contact	Teachers	Current	Teachers
Lecture	9.4%	48.3%	9.4%	54.1%	17.0%	57.7%
Demonstration	36.0%	20.0%	35.9%	14.1%	43.6%	18.7%
Doing It Once	6.0%	3.0%	10.9%	9.4%	8.7%	3.7%
Doing It Several Times	24.0%	10.0%	15.6%	9.4%	17.4%	13.7%
Using it in Real Life	16.0%	9.0%	17.2%	3.1%	10.4%	4.6%
No Answer	9.0%	12.0%	10.9%	12.5%	2.9%	1.7%

Table 6 – Participation in Extracurricular Activities

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
None	53.1%	51.6%	55.2%
One	19.6%	25.0%	23.2%
Two or More	17.5%	15.7%	19.1%
No Answer/Missing	9.8%	7.8%	2.5%

Table 7 – Participation in School Sponsored Service Projects

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
None	76.9%	76.6%	83.8%
One	10.5%	9.4%	11.6%
Two or More	3.5%	4.7%	2.1%
No Answer/Missing	9.1%	9.4%	2.5%

Table 8 – Participation in Vocational or Technical Training

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
None	32.9%	12.5%	68.9%
One	23.0%	6.3%	21.2%
Two or More	9.0%	1.6%	9.3%
No Answer/Missing	35.0%	81.3%	1.7%

Table 9 – Work Experiences at Real Work Sites

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
None	41.3%	51.6%	55.2%
One	34.0%	31.3%	25.3%
Two or More	14.0%	9.4%	17.4%
No Answer/Missing	10.0%	7.8%	2.1%

Table 10– Student Knowledge of Goals in Transition Plan

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Knows None	44.1%	51.6%	39.1%
Knows Some	27.0%	32.8%	32.2%
Knows All	17.0%	7.8%	25.5%
No Answer/Missing	12.0%	7.8%	3.5%

Table 11– Student Participation in Developing Transition Plan

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Attend IEP	75.0%	59.4%	84.2%
Meet with Someone Before IEP to Plan	49.0%	21.9%	55.2%
Do a MAPS or other plan	17.0%	6.3%	18.3%
Self Advocacy Training	11.0%	6.3%	14.5%

Table 12 – Family Participation in Developing Transition Plan

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Attend IEP	85.0%	82.8%	89.2%
Meet with Someone Before IEP to Plan	40.0%	40.6%	40.2%
Do a MAPS or other plan	11.0%	6.3%	10.0%
Self Advocacy Training	8.0%	6.3%	10.0%

V. Employment Status

The percent of current students and graduates who are employed is comparable to the statistics for Rhode Islanders (15 – 24). The percent of participants who dropped out or ceased contact is lower than the Rhode Island statistic. Participants are employed for fewer hours than the Rhode Island comparison group. The average wage for project participants is less than the median wage for all Rhode Islanders in comparative job categories. The average wage for those who ceased contact or dropped out is lower than for any other category. Only 32% of graduates receive health insurance and only 11% have retirement plans through their employers. Very few of those who dropped out or ceased contact receive any benefits.

Table 13 – Employment Status

	Graduates n = 165	Ceased Contact n = 79	Current Students n = 288	Rhode Island Comparison Statistic
Employed	70.9%	45.3%	37.8%	37.7% (15 – 19) 75.5% (20 – 24)
Full Time	32.7%	25.0%	6.6%	15.0% (15 – 19) 55.8% (20 – 24)
Part Time	37.2%	20.3%	31.2%	22.7% (15 – 19) 19.2% (20 – 24)
Average Wage	\$7.60	\$5.90	\$6.60	\$10.22 Food Preparation \$15.33 Maintenance \$7.57 Counter Personnel \$7.99 Child Care
Benefits:				
Health Insurance	32.6%	3.4%		6.7%
Retirement	11.2%	3.4%		1.1%
Other	6.7%	0.0%		13.5%

VI. Participation in Post Secondary Education or Training

The percent of graduates who participate in Post Secondary Education or Training is about half the percentage for other Rhode Islanders of similar age. The number of participants attending college and the number of students attending technical or vocational programs were very comparable. 80% of those in college programs are in the Community College of Rhode Island. About 10% are participating in technical programs in the military.

Table 14 – Participation in Post Secondary Education and Training

	Graduates n = 165	Ceased Contact n = 79	Rhode Island Comparison Statistic
Post Secondary	21.7%	6.3%	45.2% (15 – 24) 63.3% (2001 High School Graduates)
Reasons for Program:			
Get a Degree	18.9%	1.6%	
Job Preparation	14.7%	7.8%	
Leisure	2.8%	0.0%	
Someone Made Me	1.4%	0.0%	

VII. Residential Status

Most project participants live with their families. 92% of current students have lived at their current address for at least four years. 60% of graduates and 90% of those who dropped out or ceased contact have lived at their current address less than four years. This speaks to the difficulty the interviewers had in locating participants who are no longer in school.

Table 15 – Type of Residence

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
My Own House	4.2%	1.6%	0.0%
My Family’s House	72.7%	81.3%	92.3%
My Own Apartment	14.7%	4.7%	0.0%
Supported Living	2.8%	1.6%	3.5%
No Answer/Missing	5.6%	10.9%	4.2%

Table 16 – Who Do You Live With?

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Parents	69.9%	73.4%	82.2%
Other Family	7.7%	10.9%	6.2%
Friends	9.1%	1.6%	7%
Others in Supported Living	2.8%	1.6%	3.5%
No Answer/Missing	10.5%	14.1%	5.1%

VIII. Community Participation

46% of graduates and 73% of those who dropped out or ceased contact belong to at least one community organization. 48% of graduates and 75% of those who dropped out or ceased contact are involved with volunteer activity. 17% of graduates voted in the 2000 election, none of the persons who dropped out voted in 2000. The percent of participants who dropped out who report problems with arrests and substance abuse is significantly higher than the other groups. More than 80% either live with their parents or have at least weekly contact with them. Almost 60% have frequent contact with friends.

Table 17 – Membership in Community Organizations

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
None	47.6%	20.3%	65.1%
One	36.4%	48.4%	16.2%
Two or More	9.8%	25.1%	9.1%
No Answer/Missing	6.3%	6.3%	9.5%

Table 18 – Volunteer Activity

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
None	46.9%	15.6%	62.2%
One	37.1%	57.8%	22.0%
Two or More	10.5%	17.2%	5.4%
No Answer/Missing	5.6%	9.4%	10.4%

Table 19 – Voting

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students	Rhode Island Comparison Statistic
Registered	53.1%	6.3%	11.2%	
Voted in 2000	17.5%	0.0%	.8%	61.4%

Table 20 – Problems

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Arrests	7.0%	31.3%	11.2%
Substance Abuse	6.3%	71.9%	7.9%
Other	5.6%	9.4%	5.0%

Table 21 – Social Integration

	Graduates	Ceased Contact
In the past month, how many times have you seen:		
Your Parents		
None	1.4%	1.6%
More Than 5	79.8%	84.4%
Other Family		
None	21.7%	10.9%
More Than 5	30.1%	43.8%
Friends		
None	9.1%	3.1%
More Than 5	57.3%	59.4%
Others		
None	9.8%	6.3%
More Than 5	13.3%	17.2%

IX. Mobility

48% of graduates, 39% of current students, and 12% of drop outs have a driver's license. 70% of graduates and 54% of current students have some degree of independent mobility. Those persons who dropped out or ceased contact are the most dependent on others for mobility and transportation.

**Table 22 Mobility
How Do You Get Around the Community?**

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
I don't	8.4%	1.6%	16.6%
My Family Drives Me	18.2%	50.0%	18.7%
I Use Public Transportation To get to a Few Places	2.8%	3.1%	5.0%
I Use Public Transportation To get to Most Places	12.6%	15.6%	8.7%
I Drive	48.3%	12.5%	38.6%
Other	6.3%	12.5%	1.2%
No Answer/Missing	3.5%	4.7%	11.2%

X. Financial Status

Participants who actually graduated from high school demonstrate more fiscal independence than either current students or participants who dropped out or ceased contact.

**Table 23 – Financial Status
Participants Who Have**

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
Savings Account	75.5%	57.8%	56.0%
Checking Account	44.8%	15.6%	11.2%
Credit Card(s)	28.0%	6.3%	5.0%
Loan(s)	16.8%	4.7%	2.9%
Insurance	55.2%	29.7%	39.4%
Retirement Plan	11.9%	6.3%	2.9%

XI. Health Status and Access to Health Care

86% of graduates, 83% of those who dropped out or ceased contact, and 84% of current students report their health status as good to excellent. The rates for medical and dental coverage are comparable to those for all Rhode Islanders; although there continues to be a percentage of persons with disabilities who are without medical and/or dental coverage. Participants report routine medical and dental visits at the same rate as other Rhode Islanders.

Table 24 – General Health Status

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
Excellent	39.2%	34.4%	41.5%
Very Good	30.1%	31.3%	20.3%
Good	16.8%	18.8%	22.0%
Fair	7.0%	10.9%	5.4%
Poor	3.5%	0.0%	.4%
Don't Know	2.1%	1.6%	2.1%
No Answer/Missing	1.4%	3.1%	8.3%

Table 25 – Health Coverage

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students	Rhode Island Comparison Statistic
Covered by Health Plan				
Yes	77.6%	84.4%	82.6%	98.0%
No	12.6%	9.4%	2.9%	
Don't Know	7.0%	3.1%	5.8%	
No Answer	2.8%	3.1%	8.7%	
Covered by Dental Plan				
Yes	65.7%	76.6%	78.4%	61%
No	22.4%	14.0%	9.1%	
Don't Know	7.0%	6.3%	4.1%	
No Answer	4.9%	3.1%	8.3%	
Time in the Last 12 Months When You Needed to See A Doctor, but Could Not Because of Cost				
	12.6%	9.4%	2.9%	
Time in the Last 12 Months When You Needed to See A Dentist, but Could Not Because of Cost				
	8.4%	6.3%	2.9%	

Table 26– Routine Visits

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students	Rhode Island Comparison Statistic
To A Doctor				
1-12 Months	67.8%	78.1%	77.6%	71%
1-2 Years	15.4%	9.4%	11.2%	
2-5 Years	8.4%	1.6%	1.7%	
5 or more Years	2.1%	4.7%	0.8%	
Never	1.4%	0.0%	0.4%	
No Answer	4.9%	6.3%	8.3%	
To A Dentist				
1-12 Months	64.3%	70.3%	70.5%	78%
1-2 Years	16.8%	14.1%	14.5%	
2-5 Years	7.0%	6.3%	2.9%	
5 or more Years	3.5%	3.1%	2.4%	
Never	2.8%	1.6%	0.4%	
No Answer	5.6%	5.6%	9.1%	

XII. Plans for the Future – Self Determination

Between 70-80% of participants have plans for next year. A slightly smaller percentage have plans for the future beyond next year. Very very few participants have any involvement in adult self advocacy groups. 17% of the graduates reported choosing where they lived and with whom. 38% of the graduates also reported selecting their post secondary training on their own, and 60% reported choosing their own jobs. Thus, those who actually graduated from high school demonstrate some self determination. Those who dropped out or ceased contact demonstrate much less self determination.

Table 27 – Plans for the Future

	Graduates n = 143	Ceased Contact n = 64	Current Students n = 241
Plans for Next Year	76.2%	67.2%	78.8%
Plans for the Future	68.5%	68.8%	72.2%
Participates in a Self Advocacy Group	0.7%	0.0%	1.7%

XIII – Satisfaction

Table 28 describes the degree of satisfaction reported by participants with various aspects of their lives. Most noteworthy is the low degree of satisfaction expressed by graduates with post secondary training and the low degree of satisfaction expressed by those who dropped out with their employment status.

Table 28 – Satisfaction (Somewhat – A Lot)

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
Employment	52.5%	18.2%	49.7%
Post Secondary Training	29.4%	4.7%	
Residence	57.4%	57.8%	65.7%
Community Participation	60.9%	67.2%	48.5%
Social Life	62.3%	78.1%	
Mobility	70.7%	73.4%	55.6%
Financial Status	79.7%	76.6%	70.5%

XIV – How Well Did School Prepare the Participants?

Table 29 describes the extent to which participants felt that school had prepared them for post school life. It should be noted that, with the exception of making friends and using financial tools, all of the combined totals (Yes & A Little) fall below 50%. Thus, more than half of participants feel that school did not prepare them for post school life. Those persons who dropped out or ceased contact are the least satisfied.

Table 29 – Did School Prepare You

	Graduates	Ceased Contact	Current Students
For Employment			
Yes	26.6%	3.5%	25.2%
A Little	21.0%	3.5%	15.4%
For Post Secondary Training			
Yes	18.2%	1.6%	
A Little	9.1%	3.1%	
For Residential Activity			
Yes	20.3%	12.5%	31.5%
A Little	18.2%	4.7%	35.7%
To Vote			
Yes	27.3%	12.5%	23.2%
A Little	16.1%	4.7%	24.1%
To Make Friends			
Yes	45.5%	32.8%	
A Little	21.7%	23.4%	
To Get Around the Community			
Yes	22.4%	12.5%	25.7%
A Little	16.8%	12.5%	10.4%
To Use Financial Tools			
Yes	32.9%	20.3%	27.0%
A Little	23.8%	15.6%	22.8%

XV. Relationship Between Selected School Practices and Outcomes

An early analysis suggests a relationship between certain school practices and selected outcomes. Five are noteworthy.

First, participants who participated in transition planning were more likely to know the details of their transition plan, to be employed, and to have plans for the future. Table 30 illustrates this point.

Table 30 - Percent of Participants Who Know The Details of Their Transition Plan

Attended IEP	85.2%	37.2%	Did NOT attend
Meet with Someone Before IEP to Plan	90.9%	52.6%	Did NOT meet before
Did a MAPS or other plan	94.6%	64.0%	Did NOT do a plan

Percent of Participants Who are Employed

Attended IEP	47.8%	36.1%	Did NOT attend
Meet with Someone Before IEP to Plan	53.6%	32.3%	Did NOT meet before
Did a MAPS or other plan	45.9%	40.2%	Did NOT do a plan

Percent of Participants Who Have Plans for the Future

Attended IEP	71.6%	36.1%	Did NOT attend
Meet with Someone Before IEP to Plan	70.0%	52.0%	Did NOT meet before
Did a MAPS or other plan	72.1%	57.1%	Did NOT do a plan

Second, participants who participated in vocational or technical training or who had work experience in real work sites were more likely to be employed.

Table 31 Percent of Participants Who Are Employed

Participated in Training	56.4%	45.5%	Did NOT participate
Experience in real work sites	65.2%	37.1%	Did NOT

Third, the more time the participants spent in the regular classroom, the more likely they were to be employed, have membership in community organizations, be registered to vote, have savings accounts, and have plans for the future. Table 32 illustrates three of those variables.

Table 32

Time in Regular Classroom	Percent Employed	Percent Members	Percent Voting
0	19.2%	30.7%	34.6%
0 – 25%	40.3%	46.1%	64.5%
25 – 50%	37.7%	33.3%	69.5%
50 – 75%	41.9%	33.6%	76.0%
75 – 100%	61.5%	47.8%	77.0%

Fourth, participants who studied the same curriculum as general education students were more likely to be employed and to have membership in community organizations. And, fifth, participants who participated in extracurricular activities were also more likely to be employed and to have membership. With both of these variables, the likelihood of employment and membership increased with increased amount and variety of extracurricular activity.

XVI. Discussion and Recommendations

This report provides a descriptive baseline of the experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities in transition and in post school settings. The results reported in several domains are comparable to the statistics for the comparable Rhode Island population. Four issues seem noteworthy.

First, the study had significant difficulty in tracking individuals (graduates and drop outs) who no longer had contact with their local schools. More than 60% of the contact information that was provided by the local schools was no longer valid. This documents the need to create a tracking system while the students are still in school, if outcome data is to be meaningfully collected.

Second, the value of good transition planning is demonstrated throughout this report. Students who attend IEPs, meet beforehand to plan, and participate in a planning process report more positive outcomes than students who do not. However, there is still a large number of students who do not fully participate in transition planning.

Third, the difference in most outcome domains between the participants who graduated and the participants who dropped out is striking. There is a need to focus more intensively on those students who are at risk.

Fourth, the information reported by the current students suggests that they are more participatory, more included in school activities, and are already achieving outcomes not achieved by some of the participants who have finished their school experience. This suggests that the experience of transition and transition planning is improving.

We would make the following recommendations:

1. Rhode Island needs to develop a comprehensive system for collecting outcome data on individuals with disabilities. This system needs to begin while the students are still in school so that a means for continued contact can be developed. The system should collect information on a limited set of outcomes on all students, and should collect more detailed information on a sample of students. The information collected on all would allow for longitudinal tracking and for accountability. The information collected on the smaller sample would allow for analysis of the efficacy of policy and practice. Outcomes should be tracked for at least five years after the student has finished his/her school experience.
2. It is important to continue to prioritize transition planning. It is the mechanism that connects many school initiatives. Although there has been documented progress in the past five years, there are still certain populations and certain schools that should be targeted for more focused activity.
3. It is important to continue to focus on those practices that increase the likelihood of positive outcomes— e.g., experience in real work sites, increased time in the regular classroom and in the general education curriculum, increased involvement in the broader life of the school through extracurricular activity, and a continuing focus on transition planning.

The Children with Disabilities Study

A Special Education Management Information System for Program Leadership and Management

Richard L. Dickson

March 7, 2001

Introduction

The development of a special education management information system (SPED MIS) is an area of capacity building for the Children with Disabilities Study. Implementing an integrated system and transforming data into information are important for leading and managing special education programs. Such a system is essential for district strategic planning and school improvement planning. Consistent with Article 23, “closing the performance gaps correlated with disability” is an anticipated outcome of these planning processes. Collecting appropriate data, analyzing it rigorously, and reporting it in a timely manner are essential to achieving this outcome.

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) currently collects and reports information on students with disabilities through four independent systems: (a) the special education census; (b) the state assessment program; (c) the student discipline record; and (d) personnel employed to provide special education and related services. Each system is located in a different RIDE office, collects unique data, analyzes it separately, and reports it differently.

A survey of Rhode Island special education directors was conducted to identify data that are important to them in leading and managing the special education programs of their districts. The process and results of the survey are described in this report. Results are discussed and recommendations are provided.

The special education management information system survey

A letter explaining the survey, an example of a SPED MIS from a neighboring state, and a thirty-item survey were mailed to the thirty special education directors of Rhode Island.

Fifteen questions and statements within the survey are organized relative to the four RIDE data collection systems. Eight statements about data collection within the special education referral, evaluation, and placement process are presented. Two statements about special education expenditures and five statements about data and information are presented.

Twenty-three directors, a 77% response rate, completed and returned the survey. Survey results may be generalized to all Rhode Island directors of special education.

Results

The Rhode Island Special Education Census

Census data on students with disabilities have been collected semi-annually during June and December since 1978. These census data had been used to reimburse local school districts for part of their special education excess costs and are now used to allocate IDEA funds. Typically, programmed diskettes provided by the Department of Education are completed from information contained in each student's individualized education program.

Four survey questions asked about the availability and utility of the data collected through the special education census for management and leadership of special education programs. Response options for these four questions were: Yes, No, or Not sure. One question asked about the importance of census data for the management and leadership of special education programs. Response options to this question were: Essential, Important, or Unimportant.

Five directors (23%) reported that their district maintained a SPED MIS that is separate from the Rhode Island special education census system. All directors except one (96%) maintain a copy of the special education census data submitted to the Department of Education. All responding directors receive a copy of the Rhode Island Statistical Profile of special education annually; eleven (48%) directors reported that the information in the Profile is presented in a way that informs their management and leadership of special education programs.

Twenty directors (87%) consider the information presented in the Statistical Profile to be essential (6 directors, 26%) or important (14 directors, 61%) to the management and leadership of special education programs in their districts. Three directors (13%) report the Profile information as unimportant for the leadership and management of their district's special education programs.

Information Works

Information Works reports the performance of students with disabilities on the State Assessments. The proficiency levels of students with disabilities in Mathematics and in English Language Arts are presented as bar graphs by the district and the school in which the students are enrolled. Three questions were asked of directors about the availability and importance of assessment results for the students with disabilities in their districts. Comments on the usefulness of the achievement data were requested. Dropout and graduation rates for all students are reported in **Information Works**. Two questions were asked of directors about the dropout and graduation rates of students with disabilities.

In addition to the achievement data reported in **Information Works**, four directors (18%) indicated that they receive a report from the RIDE that identifies the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments. Nine directors (41%) indicated that they did not receive such a report; nine directors (41%) were unsure about receiving a report on the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments.

Twenty-two directors (96%) indicated that information about the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments is essential (6 directors, 26%) or important (16 directors, 70%) to their leadership of special education programs. One director indicated that the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments was unimportant to leadership of special education programs.

Twelve of twenty-two directors (55%) indicated that information about the performance of students with disabilities is used as a basis for designing the district strategic plan and the school improvement plans. Six directors (27%) were unsure that information about the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments was used in district and school planning. Four directors (18%) reported that such information is not used in district strategic plans and school improvement plans; one of these directors commented, "The bar graph format is not helpful".

Fifteen directors provided comments on the current usefulness of State assessment information for their leadership of special education programs and for district and school improvement planning. Their comments are presented verbatim in Attachment A.

Dropout and graduation rates are reported for all students enrolled in the high school(s) within each Rhode Island district. Reporting the drop out and graduation rates of students with disabilities is required by the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97).

Fifteen directors (65%) indicated knowledge of the drop out and graduation rates of students with disabilities in their districts. Four directors (17%) were unsure of the dropout and graduation rates; four directors (17%) reported no knowledge of the drop out and graduation rates of students with disabilities in their districts. Relative to knowing about the drop out and graduation rates, one of the directors commented, "no, but we should."

Seven directors (30%) reported that information about the dropout and graduation rates of students with disabilities in their districts is essential to their leadership of special education programs. Fourteen directors (61%) indicated that such information is important to their

leadership. Two directors (9%) reported that information about the dropout and graduation rates of students in their districts was unimportant to their leadership of special education programs.

Student Discipline Record System

The Rhode Island Department of Education **Student Discipline Record System** collects information on disciplinary actions that result in expulsion, in school or out of school suspension, or placement in alternative educational programs. The number of suspensions and the number of long-term suspensions of students with disabilities are reported annually. Two questions were asked of directors about information collected through this system.

Twenty-one directors (91%) had not received any information from the Rhode Island Department of Education in last six months on the number of expulsions and long-term suspension of students with disabilities. Two directors (9%) were unsure about having received such information.

Twenty-one directors (91%) considered information about exclusions and long-term suspensions of students with disabilities to be essential or important. Two directors (9%) reported such information as unimportant to their leadership and management of special education programs.

Two statements about **special education and related services staffing patterns** were presented to the directors.

Response options to these statements were: Very interested, Interested, or Uninterested.

Twenty-two directors indicated that they were either very interested (14 directors, 61%) or interested (8 directors, 35%) in receiving information on the number of special education teachers and related services professionals employed in their district relative to demographically comparable districts. One director (4%) was uninterested in such information. The same number of directors reported being very interested (14 directors, 61%) or interested (8 directors, 35%) in information on the number of special education teacher assistants employed in their district relative to demographically comparable districts. One director (4%) was uninterested in this information.

Data Needs

A lot of data about students with disabilities currently is collected.

Responses to eight statements were elicited to gauge the level of interest in collecting data about referrals, evaluations, eligibility decisions, instructional modifications, placements and programming. Response options to the eight statements were: Very interested, Interested, or Uninterested.

All twenty-three directors indicated that they are very interested (19 directors, 83%) or interested (4 directors, 17%) in information about the number of students referred by school, grade level, and the reasons for referral. All twenty-three directors indicated that they are very

interested (18 directors, 78%) or interested (5 directors, 22%) in the number of students for whom an evaluation is required and the type of evaluation requested.

All twenty-three directors were either very interested (18 directors, 78%) or interested (5 directors, 22%) in the number of students who require special education. Of the students who do not require special education, all twenty-three directors are either very interested (14 directors, 61%) or interested (9 directors, 39%) in the instructional modifications recommended for these students in general education settings.

All twenty-three directors are with very interested (16 directors, 70%) or interested (7 directors, 30%) in the special education placements of students who require special education. All directors were either very interested (16 directors, 70%) or interested (7 directors, 30%) in the related services required by students in need of special education.

All twenty-two directors who responded to this statement indicated that they were either very interested (17 directors, 77%) or interested (5 directors, 23%) in the movement of students within the continuum of special education placements on an annual basis. Twenty-three directors were either very interested (18 directors, 78%) or interested (5 directors, 22%) in the number of students who exit from their special education programs and the reasons for exiting.

Special Education Expenditures

Data on expenditures in public education currently are collected through IN\$ITE. The Special Education Expenditures Project (SEEP) is analyzing data that describe allocations of professional time relative to expenditures. Two statements regarding special education expenditures were presented for responses. Three response options were available: Very interested, Interested, or Uninterested.

Twenty-two directors were very interested (20 directors, 87%) or interested (2 directors, 9%) in the special education expenditures in their district presented by standard budget categories relative to the expenditures of demographically comparable districts. One director (4%) was uninterested in these expenditures.

All the special education directors were very interested (20 directors, 87%) or interested (3 directors, 13%) in out-of-district placement costs of their district relative to demographically comparable districts.

From Data to Information

A large amount of data on students with disabilities and their special education programs exists; even more can be collected. These data become information when interpreted knowledgeably. This knowledge is specialized and must be possessed by those who translate data into information.

Five statements related to distinctions between data and information were presented. Four statements related to the amount and quality of data and information. Response options to these four statements were: More than enough, Adequate, or Inadequate. The fifth statement asked for responses relative to the example from the neighboring State's special education management information system. Response options to this statement were: Extremely helpful, Helpful, or Not helpful.

One (4%) director reported having more than enough data on the special education programs of the district. Eleven (48%) directors reported having an adequate amount of data and eleven directors (48%) reported that the amount of data available to them on the special education programs of their districts was inadequate.

Relative to the quality of data for decision making about special education programs in their district, ten directors (43%) reported that the quality of data were adequate and thirteen (57%) of the directors reported that the quality of their data were inadequate.

Of the twenty-two directors who responded to this statement, three directors (14%) indicated that the amount of information on the special education programs in their districts was more than enough. Fifteen directors (68%) indicated that the amount of information they had was adequate; four directors (18%) reported that the amount of information they had was inadequate.

Of the twenty-two directors who responded to this statement, one (5%) director reported that the quality of information on special education programs of the district was more than enough. Thirteen directors (59%) indicated the quality of information available to them on the special education programs of their districts was adequate; eight directors (36%) reported that the quality of information availability to them was inadequate.

Twenty-two directors thought that a management information system like the example from a neighboring state would be either extremely helpful (15 directors, 65%) or helpful (7 directors, 30%) in leading and managing the special education programs in their districts. One director (5%) thought the example from the neighboring state would not be helpful in leading and managing the programs of the district.

Written comments regarding management information systems for special education were requested. Nine directors commented. Their comments are available in Attachment Two.

Discussion

In the last few months, special education directors have responded to multiple requests for data. These requests have included data about special education expenditures through the SEEP, data for the Office of Civil Rights, and responses to personnel surveys conducted by the University Affiliated Program of Rhode Island. In the context of these many requests, the responsiveness of directors to this SPED MIS survey is indicative of its' importance to them.

They recognize the need for a SPED MIS that is consistent with: the best practices of management science; supports educational planning and programming directed toward improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities; and is consistent with local, State, and Federal reporting requirements.

Five districts use a SPED MIS that is separate from the State census system. In developing a Rhode Island SPED MIS, duplication of data entry in district and State systems must be minimized to increase its accuracy.

All responding directors receive a copy of the Rhode Island Statistical Profile of Special Education. All directors consider data reported in the Profile to be either essential or important to their leadership and management. However, the presentation of data in the Profile limits its utility for more than half of the directors. These directors recognize the need to collect special education census data reliably and to report it in ways that inform program leadership and management.

Directors of special education reported that the performance of students with disabilities, as presented in **Information Works**, is very important to the leadership of their special education programs. A small number of directors (4) indicated receipt of a report from RIDE regarding the performance of their students with disabilities on State Assessments.

Written comments on the current usefulness of **Information Works** for students with disabilities on State Assessments is mixed. Comments of eight directors indicate that assessment information informs administrative discussion, is used to set benchmarks, or is considered when developing school improvement and district strategic plans. Although these directors describe use of the assessment results for school improvement and district strategic planning, such planning for students with disabilities is not evident from a review of district strategic plans submitted by November 1, 2000. Very few district strategic plans even mention using assessment data for “closing the performance gaps correlated with disability.”

Four directors noted that data presentations for students with disabilities lack either a level of specificity or a longitudinal perspective. This limits the usefulness of the data presentations for program improvement planning.

Information about the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments should be collected and reported so that: (a) it can be related to the same students in the special education census; and (b) it informs school improvement and district strategic planning directed toward “closing the performance gaps correlated with disability.”

Information on the participation rates of students with disabilities in State Assessments is essential to meaningful interpretations of assessment results. Strategies for improving the quality of data for students with disabilities in the state assessment program require development and improvement. Preprinted labels which list students names, dates of birth, gender, disability status and grade placement may improve the quality of data and the integration of assessment results and special education census data.

Directors think information about the dropout and graduation rates of students with disabilities is very important for their leadership and management of special education

programs. IDEA '97 requires annual reporting of the graduation and dropout rates of students with disabilities. This information is not presented in **Information Works** or through the Special Education Statistical Profile. As the result of a special study, the dropout rate for students with disabilities in Rhode Island was last reported in January of 1999. When calculated with the same procedure employed for all students, the dropout rate for students with disabilities was 31.49%. As noted then (Dickson, 1999), dropout rates for students with disabilities, when calculated with data collected through the current special education census, are unreliable.

Data relative to the dropout and graduation rates of students with disabilities must be collected reliably and reported in ways that promote actions to decrease dropout and increase graduation rates.

IDEA '97 requires Rhode Island to report expulsions and long-term suspensions of students with disabilities by disability category and race/ethnicity. Currently, these data are not collected. While none of the directors receive information on expulsions and long-term suspensions from the State, all but two directors consider this information essential to their leadership and management of special education programs.

At a minimum, data relative to the number of students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled must be reported in ways that respond to Federal reporting requirements. More constructively, data on the number of days students with disabilities are suspended should be reported in ways that inform the need for behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determinations, and revised individualized education programs.

Directors are very interested in information about special education and related services staffing patterns. Data are collected annually by area of certification, the number of retained teachers, and the number of vacant positions. These data are collected, aggregated by hand, and reported to the Federal government by a RIDE professional who is not connected to the Office of Special Needs. Any return on the time, effort and expense invested in this process is limited to the Federal report.

Data should be collected on the number and type of personnel including: special education administrators, teachers, related service professionals, and teacher assistants that are employed by a district. These data should be reported relative to those of comparable districts.

Eight statements elicited responses from directors relative to their data needs. All directors were quite interested in information about the number of students processed through the special education referral, evaluation, and placement process. Directors are equally as interested in the movement of students within the continuum of programs and the number of students who exit from special education annually. Systems to collect and report data on students within the special education referral, evaluation, and placement process were available twenty years ago in Rhode Island. These systems should be redesigned and implemented. Data collected within them could inform the need for curriculum and program development at specific grade levels and schools.

Directors are very interested in their special education expenditures relative to those of comparable districts. Comparative data are available through the IN\$ITE standard accounting

system. Through its resource cost model, the Special Education Expenditures Project (SEEP) is identifying allocations of professional time within budget categories. The best features of IN\$ITE and the SEEP cost/expenditures model can be combined to generate functional special education expenditures information on an ongoing basis.

In their comments about a SPED MIS, directors expressed concerns, preferences, and expectations. Expressed concerns relate to the duplication of data entry, use of programs that maintain a standard format and programs which produce data that respond to district, state, and federal reporting requirements. Preferences relate to user friendliness, frequent training, and periodic review and revision of any system. Expectations relate to the availability of data tables like those produced by a neighboring state, rapid availability of data, and interactive systems. As one director wrote, “At present I don’t know all that would be helpful ... we need to assist in developing appropriate and reasonable goals to improve the lives of our students.”

Recommendations

Major recommendations

A management information system for all students is recommended. This system could employ the IN\$ITE development and implementation model. Information about children with disabilities and their educational programs could part of this “all kids” management information system.

A revised and rejuvenated special education census could be part of an “all kids” system. Additionally, relational data sets that reliably collect and report State assessment information on children with disabilities, special education expenditure information, and special education personnel information must be developed.

Supportive recommendations

- 1.0 Develop a special education management information system which is:
 - 1.1 consistent with the best practices of management science;
 - 1.2 supports educational planning and programming directed toward improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities;
 - 1.3 consistent with State and Federal reporting requirements.
2. Collect special education census data reliably and report it in ways that inform program leadership and management.
3. Collect and report information about the performance of students with disabilities on State assessments so that: (a) it can be related to the same students in the special education census; and (b) it informs school improvement and district strategic planning directed toward “closing the performance gaps correlated with disability.”

4. Data relative to the dropout and graduation rates of students with disabilities must be collected reliably and reported in ways that promote decreased dropout rates and increased graduation rates.
5. At a minimum, data relative to the number of students with disabilities who are suspended or expelled must be reported in ways that respond to Federal reporting requirements. More constructively, data on the number of days students with disabilities are suspended should be reported in ways that inform the need for behavioral intervention plans, manifestation determinations, and revised individualized education programs.
6. Collect data on the number and type of personnel including: special education administrators, teachers, related service professionals, and teacher assistants that are employed by a district. Report data relative to those of comparable districts.
7. Data on students within the special education referral, evaluation, and placement process were collected and reported for three years (1978 – '79 through 1980-'81 school years). Given the current interest in these data, they should be part of any Rhode Island SPED MIS.
8. The best features of IN\$ITE and the SEEP cost/expenditures analyses should be combined to generate functional special education expenditures information on an ongoing basis.

Attachment 1

Directors' comments on the current usefulness of **Information Works** for students with disabilities

Performance of ALL students is presented. Special needs are not separated. It provides some information on students' performance. It will be valuable to have the information on special needs students disaggregated by grade, content and skills from the general ed. population.

The information is limited in regard to the percentage of students with disabilities at each performance level. The information would be more useful if disaggregated to reflect student progress over time in the hope of providing information as to what impact the reform movement is having on students with disabilities.

It helps us to see where improvement is needed in the areas of direct instruction.

District to district comparisons are essential in developing budgets and providing programs. This information also drives out staff development programs.

Need data in different format i.e., by school, program, student, means for students at same grade.

This information guides us in setting benchmarks for student improvement and informs us on our progress. We then use this information to determine where our efforts are falling short and need additional or change in programming.

The Information Works data is good but dated when we receive it.

Currently limited. District uses this information to develop strategic plans and school improvement planning.

Have problems with special education student participation on a variety of levels- especially self-contained students.

The disaggregate scores have only recently become available. This set of data will be of an essential nature in future years.

It has not effected programming for students with disabilities.

Provides data which allows us to measure growth in individuals. Allows us to examine gaps among groups. Provides an over-arching goal; student achievement, that transcends the populations.

Utilized in administrative meetings to discuss overall performance, necessary accommodations, etc. and district planning.

The info is essential to plan school improvement at the building & district level to "close gaps among groups of students including those with disabilities. In addition to knowing how many students were or were not proficient, it would be helpful to know the % that scored nearly proficient.

Attachment 2

Directors' comments on management information systems for special education

Interesting

- 1. Demographic information of students and personnel*
- 2. Placements out of district by District, other parties*
- 3. Student caseload per FTE staff member*
- 4. Staff assignment comparison to like Districts. Please!*

Main concern is the level of staff hours required to enter data. We are already buried under requests for information. If the State could survey the LEAs for the data requests for the year (federal & state) and assist in compilation it would be very helpful.

A program that uses a standard format (Access, etc.) will be helpful & the option to eliminate non-essential categories will be most helpful. These programs, once developed at RIDE, tend to become laden with extraneous stuff as new initiatives/agendas or federal requirements are identified.

A management information system like Connecticut would be extremely helpful if it was to replace the OCR requirements; to do both would not be time effectively used. More

information available about alternative service delivery models & incidence of collaborative teaching statewide.

- 1. Data should be available on a daily basis in executive summary dictated by SPED Dir*
- 2. Comparisons between districts confounded by numerous variables and can be translated into minimum service standards by school committees.*

At present I Don't Know ALL that would be helpful. As we disaggregate we need to examine the students, i.e., are the students MR, autistic, etc to assist in developing appropriate and reasonable goals to improve the lives of our students.

I would love to have information for my district that Connecticut provides. Special education profiles in many of the Tables would be useful for analyzing trends and reflective and projective dialogue; also improvement in ability to plan for subsequent needs.

State census could be more user friendly. Training on use of Queries and Medicaid reports would be helpful to districts in maximizing reimbursements.

The system should be more detailed beginning with referral. The system should be part of the districtwide system vs separate. (Should be a statewide system for all students.) The system should also have an electronic IEP component that can be networked from the buildings with the central office.

Final Report

Rhode Island Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP)

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Executive Summary

Background

This report presents findings from the Rhode Island Special Education Expenditure Project. The study, which began in January 2000, was conducted in tandem with the national Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP), commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education, and with eight other state SEEP studies.¹ The Rhode Island SEEP shares a common core of research questions and methods with the national and state studies, although many aspects of the study are specific to Rhode Island's interests and policy concerns.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the Rhode Island SEEP is to obtain special education spending estimates for the state, and to provide this information in light of various special education funding formulas that are currently in place across the nation. To these ends, this report presents both per student and total expenditure information, along with breakdowns of these costs by key variables such as age group, service or resource, category of disability, educational environment, and "Abilities Index" score. This report also compares overall spending in Rhode Island with spending in other SEEP states and the nation so that Rhode Island may assess expenditure estimates in relation to other jurisdictions.

General Approach

The approach to this study is based on a set of self-administered surveys and the examination of existing documents and databases, at the state, district, and school levels. In order to ensure representation of the state as a whole, the study included the full population of 36 districts as well as a sample of 107 schools, which were randomly selected from across the state. District special education administrators, school administrators, staff knowledgeable about special education programs and services, general education teachers who interacted with special education students, special education teachers and related service providers, and special education aides were surveyed about how they spent their time and about the resources available in their classrooms. In addition, special education teachers and related service providers filled out surveys about special education students for whom they provided services. Documents and databases requested include budgets, salary reports, enrollment reports, personnel listings, rosters, and schedules.

¹ The other eight states contracting for comparable SEEP studies are Alabama, Delaware, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio.

Summary of Findings

Special education expenditures in Rhode Island tend to be higher than the national average, as well as average to high among the SEEP states. Across all students in the state, ages 3-22, the per student special education expenditure is \$10,198, and the per student general education expenditure for special education students is \$5,410, totaling \$15,608 per special education student. In contrast, the total national special education expenditure per student is \$12,474. The special education expenditure per school-aged student in Rhode Island is \$9,380 and per preschool student it is \$18,602.

The ratio of special education spending to general education spending for school-aged students in Rhode Island is approximately 2.03—slightly higher than the national ratio of 1.90. Total special education expenditures in the state (ages 3-22) amount to approximately \$304.6 million, with \$255 million spent on school-aged (ages 6-22) students and \$49 million on preschool (ages 3-5) students.

The disability category associated with the highest per student expenditure is mental retardation, at \$23,884 per student. The disability category associated with the next highest cost is multiple disabilities, at \$23,469 per student.

The Rhode Island SEEP also provides special education expenditure information in light of various funding formulas that are currently in place across the nation. Rhode Island expenditures tend to be higher than the average expenditures of states using the four types of special education funding formulas (resource-based, flat grant, pupil weight, and percent reimbursement).

I. Introduction

Overview of the Study

In January of 2000, the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Special Needs, contracted with the Center for Special Education Finance at the American Institutes for Research to conduct the Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP). The purpose of this study is to obtain special education expenditure data representative of the state.

This special education study is being conducted in tandem with a national study of special education expenditures. The national study, of which Rhode Island is a participant, shares a common core of research questions with the Rhode Island study. Benefits of this parallel participation include the simultaneous production of comparable data from other states, districts, and the nation as a whole. These data allow comparisons between Rhode Island and the eight other states that contracted for similar SEEP studies, and between Rhode Island and the nation, using the same methodology across similar jurisdictions. In addition to the eight other states that contracted for SEEP studies at the time of Rhode Island, two other states and one major urban school district have since contracted with AIR to conduct such analyses.²

Rhode Island SEEP Research Questions

In contracting for this study, Rhode Island sought to examine a variety of issues associated with special education finance and spending. More specifically, state legislators and education administrators desired a straightforward accounting of what is actually spent on special education in the state in relation to funding, and how this spending is affecting general education. To these ends, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the detailed average special education, general education, and total (special and general combined) education expenditures per special education student, and how do they vary by type of disability and school placement in Rhode Island?
2. What are the identification rates for students with specific types of disabilities?
3. What are the total and per student expenditures on the assessment of special education students, as provided by supplemental special education personnel?³
4. What are the total and per student expenditures for direct instruction and related service personnel?

² These are Maryland, Wyoming, and the Milwaukee Public School District.

³ This research question addresses the expenditures on assessment services provided by special education consulting teachers, psychologists, counselors, and social workers assigned to schools. Expenditures for assessment services provided by other personnel (i.e., district central office staff and general and special education teachers) are included in the expenditure data for district central office administration and support and for direct instruction and related service personnel. Thus, any data on assessment services in this report are partial, not total, expenditures.

5. What are the total and per student expenditures for indirect costs such as administration and office support?
6. What are the total and per student expenditures on transportation for special education students?
7. What are the expenditures on programs and services for preschool special education students?
8. What are the total and per student general education expenditures for special education students? To what extent are general education resources used to serve special education students?
9. What is the ratio of spending on a special education student versus a general education student?
10. What is the total expenditure for special education services?

Context for the Study: The National SEEP

Interest and concern about special education finance policy are not unique to Rhode Island or the eight other SEEP states. Indeed, such concerns have increased across the states, as well as at the federal level, in recent years. According to *State Special Education Finance Systems and Expenditures, 1999-00* (Parrish and Anthony, 2001), “over one-half of the reporting states (29 of 46) have reformed the way they fund special education over the past six years. In addition, 46% of the reporting states (21 of 46) are considering future formula changes, and 12 of these are states that have already made changes in the past six years.” In addition, the reauthorized *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA-97) changed special education funding provisions at the federal level.

Special education expenditure data, however, have been generally lacking. Prior to the current national SEEP, the most recent national study on special education expenditures and their relationship to general education was conducted by Decision Resources Corporation for the 1985-86 school year (Moore et al., 1988). Reflecting the need for updated, comprehensive, and accurate information regarding special education expenditures and their relationship to general education, IDEA-97 required studies to measure and evaluate the impact of the IDEA and the effectiveness of state efforts to provide a free, appropriate public education to all children with disabilities (per Sections 618 of Part B and 674). Under this authorization, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education, funded the National Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP)—the first national study of special education expenditures in 15 years.

The national SEEP will report per student and total special education expenditures, and will provide breakdowns by type of state, district, school, and student. It will also examine the relationship between student poverty and the level of spending for students with disabilities;

expenditures relating to inclusion, assessment, and the provision of services to preschool children; as well as detailed analyses regarding the relationship between general and special education spending. Appendix A includes an in-depth list of the research questions addressed by the national SEEP.

Study Approach

The AIR research team utilized the data collection methods of the national SEEP, extending the Rhode Island sample size from 2 to all 36 districts in the state and from 6 to 107 schools. The school sample, which was chosen randomly, along with the full population of districts, ensured representation of the state as a whole. A brief description of the methods used in the Rhode Island SEEP follows.⁴ Appendix B provides the national SEEP sampling plan upon which the Rhode Island SEEP sample is based, Appendix C describes the data collection methods in greater detail, and Appendix D provides detailed survey response rates by sample district and school.

Data Collection Procedures

The SEEP data collection included surveys and the examination of existing documents and databases collected from states, districts, and schools. The written surveys gathered information from staff most knowledgeable about special education programs and from general education staff who interacted with special education students. In addition, surveys for teachers, teacher assistants, and related service providers solicited information on how they spent their time, about their participation in professional development, and about the resources available in their classrooms.

AIR requested documents and materials from states, districts, and schools in order to obtain information related to the use of special education resources. These materials included budgets, enrollment reports, personnel listings, rosters, and schedules.

In February of 2000, initial calls were made to directors of special education in the sample school districts to inform them of the study and provide further information, to obtain their approval and support, and to establish them as contacts for the district-level data collection. Surveys were then sent to the directors and district office staff, and the Rhode Island SEEP data collection officially began.

After the sample districts approved the study, AIR data collectors called the principals of the sample schools to request their participation. Following their approval, surveys were sent to the participating schools.

⁴These methods are described in more detail in the Data Collection Report, the Preliminary Data Report, and the original contract package submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education.

Data collectors used follow-up telephone calls, e-mails, and faxes to ensure that all survey items were clear and understandable. This strategy was crucial to the accuracy of the survey data obtained. Data collectors made follow-up calls to districts and schools through approximately August 2000, at which time the data collection officially ended.

The research team also used state fiscal, personnel, student, and transportation databases to complete information gaps in the survey data and to provide statewide numbers to inform and provide a context for the study.

The Resource Cost Model or “Ingredients” Approach⁵

The methods used in this project to measure special education spending are referred to as the “ingredients” approach, or the *Resource Cost Model* (RCM). The RCM represents a “bottom-up” approach to the collection of data on educational service delivery systems. It organizes information on resources according to the resulting services. These resources include the teachers or paraprofessionals providing these services, the class size or number of students receiving these services at the same time, special equipment, and supplies and materials. Services include classroom instruction, professional development, consultation of resource teachers with regular classroom teachers, pullout programs in resource rooms, integrated services provided in regular classrooms to students with special needs, and overall administration and support.

Role of the Rhode Island Department of Education

AIR kept the Rhode Island Department of Education continually abreast of issues of concern during the data collection. AIR provided the Department with up-to-date response rates by district and school. When any of the sample districts hesitated to participate, the Department was notified and asked to step in as a liaison, making many calls and sending letters of encouragement to the sample districts. The Department also guided the AIR data analysis team in our attempts to obtain state databases.

Organization of Report

This final report is a revised and expanded version of the Draft Final Report, submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education on December 10, 2001.⁶ In addition to this introductory chapter, the report presents:

- Key findings of the study, presented in a series of descriptive data tables and text (Section II)
- Appendices, including research questions for the national SEEP and response rates for the Rhode Island data collection

⁵ For more detailed descriptions of the resource cost model applications, see Parrish (1994) and Chambers & Parrish (1994).

⁶ Earlier submissions to the Rhode Island Department of Education include the *Data Collection Plan*, submitted on January 31, 2000, and the *Preliminary Data Tabulation Report*, submitted on April 30, 2001.

II. Findings

Introduction

This section of the report presents empirical results of the Rhode Island SEEP data collection, and is divided into the following five sub-sections: summary results, personnel, transportation, the “Abilities Index,” and total expenditures. Twenty tables are presented in this section, for which a brief introduction follows.

Exhibit I is a crosswalk between the research questions specified for this report and the tables that address them. As the crosswalk indicates, some of the research questions are addressed through more than one table, and several tables address more than one question.

Exhibit I - Crosswalk Between Research Questions and Tables

Research Questions	Table Number																					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19a	19b	20	
1. What are the detailed special education, general education, and total special and general combined) education expenditures per student for special education students? How do these expenditures vary by type of disability, age group, or educational environment in Rhode Island?	X	X	X	X	X		X	X					X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
2. What are the identification rates for students with specific types of disabilities?	X																X					
3. What are the total and per student expenditure on the assessment of special education students, as provided by supplemental special education personnel?																			X			
4. What are the total and per student expenditures for direct instruction and related service personnel?			X						X	*	*		X						X	X		
5. What are the per student expenditures for indirect costs such as administration and office support?																			X	X		
6. What are the total and per student expenditures on transportation for special education students?			X									X							X	X		
7. What are the expenditures on programs and services for preschool special education students?		X	X				X		X				X	X	X	X		X			X	
8. What are the total and per student general education expenditures for special education students? To what extent are general education resources used to serve special education students?		X			X		X	X														X
9. What is the ratio of spending on a special education student versus a general education student?				X	X	**																
10. What is the total expenditure for special education services?	X																		X	X		X

This section of the report presents the following tables:

Table Number	Data Presented
Summary Results	
I	Count of special education students and the number of SEEP student surveys on which the analyses presented in this report are based
2	Special education spending estimates for the state, with and without transportation and capital expenditures
3	Per student costs for special education
4	Comparison of general and special education spending for school-aged students in Rhode Island
5	Comparison of general and special education spending for school-aged students across all SEEP states and the nation
6	General education expenditure information per general education student in Rhode Island
7	Preschool special education expenditures across all SEEP states (ages 3-5)
8	Special education expenditures across all SEEP states and the nation, for students ages 3-22
Personnel	
9	Per student personnel expenditures by category of disability
10	Average number of hours that special education students spend in various service settings, by type of disability
11	Number of special education students per teacher in the state
Transportation	
12	General and special transportation expenditures for special education students

The “Abilities Index”	
13	Personnel expenditures per school-aged special education student by “Abilities Index” score
14	Expenditures by “Abilities Index” score per special education student
15	Expenditures per special education student by educational environment and “Abilities Index” score
Total Expenditures	
16	Expenditures by disability per special education students
17	Expenditures for school-aged special education students, by disability, across all SEEP states
18	Expenditures per special education student by disability type and educational environment
19a 19b	Expenditures by service for school-aged and preschool students Rhode Island Customized Report
20	Expenditures per special education student, by special education funding formula type

In preface to the tables, a few guiding principles and definitions require clarification:

- All tables pertain to the 1999-2000 school year, and data for both school-aged and preschool students are provided throughout the tables unless otherwise specified.
- For this report and in accordance with the IDEA, school-aged students are between the ages of 6-22 and preschool students are 3-5 years old. Unless otherwise noted, expenditures for school-aged and preschool students are combined.
- Two categories of school programs are shown. The majority of students are enrolled in programs in schools operated by the public school district in which they reside. When deriving expenditure estimates for this group of students, the SEEP includes state special education schools. The second category of school programs includes students who are placed in non-public institutions and agencies for which the home district pays tuition and fees or transfers funds. This category includes a small number of students who are placed in public school districts outside their district of residency, also for whom the home district pays tuition or fees or transfers funds. Expenditure information for students in non-public institutions or agencies or for those placed in

public school districts outside their district of residency are based upon survey responses as completed by the district of residency. (For example, the home district reports the total amount of tuition paid or amount of funds transferred per year for the student's placement.)

- Estimated average expenditures are based on rounded numbers and are not exact.
- Most special education students receive special and general education services. The expenditure estimates for these two categories of service are provided separately. The total expenditure for educating a student with a disability is also provided, which is the combined special and general education expenditures for a special education student.
- Expenditure data do not include costs for supplemental programs such as Title I, English as a Second Language (ESL), or Gifted and Talented Education (GATE). These programs have been subtracted from spending estimates to provide more straightforward comparisons between general and special education spending.
- Five tables in this report provide comparison data across the SEEP states, two of which also provide national data. National data available for the public at the time of this report are for all ages (3-22) only, and cannot be broken-out by school-aged and preschool age ranges.

Summary Results

Counts of Rhode Island Special Education Students

Table 1 shows the number of school-aged and preschool special education students in Rhode Island for the school year 1999-2000, as well as the count of special education students for whom we had survey responses. These data are broken out by primary disability category or by school program. Preschool students are listed separately because they are not counted by primary category of disability.⁷ Homebound students and those in schools not operated by the public school district in which they reside are not disaggregated by disability because of the limited sample size for these categories of students. Table 1 shows 29,870 special education students in the state, with 1,090 of these students included in the study sample.

As shown, the population of special education students with a specific learning disability is larger than all other disability categories. These students also comprise the largest portion of the SEEP sample, at 36.1%. Speech or language impairment is the next largest disability category in the state, comprising 16% of special education students, although it comprises only a small portion of the sample (6.8%). Teachers were asked to oversample students in low-incidence categories (e.g., autism, multiple disabilities) to ensure an adequate number of these students in the study sample, which likely resulted in a smaller than expected number of students with speech or language impairment being selected for the sample.

⁷ According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Web site: www.IDEAdata.org.

Table 1
Number of Special Education Students by Primary Disability
Category in Rhode Island, 1999-2000

Disability Category ⁸	Number of Districts Reporting	Total Number and % of Special Education Students in this Category ⁹	Number and % of Student in Sample
School-aged students in schools operated by home district ¹⁰	32	26,034 (87.2%)	963 (88.3%)
Autism	26	186 (0.6%)	79 (7.2%)
Deaf-blindness ¹¹	3	1 (0.0%)	3 (0.3%)
Emotional disturbance	22	1,705 (5.7%)	77 (7.1%)
Hearing impairment/deafness	14	172 (0.6%)	24 (2.2%)
Mental retardation	25	1,015 (3.4%)	97 (8.9%)
Multiple disabilities	23	198 (0.7%)	63 (5.6%)
Orthopedic impairment	10	134 (0.4%)	13 (1.2%)
Other health impairment	25	1,894 (6.3%)	105 (9.6%)
Specific learning disability	32	15,623 (52.3%)	393 (36.1%)
Speech or language impairment	26	4,785 (16.0%)	74 (6.8%)
Traumatic brain injury	7	46 (0.2%)	9 (0.8%)
Visual impairment/blindness	13	62 (0.2%)	26 (2.4%)
All preschool students in schools operated by home district ¹²	15	2,441 (8.2%)	73 (6.7%)
All school-aged students in schools <i>not</i> operated by home district ¹³	19	1,188 (4.0%)	53 (4.9%)
All preschool students in schools <i>not</i> operated by home district ¹⁴	1	207 (0.7%)	1 (0.1%)
Total ¹⁵	36	29,870	1,090

⁸ Counts by disability are available only for school-aged students in programs operated by the public school district in which they reside.

⁹ Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Web site: www.IDEAdata.org. The sample weights attached to our expenditure estimates were adjusted to reflect the actual numbers of students in the population. However, because of the way students were sampled for SEEP, these population estimates require us to know not only counts of students by disability, but also the counts by certain types of placements. Since placement data are not available for 1999-2000, estimates were calculated by multiplying the 1998-1999 percentages of school-aged students in schools operated by home district, school-aged students in schools not operated by home district, and homebound/hospital students with 1999-2000 total enrollment. This may result in some slight variation from actual counts. Similarly, preschool 1998-1999 placement data were categorized in such a way that distinctions between these placements could not be made, so 1997-1998 percentages were used to estimate the 1999-2000 placements.

¹⁰ Schools operated by the home district refer to any public school operated by the public school district in which the student resides, including state schools.

¹¹ Number of students with deaf-blindness in the sample was reported by the teachers and/or administrators of the school.

¹² All disability categories were collapsed for preschool students, as there was an insufficient sample size for individual disability categories to be detailed accordingly.

¹³ Includes school-aged students enrolled in schools outside the home district, or non-public schools or agencies not operated by the district, for which the home district pays tuition and fees. All disability categories were collapsed, as there was an insufficient sample size for individual categories to be detailed accordingly.

¹⁴ Includes preschool students enrolled in schools outside the home district, or non-public schools or agencies not operated by the district, for which the home district pays tuition and fees. All disability categories were collapsed, as there was an insufficient sample size for individual disability categories to be detailed accordingly.

¹⁵ Total number of special education students in the state includes 213 homebound and hospital students.

Total Special Education Spending in Rhode Island

Tables 2 and 3 present total spending for special education students in Rhode Island for the school year 1999-2000. This information is obtained from the Student Information, Teacher, and District Surveys, as well as from school databases.

Table 2 includes both general and special education expenditures for special education students. General education expenditures include central office administration, school administration, general education teachers and other general education personnel, non-personnel items such as materials and supplies, and transportation. Special education expenditures include the same general categories, except that the focus is on special education. For example, for central office costs, only expenditures for the office of the district's special education director are presented. Special education personnel for direct instruction and related services include special education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and aides. Special education expenditures are also provided for special transportation and incremental assessment activities conducted by special education consulting teachers, psychologists, counselors, and social workers.¹⁶ In addition, special education expenditures include services for students placed in public or non-public institutions not operated by the public school district in which the student resides and for whom the home district pays tuition and fees, as well as services for homebound students and summer school.

As shown in Table 2, the expenditure per *preschool* special education student for special education services, without capital and transportation, is \$17,165, and the estimated average general education expenditure per preschool special education student, without capital and transportation, is \$1,571, for a total of \$18,735. The statewide preschool special education expenditure (not including capital or transportation) is approximately \$45.5 million, with total (general and special) education spending on preschool special education students approximating \$49.6 million.

When capital and transportation is included, the expenditure per *preschool* special education student for special education services is \$18,602, and the average general education expenditure per preschool special education student is \$2,741, for a total of \$21,343. Including capital and transportation, the statewide special education expenditure for preschool special education students is \$49.3 million, with total (general and special) education spending on *preschool* special education students approximating \$56.5 million.

Excluding capital and transportation, the average expenditure per *school-aged* special education student for special education services, is \$8,609, and the average general education expenditure per special education student is \$4,417, for a total of \$13,026. The statewide special education expenditure (excluding capital or transportation) is more than \$234 million, with total (general and special) education spending on *school-aged* special education students approximating \$354.6 million.

¹⁶ Expenditures for assessment services provided by general and special education teachers and related service providers are included in personnel expenditures. Incremental expenditures for assessment services only include personnel not covered by direct instruction and related service personnel, as well as district/school administration and support personnel.

When capital and transportation are included, the average expenditure per *school-aged* special education student for special education services is \$9,380, and the average general education expenditure per *school-aged* special education student is \$5,670, for a total of \$15,050. Including capital and transportation, the statewide special education expenditure for *school-aged* special education students is about \$255.4 million, with total (general and special) education spending on *school-aged* special education students approximating \$409.7 million.

Across *all* special education students in the state (*ages 3-22*), the average expenditure per student for special education services, without capital and transportation, is \$9,367, and the average general education expenditure per special education student, without capital and transportation, is \$4,165, for a total of \$13,532. The statewide special education expenditure (not including capital or transportation) for all special education students is approximately \$280 million, with total (general and special) education spending on all special education students approximating \$404 million. Again, this latter figure does not include any Title I or bilingual services the state's special education children may be receiving. When capital and transportation is included, the average expenditure per special education student for special education services is \$10,198, and the average general education expenditure per special education student is \$5,410, for a total of \$15,608. Including capital and transportation, the statewide special education expenditure is more than \$304 million, with total (general and special) education spending on special education students approximating \$466 million.

Table 3 further delineates the total (general and special) education expenditure data for school-aged and preschool special education students shown in Table 2, presenting the breakdown of expenditures by personnel, operating, capital and transportation. For *preschool* special education students, of the \$21,343 average total (general and special) education expenditure, \$12,346 is spent on personnel, \$6,299 on operating costs, \$1,706 on capital, and \$902 on transportation. For *school-aged* special education students, of the \$15,050 average total (general and special) education expenditure (including capital and transportation), \$7,772 is spent on personnel, \$5,254 on operating costs, \$1,535 on capital, and \$489 on transportation. For *all* special education students (preschool and school-aged combined), of the \$15,608 average total (general and special) education expenditure, \$8,185 is spent on personnel, \$5,347 is spent on operating costs, \$1,551 is spent on capital, and \$526 is spent on transportation. Note that these breakdowns are averages across all special education students in each age group, regardless of whether all students in the state receive each of these services. For example, Table 19a shows that the average total (general and special) expenditure for transportation per school-aged special education student is \$1,613. This is the average across only the students who receive some form of transportation, special or general, and is not an average across all school-aged students, as Table 3 reflects in the expenditure of \$489 per student.

Table 2
Estimated Special Education Spending in Rhode Island, 1999-2000¹⁷

	Total Count Special Education Students in the State ¹⁸	Total Number of Students in Sample	Special Education Expenditure per Special Education Student	General Education Expenditure per Special Education Student	Total (Special and General) Education Expenditure per Special Education Student	Total Special Education Expenditure	Total General Education Expenditure for Special Education Students	Total (General and Special) Education Expenditure on Special Education Students
Preschool (Ages 3-5)	2,648	74	\$17,165	\$1,571	\$18,735	\$45,451,829	\$4,158,729	\$49,610,558
	2,648	74	\$18,602	\$2,741	\$21,343	\$49,257,245	\$7,259,243	\$56,516,488
School-Aged (Ages 6-22)	27,222	1,016	\$8,609	\$4,417	\$13,026	\$234,342,531	\$120,246,151	\$354,588,682
	27,222	1,016	\$9,380	\$5,670	\$15,050	\$255,363,147	\$154,338,975	\$409,694,834
All (Ages 3-22)	29,870	1,090	\$9,367	\$4,165	\$13,532 ¹⁹	\$279,798,275	\$121,402,040	\$404,200,315
	29,870	1,090	\$10,198	\$5,410	\$15,608 ²⁰	\$304,624,098	\$161,595,588	\$466,219,686

¹⁷ Includes data on both school-aged and preschool students. Estimated expenditure per student has been rounded to the nearest whole number.

¹⁸ The total number of special education students in the state (3-22) includes 213 homebound and hospital students. The data do not allow the school-aged and preschool homebound and hospital program expenditures to be disaggregated. However, we assume that the homebound and hospital program expenditures apply primarily to school-aged students; therefore, the school-aged count (6-22) includes 213 homebound and hospital students.

¹⁹ Standard error of the mean total expenditure per special education student, not including capital or transportation, is \$492.

²⁰ Standard error of the mean total expenditure per special education student, including capital and transportation, is \$572.

Table 3**Estimated Average Personnel, Operating, Capital, and Transportation Expenditures per Special Education Student in Rhode Island, 1999-2000**

	Total Number of Students in State	Total Number of Students in Sample	Total (Special and General) Education Expenditures	Personnel Expenditures	Operating Expenditures ²¹	Capital Expenditures	Transportation Expenditures
Preschool (Ages 3-5)	2,648	74	\$21,343	\$12,346	\$6,299	\$1,706	\$902
School-Aged (Ages 6-22)	27,222	1,016	\$15,050	\$7,772	\$5,254	\$1,535	\$489
All (Ages 3-22)	29,870	1,090	\$15,608	\$8,185	\$5,347	\$1,551	\$526

²¹ Operating expenditures exclude personnel expenditures, and include central office administration and support, school administration and support, assessment (school-aged only), non-personnel, fees and tuition for students placed in non-public institutions, homebound/hospital programs (school-aged only), and summer school.

Table 4 compares average spending on a *school-aged* special education student and a general education student in the state. As shown, the estimated education expenditure per school-aged special education student is \$15,050, compared to \$7,410 for a general education student. The ratio of special education spending to general education spending for school-aged students in Rhode Island is estimated to be 2.03. That is, the total expenditure to educate the average school-aged student with disabilities is an estimated *2.03 times* that expended to educate the typical school-aged general education student with no needs.

Table 4
Comparison of Special Education to General Education Spending in Rhode Island for School-aged Students, 1999-2000

Total (Special and General) Education Expenditure per Special Education Student	\$15,050
Education Expenditure per General Education Student	\$7,410
Ratio of Spending on a Special Education Student vs. a General Education Student	2.03

Table 5
Comparison of Special Education to General Education Spending for School-aged Students Across all SEEP States and the Nation, 1999-2000¹

Table 5, below, provides total per student expenditures for *school-aged* special education students in Rhode Island and across the SEEP states and the nation. This table also provides comparisons of special education to general education spending for school-aged students across all nine SEEP states and the nation. As shown, the total per student expenditure for special education students is about average among the SEEP states, at \$15,050. The lowest total per student expenditure across the states is \$10,114, and the highest is \$19,976. The national average is \$12,474. Also provided in Table 5 are comparisons of special education to general education spending across the SEEP states and nation. As shown, the lowest spending ratio across these SEEP states and the nation is 1.57 and the largest is 2.73; at 2.03, Rhode Island is about average when compared to the other states. The national ratio is 1.90; that is, across the United States, the total cost per special education student is about 1.90 times greater than the cost to educate a general education student who receives no supplemental services such as Title I, ESL, or GATE.

Table 5
Comparison of Special Education to General Education Spending for
School-aged Students Across all SEEP States and the Nation, 1999-2000²²

	State A	State B	State C	State D	State E	Rhode Island	State F	State G	State H	U.S. ²³
<i>Special Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	\$5,633	\$5,333	\$6,157	\$6,316	\$7,093	\$9,380	\$11,432	\$12,507	\$16,860	See footnote
<i>General Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	\$4,481	\$5,096	\$4,690	\$4,810	\$4,120	\$5,670	\$5,661	\$5,233	\$3,116	See footnote
<i>Total (Special and General) Education</i> Expenditure per School-aged Special Education Student	\$10,114	\$10,429	\$10,848	\$11,126	\$11,213	\$15,050	\$17,094	\$17,740	\$19,976	\$12,474
Total Education Expenditure per School-aged <i>General Education Student</i>	\$6,303	\$6,660	\$6,351	\$6,940	\$5,933	\$7,410	\$9,229	\$7,869	\$7,311	\$6,556
Ratio of Spending on a School-aged Special Education Student vs. a School-aged General Education Student	1.60	1.57	1.71	1.60	1.89	2.03	1.85	2.23	2.73	1.90

²² Includes the following services: Personnel, central office administration and support, school administration and support, assessment, non-personnel, fees and tuition for students placed in non-public institutions, homebound/hospital programs, summer school, capital, and transportation.

²³ Source: Chambers, J., Parrish, T., and Harr, J. (2002). National data applies to all special education students (ages 3-22); national data for school-aged (ages 6-22) students are not yet available to the public.

Table 6 further delineates the education expenditure per general education student in Rhode Island, for whom the total expenditure of \$7,410 is provided in Table 4. Note that expenditures for services are only averaged across students who receive them, not necessarily every general education student in the state. For example, the \$414 per student for transportation is an average across the 88,174 students in the state who receive this service, not across all 121,819 general education students in the state. The largest component of expenditures for the general education student is general education teachers, at approximately \$3,982 per student. The second largest component is non class capitalization costs generated by general school administration, at \$997 per student. The total expenditure for general education students in the state is approximately \$902.7 million.

Table 6
General Education Expenditures per School-aged General Education Student
in Rhode Island, 1999-2000

Education Spending Components	Expenditure per student served	Total Estimated Population of General Students in this Category	Total Expenditures
Total general central office administration and support	\$299	121,819	\$36,468,439
Non class capitalization costs generated by general district administration	\$57	121,819	\$6,993,560
General school administration professional staff	\$668	121,819	\$81,353,902
General school administration non-certified staff	\$398	121,819	\$48,454,346
General school administration non-personnel expenditures	\$52	121,819	\$6,288,334
Non class capitalization costs generated by general school administration	\$997	121,819	\$121,424,878
School-aged – general education teachers	\$3,982	121,819	\$485,050,003
School-aged – general education paraprofessionals and aides	\$247	57,337	\$14,189,916
School-aged general education non-personnel expenditures	\$148	121,819	\$17,974,270
Class capitalization costs generated by general teachers	\$399	120,290	\$48,005,161
General transportation	\$414	88,174	\$36,530,283
TOTAL	\$7,410	121,819	\$902,733,093

Table 7 provides per student expenditures for preschool special education students across Rhode Island and the other SEEP states. As shown, the range of total per student expenditures is large, from \$10,309 in the lowest spending state to \$31,111 in the highest. Rhode Island is in the upper end of the range, spending a total of \$21,343 per preschool special education student.

Table 7
Preschool Special Education Expenditure Estimates Across SEEP States, Ages 3–5
1999–2000²⁴

	State A	State B	State C	State D	State E	Rhode Island	State F	State G
<i>Special Education Expenditure per Special Education Student</i>	\$7,122	\$10,523	\$10,462	\$9,423	\$10,806	\$18,602	\$17,029	\$29,230
<i>General Education Expenditure per Special Education Student</i>	\$3,187	\$1,953	\$2,820	\$4,096	\$5,058	\$2,741	\$5,100	\$1,881
<i>Total (Special and General) Education Expenditure per Special Education Student</i>	\$10,309	\$12,476	\$13,282	\$13,519	\$15,864	\$21,343	\$22,129	\$31,111

²⁴ Data across the U.S. is not yet available to the public. Due to an insufficient sample size, preschool data for one state is not reported. This table includes the following services: Personnel, central office administration and support, school administration and support, non-personnel, fees and tuition for students placed in non-public institutions, summer school, capital, and transportation.

Table 8 provides expenditures for all special education students (ages 3-22) across the SEEP states and the nation. As expected, the total expenditure per special education student in Rhode Island (\$15,608) is in the mid to high range, and is higher than the national average (\$12,474).

Table 8
Special Education Expenditure Estimates Across SEEP States and the Nation,
Ages 3-22
1999-2000²⁵

	State A	State B	State C	State D	State E	Rhode Island	State F	State G	State H	U.S. ²⁶
<i>Special Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	\$6,015	\$5,459	\$6,466	\$6,540	\$7,511	\$10,198	\$11,839	\$12,311	\$18,105	\$8,080
<i>General Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	\$4,351	\$4,962	\$4,635	\$4,706	\$3,860	\$5,410	\$5,637	\$5,215	\$2,994	\$4,394
<i>Total (Special and General) Education Expenditure per School-aged Special Education Student</i>	\$10,366	\$10,421	\$11,101	\$11,246	\$11,371	\$15,608	\$17,476	\$17,526	\$21,099	\$12,474

²⁵ Includes the following services: Personnel, central office administration and support, school administration and support, assessment (school-aged only), non-personnel, fees and tuition for students placed in non-public institutions, homebound/hospital programs (school-aged only), summer school, capital, and transportation.

²⁶ Source: Chambers, J., Parrish, T., and Harr, J. (2002).

Personnel

Average Personnel Expenditures by Category of Disability

Table 9 shows the per student personnel expenditures and demonstrates how these expenditures vary by category of disability. These spending estimates are based on personnel spending only for staff providing direct instructional or related services, and include salaries and benefits for general and special education teachers, related service staff, paraprofessionals, and aides. These analyses do not include administration and support personnel or non-personnel expenditures such as supplies, materials, and assistive equipment.

The data include only school-aged students in schools operated by the public school district in which they reside, including state schools, as well as preschool students. Personnel expenditure data are not provided for school-aged students placed in non-public institutions or agencies, as the SEEP surveys did not provide this information.

Furthermore, because of the small sample size of students, three disability categories—deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairment, and traumatic brain injury—were collapsed into a single—“other low-incidence disabilities” category.

The analysis of personnel expenditures is derived from the Student Information Survey and the *Student Resource Cost Database*, which is comprised of a combination of data from a variety of surveys and other information received from the districts such as fiscal data. The student samples were weighted to achieve a state count for each disability category; these counts also match the actual number of students in each disability category in the state.

Table 9 shows that the highest level of personnel spending in the state for special education students is on those with mental retardation. This disability category has total personnel expenditure of \$15,036 per special education student. The second highest spending on personnel is \$14,407 for a student with multiple disabilities. Preschool, which cannot be disaggregated by disability type, has a total personnel expenditure of \$13,490. The average total personnel expenditure across all ages (3-22) is \$8,651.

Table 9
Personnel Expenditures per Special Education Student by Disability
in Rhode Island, 1999-2000²⁷

	<i>Total (General and Special) Personnel Expenditure Per Special Education Student</i>
School-aged Students in Schools Operated by the Public School District in which the Student Resides	
Autism	\$12,070
Emotional Disturbance	\$10,313
Hearing Impairment/Deafness	\$10,113
Mental Retardation	\$15,036
Multiple Disabilities	\$14,407
Other Health Impairment	\$8,596
Specific Learning Disability	\$7,841
Speech or Language Impairment	\$6,360
Visual Impairment/Blindness	\$9,293
Other Low-incidence Disabilities ²⁸	\$11,550
Preschool	\$13,490
Overall Average, including Preschool	\$8,651

²⁷ Personnel expenditures account for the salaries and benefits of staff necessary to provide direct instruction and related services to students, such as general and special education teachers, related service staff, paraprofessionals, and aides. This component does not include administration and office support personnel or non-personnel expenditures, such as supplies, materials, and assistive equipment.

²⁸ Other low-incidence disabilities include deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairment, and traumatic brain injury. These disabilities were collapsed into a single category, as the individual sample sizes of students with these disabilities were insufficient.

Table 10 provides the average number of hours per year that special education students spend in various service settings and with various resources, by disability. This table is intended to inform the expenditure information in Table 9 (see footnote to Table 9 for explanation of how personnel expenditures are derived according to service and resources). Table 10 lists five distinct services: general elementary services, general secondary services, special education class, resource specialist, and related services. Note that, except for the general elementary and general secondary settings, the service categories are not mutually exclusive; that is, a student may receive services from more than one of the categories listed. The bottom row of the table provides “overall” hours spent in each setting by disability. (See Table 1 in this report for the counts of students by disability category.)

As shown, according to the SEEP survey data, most students with disabilities spend the majority of their time in general education classrooms, either elementary or secondary. In contrast, students with deaf-blindness spend slightly more time in special education classes (1,080 hours vs. 1,052 hours in a secondary general education class). Students with deaf-blindness receive more hours with a resource specialist than students with any other disability (597 hours), and they receive more hours of related services, as well (216 hours). Overall, the average special education student spends either 900 hours in an elementary general education class or 846 hours in a secondary general education class, 535 hours in a special education class, 222 hours with a resource specialist, and 67 hours with related services.

Table 10
Hours per Year Special Education Students Spend in Each Type of Service, by
Disability,
in Rhode Island, 1999-2000²⁹

	General Education Class		Special Education Class (3)	Resource Specialist (4)	Related Services (5)
	Elementary (1)	Secondary (2)			
Autism	1,152	866	558	247	64
Deaf-blindness	-	1,052	1,080	597	216
Development Delay	-	-	-	-	-
Emotional Disturbance	1,052	1,105	657	214	58
Hearing Impairment /Deafness	1,060	1,106	361	162	107
Mental Retardation	1,162	690	680	433	169
Multiple Disabilities	853	978	660	468	154
Orthopedic Impairment	847	0	330	89	88
Other Health Impairment	1,409	673	575	189	68
Specific Learning Disability	932	812	468	234	46
Speech or Language Impairment	774	1,135	639	222	46
Traumatic Brain Injury	-	537	280	141	42
Visual Impairment/ Blindness	687	842	546	195	46
Preschool	647	-	589	149	120
Overall Average	900	846	535	222	67

²⁹ Dashes in cells indicate insufficient number of cases to report data.

Table II provides the number of special education students to teachers in Rhode Island for the school year 1999-2000. Four categories of teachers are presented: special education teachers, special education related service providers, general education teachers, and special education aides. Only general education teachers who provide services for special education students are included in the respective ratios. As shown, there are approximately 20.4 special education students to every special education teacher, 21.4 special education students to every one special education related service provider, 28.5 special education students to every one general education teacher, and 40.5 special education students to every special education aide. The overall ratio for teachers and aides providing services to special education students is 26.8 special education students to every teacher or aide.

Table II
Number of Special Education Students per Teacher in Rhode Island, Ages 3-22
1999-2000³⁰

	Number of Special Education Students per Teacher	Number of Teachers in Sample
Special Education Teachers ³¹	20.4	322
Special Education Related Service Providers ³²	21.4	137
General Education Teachers ³³	28.5	343
Special Education Aides ³⁴	40.5	168
Overall Average	26.8	970

³⁰ The SEEP surveys do not provide sufficient information to obtain ratios for administrators working in special education programs.

³¹ Special education teachers consist of the following: consulting teacher, early childhood special education classroom teacher, itinerant teacher, other teacher, regular early childhood education classroom teacher, resource specialist/teacher, special class teacher, and team teacher.

³² Special education related service providers consist of the following: adaptive PE teacher, occupational therapist, other related service provider, physical therapist, psychologist, school counselor/social worker, special education counselor, and speech therapist.

³³ General education teachers consist of the following: classroom teacher, consulting teacher, early childhood education teacher, team teacher, bilingual teacher, and other teacher.

³⁴ Special education aides consist of the following: administrative aide, other assistant, personal or health care aide, bilingual teaching assistant, teaching assistant for resource specialist, teaching assistant for general education teacher, and teaching assistant for special class.

Transportation

Transportation Services and Expenditures

Information from the District and Student Information Surveys was used to determine per student and total expenditures on transportation services for special education students. Because it was not always possible to determine whether the transportation received by a special education student was a special transportation accommodation or whether it was a general transportation service (as received by all students), several assumptions were made. Transportation was interpreted to be a general education service when it was provided to the general education student population and when no special accommodations were made, while special education transportation services were interpreted to include those specifically designed for students with disabilities. This may include a special bus, a modified school bus, special transportation routes, the use of an aide or attendant to assist the student (on either the special bus or the regular bus), or reimbursement for transportation expenses. Students with more severe disabilities are likely to require such services, while students with less severe disabilities are frequently transported from home to school on regular buses along with the general education students. They usually do not require the assistance of aides or other special accommodations. We assumed that, in most cases, these students were receiving transportation similar to that provided for general education students, and therefore that these were general education transportation services. The resulting expenditures per student were then weighted to produce statewide estimates.

From the student surveys, transportation was inferred to be a special education service, if one of the following was true:

1. The student was transported to a special school or to multiple schools including vocational schools.
2. The student was transported from home to a general education school and required a wheelchair lift or other special arrangements, or was accompanied by an aide. (If the student was transported to a general education school and did not require any special accommodations, the student was assigned to the category of general transportation.)
3. The student was transported to a general education school and had an “Abilities Index” score over 34.³⁵
4. The student’s family received reimbursement for transportation expenses.

³⁵ The “Abilities Index” was developed by Rune Simeonsson and Donald Bailey of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We selected a mean score of 34 to assign students to special transportation services because this was the mean score of students who were transported to special education schools in our sample. We assumed that those with higher than this mean score would *likely* require special transportation services.

Table 12 shows general and special transportation expenditures for special education students and the percentage of special education students receiving transportation services. The data show that 36% of special education students receive some form of transportation services. We estimate that approximately 28% of these students with disabilities were riding regular buses without special accommodations, and that about 8% received special transportation services or reimbursement.

Total transportation expenditures for special education students were estimated to be approximately \$15.7 million for the 1999-2000 school year, of which \$12.3 million were for special transportation services. The average expenditure for a special education student receiving general transportation services is approximately \$425, and for a special education student receiving special transportation services, it is approximately \$5,165.

Table 12
Transportation Expenditures for Special Education Students in Rhode Island,
1999-2000

Type of Transportation	Number of Special Education Students Receiving Transportation Services	Percent of Special Education Students Receiving Services	Transportation Expenditure per Special Education Student Transported	Total Transportation Expenditures for Special Education Students
General Transportation Services Funded by General Education	8,052	28%	\$425	\$3,423,931
Special Transportation Services Funded by Special Education	2,378	8%	\$5,165	\$12,280,295
Total		36%		\$15,704,226

The “Abilities Index”

Table 13 through 15 shed light on the relationship between the severity of a student’s disability as measured by a functional abilities assessment, the “Abilities Index,” and the expenditure required to serve that student. The “Abilities Index” information contained in this report is exploratory in nature, and should be reviewed in conjunction with the other expenditure data provided.

The “Abilities Index” was developed by Rune Simeonsson and Donald Bailey of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.³⁶ It is a functional assessment where the focus of the measures is the different functional abilities of the student in 9 different domains: audition, behavior, intellectual functioning, limbs, intentional communication, tonicity, integrity of health, eyes, and structural status.

This Abilities Index is an acronym for a measure covering the nine areas of functioning mentioned above (see Appendix F for a copy of the Index directly extracted from the SEEP student survey). The teacher or person most knowledgeable about the student that filled out the form rated each domain or area of functioning based upon the student’s characteristics. The maximum rating value on each domain is 5 (implying profound or severe disability) and the minimum is 0 (implying normal functioning in that domain). In order to facilitate comparisons between different students, an Index score was developed for each student. To calculate the total score, a specific weight³⁷ was assigned to each domain in order to reflect the *relative importance* of that specific domain in the overall measure of functionality (or total Index score) of the student. For example, the domain of intellectual functioning has a weight of 2, and the domain of intentional communication has a weight of 1. The total Index score was calculated as a weighted average, taking into account all the ratings in the different areas. The highest total score a student can obtain is 45, meaning that the student has a severe, profound disability in all the areas measured.

In Table 13, as with all tables presenting “Abilities Index” information in this report, students were classified into the four Quartiles based on their “Abilities Index” score. The score range for Quartile I (25th percentile of the population) is 0-3, the score range for Quartile II (50th percentile of the population) is 3.0-10, Quartile III (75th percentile of the population) has a score between 10-21.2, and Quartile IV (100th percentile of the population) shows a score range of 21.3 or above.

This table provides information for both school-aged and preschool students who are enrolled in schools operated by the public school district in which they reside. Note that expenditures by Quartile are provided for school-aged students only; data for preschool students are only available in aggregate form. Special and total (general and special) education expenditure data by ability score range and the number of sample students for whom we have data for each score range are presented.

³⁶ See Simeonsson, R., et. al (1995).

³⁷ Rune Simeonsson developed these weights.

Table 13 provides expenditure information by “Abilities Index” Quartile for personnel expenditures only, for students aged 3-22. Personnel expenditure data is not provided for school-aged students who are placed in non-public institutions or agencies, as this information was not provided in the SEEP surveys. The lowest total per student personnel expenditure is for students in Quartile I, at \$5,846 spent per student. Quartile III has the largest total personnel expenditure per student, at \$11,179. Preschool has a total personnel expenditure of \$13,490 per student. The average total expenditure across all Quartiles plus preschool is \$8,651. When compared to the total per student expenditures presented in Table 14, Table 13 shows that on average, about half of the expenditure spent on a special education student is spent on personnel.

Table 13
Personnel Expenditure per Special Education Student by “Abilities Index” Score in Rhode Island, Ages 3-22, 1999-2000

	Total Number of Students in Sample ³⁸	<i>Special Education</i> Expenditure per Student	<i>Total</i> (General and Special) Education Expenditure per Student
Quartile I	158	\$2,454	\$5,846
Quartile II	239	\$3,930	\$6,713
Quartile III	266	\$8,745	\$11,179
Quartile IV	276	\$8,314	\$10,700
Preschool	73	\$13,069	\$13,490
Overall Average, Including Preschool	1,012	\$5,775	\$8,651

¹ Total number of students in sample for whom “Abilities Index” information was obtained.

Table 14, below, provides per student expenditures by “Abilities Index” score for ages 3-22. As in Table 13, expenditures by Quartile are only presented for school-aged students who attend schools in the public school district in which they reside. Expenditures for students in non-public institutions or agencies and preschool students are only available in aggregate form. As expected, expenditures increase as the severity of the students’ disabilities increase, from a total of \$11,457 per student in Quartile I to \$17,974 per student in Quartile IV. The full expenditure for students in non-public institutions or agencies is \$39,228, and it is \$21,343 for preschool students. This table shows that the overall per student special education expenditure for the 1,065 students in the sample is \$10,198, and the per student total (special and general) education expenditure is \$15,608.

Table 14
Expenditure per Special Education Student by “Abilities Index” Score in Rhode Island,
Ages 3-22, 1999-2000

	Total Number of Students in Sample ³⁹	<i>Special Education</i> Expenditure per Student	<i>Total</i> (General and Special) Education Expenditure per Student
Quartile I	158	\$4,717	\$11,457
Quartile II	239	\$6,436	\$12,457
Quartile III	266	\$9,902	\$15,400
Quartile IV	276	\$12,686	\$17,974
Students in Non-public Institutions or Agencies	53	\$39,228	\$39,228
Preschool	74	\$18,602	\$21,343
Overall Average, Including Students in Non-public Institutions and Preschool	1,065	\$10,198	\$15,608

³⁹Total number of students in sample for whom “Abilities Index” information was obtained.

Table 15 presents expenditures for special education students, by ages 3-22, “Abilities Index” Quartile and educational environment. The educational environments in this table are placement categories, as defined by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education.⁴⁰ The method of classifying students into these educational environments is as follows: (Appendix E describes these environments in greater detail.)

- (1) **General Education Class:** A regular class includes students receiving special education and related services outside the general education classroom for less than 21 percent of the school day. Therefore, these students spend a majority of their education program with non-disabled peers inside the general education classroom.
- (2) **Resource Room:** A resource room includes students receiving special education and related services outside the general education classroom for at least 21 percent but no more than 60 percent of the school day. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) resource rooms with special education/related services provided within the resource room, or (b) resource rooms with part-time instruction in a general education class.
- (3) **Separate Special Education Class:** A separate special education class includes students receiving special education and related services for more than 60 percent of the school day in a separate class. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) self-contained special classrooms with part-time instruction in a general education class, or (b) self-contained special classrooms full-time on a regular school campus.
- (4) **Public Separate Facility:** Public separate facilities include students receiving special education and related services for greater than 50 percent of the school day in a separate special education day school in a public school district, or in a state special education school. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) public day schools for students with disabilities, or (b) public day schools for students with disabilities for a portion of the school day (greater than 50 percent) and in general education school buildings for the remainder of the school day.
- (5) **Private separate facility:** Private separate facilities include students with disabilities receiving special education and related services in these facilities, at public expense for greater than 50 percent of the school day. This may include children and youth placed in private day schools for students with disabilities or private day schools for students with disabilities for a portion of the school day (greater than 50 percent) and in regular school buildings for the remainder of the school day.
- (6) **Home/hospital:** Homebound/hospital placement includes students receiving education programs in hospital programs or homebound programs. Separate Special Education Class, public separate facility, and home/hospital environments are not reported in this table, due to an insufficient sample size to report separately. The remaining placements provided by OSEP in the Report to Congress (i.e., public residential facility, private residential facility, and correctional facility) are not included in these analyses due to the nature of the SEEP surveys.

⁴⁰ Source: “OSEP IDEA, Part B Data Collection History” (September 2001).

As shown in Table 15, the per student expenditures in the *General Education Class* environment increase by Quartile, from \$10,921 for Quartile I to \$17,325 for Quartile IV. The expenditure for this educational environment for Quartile II is \$12,279, and for Quartile III it is \$15,484. The overall average for this educational environment is \$13,449. The overall averages for the other educational environments are as follow: *Resource Room*, \$18,563, and *Private Separate Facility*, \$41,205. As in the other tables, a dash in a cell indicates insufficient sample size to report.

Table 15
Expenditure per Special Education Student
by Educational Environment and Abilities Index Quartile, 1999-2000⁴¹

Educational Environment	Quartile I	Quartile II	Quartile III	Quartile IV	Overall Average
General Education Class	\$10,921	\$12,279	\$15,484	\$17,325	\$13,449
Resource Room	-	\$14,077	\$19,596	\$22,346	\$18,563
Private Separate Facility	-	-	\$39,416	-	\$41,205

Total Expenditures

Expenditures by Disability

Table 16 provides yearly expenditures, both general and special, by disability category in Rhode Island for 1999-2000. General education expenditures include central office administration; school administration; general education teachers and other general education personnel; non-personnel items such as materials and supplies; and transportation. Special education expenditures include the same general categories, except that the focus is on special education. For example, for central office costs, only expenditures for the office of the district's special education director are presented. Special education personnel for direct instruction and related services include special education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and aides. Special education expenditures are also provided for special transportation and incremental assessment activities conducted by special education consulting teachers, psychologists, counselors, and social workers.

Data by disability include only school-aged students in schools operated by the public school district in which they reside, as well as state schools. Due to insufficient sample sizes, data for preschool students and for school-aged students in non-public institutions or agencies are not

⁴¹ The sample sizes by educational environment and abilities index were only sufficient in size for the 3 educational environments listed above. Dashes in cells indicate an insufficient sample size.

disaggregated by disability. Three disability categories—deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairment, and traumatic brain injury—are collapsed into the “Other low-incidence disabilities” category, due to low sample sizes.

Table 16 shows mental retardation is the disability category associated with the highest total per student cost (\$23,884), while speech or language impairment is associated with the lowest total cost (\$11,322). Speech or language impairment is also the only disability with general education expenditures higher than special education expenditures. Multiple disabilities is associated with the second highest expenditure, at \$23,469 per student. The total per student expenditure for students in non-public institutions is \$39,228, and the total per student expenditure for preschool special education students is \$21,343. The overall average total expenditure per special education student is \$15,608.

Table 16 - Expenditure per Special Education Student in Rhode Island, by Disability, Ages 3-22, 1999-2000⁴²

	<i>Special Education Expenditure Per Special Education Student</i>	<i>General Education Expenditure Per Special Education Student</i>	<i>Total (General and Special) Education Expenditure Per Special Education Student</i>
School-aged Students in Schools Operated by the Public School District in which the Student Resides ⁴³			
Autism	\$16,053	\$4,177	\$20,230
Emotional Disturbance	\$11,032	\$5,483	\$16,516
Hearing Impairment/Deafness	\$9,204	\$7,394	\$16,598
Mental Retardation	\$20,239	\$3,644	\$23,884
Multiple Disabilities	\$19,214	\$4,256	\$23,469
Other Health Impairment	\$8,295	\$6,505	\$14,801
Specific Learning Disability	\$7,197	\$6,103	\$13,301
Speech or Language Impairment	\$5,271	\$6,051	\$11,322
Visual Impairment/Blindness	\$9,273	\$6,107	\$15,380
Other Low-Incidence Disabilities ⁴⁴	\$14,116	\$5,193	\$19,309
School-aged Students in Non-public Institutions or Agencies	\$39,228	\$0	\$39,228
Preschool	\$18,602	\$2,741	\$21,343
Overall Average, including Preschool and Students in Non-public Institutions ⁴⁵	\$10,198	\$5,410	\$15,608

⁴² Personnel expenditures account for the salaries and benefits of staff necessary to provide direct instruction and education services to students, such as general and special education teachers, related service staff, paraprofessionals, and aides. This component does not include administration and office support personnel or non-personnel expenditures, such as supplies, materials, and assistive equipment. The numbers in this table are weighted averages based on the estimated total population of students in each disability category.

⁴³ Includes state schools.

⁴⁴ Other low-incidence disabilities include deaf-blindness, orthopedic impairment, and traumatic brain injury. These disabilities were collapsed into a single category, as the individual sample sizes of students with these disabilities were insufficient.

⁴⁵ This figure does not include expenditures associated with students in hospital and homebound programs.

Table 17 expands upon Table 16, providing expenditure data by disability category across all SEEP states. Table 17 also provides disability rates by state. Note that if the sample size is low for any one disability category in a state, it is included in the “other disabilities” category, shown in the next to last row of the table. The disabilities included in this category vary by state. As shown, Rhode Island expenditures by disability tend to be on the higher side when compared to the other SEEP states. In fact, for two disabilities, Rhode Island’s expenditures are higher than the other states. These are mental retardation, at \$23,884, and multiple disabilities, at \$23,469. Across all disabilities, the highest overall average expenditure across the SEEP states is \$16,456 and the lowest overall average expenditure is \$10,049. The total overall average special education expenditure for school-aged students in Rhode Island is \$15,050.

Table 17 - Expenditures per School-aged Special Education Student by Disability, Across all SEEP States, Ages 6-22, 1999-2000⁴⁶

	Expenditure Type	Rhode Island	State A	State B	State C	State D	State E	State F	State G	State H
Autism	SE	\$ 16,053	\$9,969	\$13,407	\$17,585	\$13,336	\$12,869	\$20,191	N/A	N/A
	GE	\$ 4,177	\$3,635	\$4,377	\$3,155	\$3,785	\$3,654	\$4,897	N/A	N/A
	Total	\$ 20,230	\$13,604	\$17,784	\$20,740	\$14,121	\$16,523	\$25,088	N/A	N/A
% disability rate**		0.74%	0.60%	1.25%	0.90%	0.90%	0.93%	1.20%	0.49%	1.40%
Deaf-Blindness	SE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	GE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% disability rate		0.01%	0.02%	0.02%	0.02%	0.04%	0.02%	0.01%	0.01%	0.30%
Developmental Delay	SE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	GE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% disability rate		0%	0.70%	0%	0.20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Emotional Disturbance	SE	\$11,032	N/A	N/A	\$5,879	\$5,747	\$10,129	\$13,428	\$9,322	N/A
	GE	\$5,483	N/A	N/A	\$4,476	\$3,841	\$7,234	\$4,762	\$4,980	N/A
	Total	\$16,516	N/A	N/A	\$10,356	\$9,588	\$17,363	\$18,190	\$14,302	N/A
% disability rate		8.68%	6.10%	8.04%	8.70%	7.90%	6.62%	11.90%	6.48%	3.3%
Hearing Impairment /Deafness	SE	\$9,204	N/A	\$11,672	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$10,613	N/A	N/A
	GE	\$7,394	N/A	\$6,008	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$5,471	N/A	N/A
	Total	\$16,598	N/A	\$17,680	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$16,084	N/A	N/A
% disability rate		0.84%	1.10%	1.23%	1.10%	0.90%	0.72%	1.50%	1.13%	1.40%
Mental Retardation	SE	\$20,239	\$8,596	\$9,666	\$8,768	\$11,044	N/A	\$16,848	\$7,140	\$16,731
	GE	\$3,644	\$3,475	\$3,707	\$2,968	\$3,060	N/A	\$3,730	\$4,443	\$2,931
	Total	\$23,884	\$12,071	\$13,373	\$11,736	\$14,104	N/A	\$20,578	\$11,584	\$19,662
% disability rate		4.50%	24.10%	16.07%	10.70%	10.40%	2.40%	4.40%	23.88%	13.60%

⁴⁶ N/A signifies expenditure data included in "Other Low Incidence" category, except data for Developmental Delay in New York. According to OSEP, there is no category Developmental Delay in NY. Disability rate calculated from statistics cited by the 22nd Annual Report to Congress, US Department of Education 2000.

Table 17 Continued

	Expenditure Type	Rhode Island	State A	State B	State C	State D	State E	State F	State G	State H
Multiple Disabilities	SE	\$19,214	\$11,460	\$15,483	N/A	N/A	\$10,797	\$17,801	\$13,027	N/A
	GE	\$4,256	\$4,356	\$2,982	N/A	N/A	\$5,674	\$5,239	\$3,201	N/A
	Total	\$23,469	\$15,816	\$18,465	N/A	N/A	\$16,461	\$23,040	\$16,228	N/A
% disability rate	1%	1.50%	0.73%	3.90%	0.70%	8.18%	5.20%	5.82%	0%	0%
Orthopedic Impairment	SE	N/A	\$9,244	\$9,734	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$15,309	N/A	N/A
	GE	N/A	\$5,002	\$4,790	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$5,660	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	\$14,246	\$4,524	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$20,968	N/A	N/A
% disability rate	0.53%	0.70%	0.90%	0.90%	0.60%	0.33%	0.70%	1.12%	5.10%	
Other Health Impairment	SE	\$8,295	\$4,662	\$6,512	\$5,334	\$6,638	\$5,937	\$10,830	N/A	N/A
	GE	\$6,505	\$5,487	\$6,677	\$4,451	\$4,863	\$6,977	\$5,621	N/A	N/A
	Total	\$14,801	\$10,150	\$13,189	\$9,785	\$11,501	\$12,914	\$16,451	N/A	N/A
% disability rate	7.0%	3.1%	1.7%	7.7%	4.4%	0.7%	5.0%	2.0%	0.0%	
Specific Learning Disability	SE	\$7,197	\$2,132	\$3,984	\$4,613	\$4,308	\$7,931	\$9,148	\$5,655	N/A
	GE	\$6,103	\$5,905	\$5,068	\$4,960	\$5,338	\$6,693	\$5,932	\$5,771	N/A
	Total	\$13,301	\$8,037	\$9,052	\$9,573	\$9,647	\$14,624	\$15,080	\$11,425	N/A
% disability rate	58.0%	44.2%	42.7%	43.4%	53.1%	56.1%	54.9%	38.5%	62.3%	
Speech/Language Impairment	SE	\$5,271	\$3,141	\$3,594	N/A	\$4,734	\$8,709	\$7,251	N/A	N/A
	GE	\$6,051	\$6,316	\$4,744	N/A	\$3,693	\$4,995	\$6,058	N/A	N/A
	Total	\$11,322	\$9,457	\$8,337	N/A	\$8,427	\$13,704	\$13,309	N/A	N/A
% disability rate	18.1%	17.3%	26.5%	22.0%	20.4%	23.7%	14.4%	20.0%	11.1%	
Traumatic Brain Injury	SE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$13,934	N/A	N/A	N/A
	GE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$6,048	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$19,982	N/A	N/A	N/A
% disability rate	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	
Visual Impairment /Blindness	SE	\$9,273	\$3,149	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	GE	\$6,107	\$5,327	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	\$15,380	\$8,476	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
% disability rate	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	
Other Disabilities	SE	\$14,116	\$10,640	\$5,563	\$7,659	\$13,629	\$14,557	\$21,385	\$4,034	\$12,826
	GE	\$5,193	\$3,802	\$5,237	\$3,410	\$4,376	\$5,710	\$5,688	\$4,761	\$3,312
	Total	\$19,309	\$14,442	\$10,800	\$11,069	\$18,004	\$20,267	\$27,076	\$8,795	\$16,137
% disability rate	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	
Average	SE	\$9,380	\$5,333	\$6,157	\$7,093	\$5,633	\$11,432	\$12,507	\$6,316	\$16,860
	GE	\$5,670	\$5,096	\$4,690	\$4,120	\$4,481	\$5,661	\$5,233	\$4,810	\$3,116
	Total	\$15,050	\$10,429	\$10,848	\$11,213	\$10,114	\$17,094	\$17,740	\$11,126	\$19,976

Table 18, below, provides total (general and special) education expenditure per special education student, by disability and educational environment. Unfortunately, the sample sizes by disability and by educational environment were only sufficient for a limited number of educational environments. Nonetheless, several comparisons can be made. The average per student expenditure across all disabilities and preschool within the *general education class* environment is \$13,449. This expenditure is higher for the *resource room* environment, at \$18,563, and for the *separate special education class* environment, at \$19,298 per student. The total cost of the *public separate facility* is \$12,263. Expenditure data for all other disability categories are provided in aggregate form in the “other low-incident disabilities” row.

Table 18
Expenditure per Special Education Student
by Disability Type and Educational Environment, 1999-2000⁴⁷

Disability Type	General Education Class	Resource Room	Separate Special Education Class	Public Separate Facility
Autism	\$20,437	—	—	—
Emotional Disturbance	\$15,826	—	—	—
Mental Retardation	\$22,290	—	—	—
Multiple Disabilities	\$20,054	—	—	—
Other Health Impairment	\$14,793	—	—	—
Specific Learning Disability	\$12,957	\$14,884	—	—
Speech or Language Impairment	\$10,434	—	—	—
Visual Impairment/Blindness	\$14,071	—	—	—
Other Low-Incidence Disabilities ⁴⁸	\$15,745	\$19,245	\$19,490	\$10,801
Preschool	\$16,079	—	—	—
Average Overall ⁴⁹	\$13,449	\$18,563	\$19,298	\$12,263

⁴⁷ The sample sizes by disability, by educational environment, were only sufficient in size for the 8 disability categories listed above, plus preschool and school-age students in non-public institutions or agencies. Dashes in cells indicate an insufficient sample size; these students are placed in the low-incident category.

⁴⁸ The disabilities included in each educational environment for this row vary, depending on sample size. General education class includes: deaf-blindness, hearing impairment/deafness, orthopedic impairment, and traumatic brain injury. Resource room includes: autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deafness, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment/blindness. Separate special education class includes: autism, emotional disturbance, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, and specific learning disability. Public separate facility includes: emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deafness, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, specific learning disability, and speech or language impairment.

⁴⁹ Includes all students in the sample, including students placed in non-public institutions or agencies for whom the home district pays tuition or fees or transfers funds, and preschool students. The samples of these students are insufficient in size to report separately.

Special Education Spending by Service Category

The services that special education students receive can be divided into a variety of categories such as school administration, instruction, and transportation. These services can also be divided into special education services and general education services. For example, most special education students receive direct instruction services from both general and special education personnel.

Tables 19a and 19b present data on the special and general education spending for school-aged and preschool special education students, respectively. For five of the service categories, both special education expenditures and general education expenditures are presented. General education spending is not shown for those services specifically designed and provided to special education students (e.g., special school administration and support, assessment services, and homebound and hospital programs). General education spending is also not shown for students placed in public or non-public institutions or agencies (excluding state special schools) not operated by the public school district in which they reside and for whom the home district pays tuition and fees or transfers funds. Furthermore, data on general education summer school programs were not collected.

To determine the expenditures associated with each service, data from the district and student files were combined to determine the special and general education expenditures for school-aged and preschool special education students. In Table 19a, column 2 shows the average special education expenditure by service for school-aged special education students receiving them, and the third column shows the estimated number of students who receive these services. Columns 4 and 5 show the general education expenditures for special education students and the estimated number of students receiving each service, respectively. Table 19a also shows the total expenditure by service category and the percentage of total spending that is attributed to each service category (columns 6, 7, and 8). Expenditures by service were also estimated for preschool special education students, as shown in Table 19b, below. The per student expenditures in both tables were calculated using weighted averages based on the estimated total number of students receiving each type of service.

For school-aged students, Table 19a shows that a total of \$409.7 million is spent on special and general education services for school-aged special education students in Rhode Island. The average expenditure per student for the special education portion of the district central office administration and support is \$742, with the general education component of district administration estimated at \$299. Special education expenditures for school administration refer to administration expenditures for special schools operated by the school district in which the student resides and special state schools. General education expenditures for school administration refer to administration for general schools operated by the public school district in which the student resides. The general school administration expenditure is estimated to be \$1,119 per special education student.

A third category of service expenditures includes direct instruction and related service personnel. The total general and special education expenditure for this category of services for a special education student is \$8,193. As one would expect, the total expenditures on direct instruction and related service personnel account for more than half of the total expenditures for school-aged special education students.

A fourth category of expenditure is for assessment services (including evaluation and IEP related activities) provided by special education consulting teachers, psychologists, counselors, and social workers assigned to schools. Expenditures for assessment services provided by district staff and general and special education teachers are not included in this figure, as these data are included in the expenditures for district central office administration and support and for direct instruction and related service personnel. Thus, this exhibit does not provide data on the *total* expenditure on assessment services. Furthermore, assessment activities are only counted as special education expenditures. Approximately 7% of the total expenditure for school-aged special education students is used for these assessment services. Another service category that is costly for school-aged students is tuition, fees, and related service personnel for schools not operated by the public school district in which the student resides. At \$46.6 million, this category accounts for over 11% of the total expenditures for school-aged special education students.

Table 19b shows a total of approximately \$56.5 million was spent on educational services, both special and general, for preschool students in Rhode Island in 1999-2000. The total general and special education expenditures per preschool student on direct instruction and related services are significantly higher than expenditures for the same services provided to school-aged students, \$13,490 and \$8,193, respectively. More than 58% of the total expenditures for preschool students are used for direct instruction and related service personnel. Higher spending on preschool students may be due to a smaller population with more severe disabilities, as compared to school-aged special education students. The next largest expenditure is for tuition, fees, and related service personnel services for preschool students placed in schools not operated by the home district. This category accounts for almost 14% of the total expenditure for preschool students.

Table 19a Special and General Education Spending for School-Aged Special Education Students in Rhode Island, by Service, 1999-2000⁵⁰

	Special Education Services for Special Education Students		General Education Services for Special Education Students		Total (General and Special) Education Expenditure Per Special Education Student Served(6)	Total (General and Special) Education Expenditures for Special Education Students(7)	Percentage of Total Education Expenditures(8)
	Expenditure Per Special Education Student Served(2)	Total Number of Students Served(3)	Expenditure Per Special Education Student Served(4)	Total Population of Students Served(5)			
District Central Office Administration and Support ⁵¹	\$742	27,222	\$299	27,222	\$1,042	\$28,352,326	6.9%
School-Aged Students in Schools Operated by the Public School District in Which the Student Resides							
Special School Administration and Support ⁵²	See footnote		Not a general education expenditure			See footnote	
General School Administration and Support ⁵³	Not a special education		\$1,119	25,820	\$1,119	\$28,880,970	7.0%
Direct Instruction and Related Service Personnel ⁵⁴	\$5,086	25,821	\$3,526	22,755	\$8,193	\$211,559,364	51.6%
Non-Personnel Items ⁵⁵	\$197	25,821	\$129	23,039	\$312	\$8,064,280	2.0%
Assessment ⁵⁶	\$996	28,262	Not a general education expenditure		\$996	\$28,162,967	6.9%
Summer School Programs	\$811	2,476	Data not available ⁵⁷		\$811	\$2,007,056	0.5%
Transportation	\$5,178	2,077	\$414	6,180	\$1,613	\$13,315,080	3.2%
Homebound and Hospital Programs ⁵⁸	\$4,392	213	Not a general education expenditure		\$4,392	\$935,585	0.2%
School-Aged Students Placed in Schools Not Operated By the Public School District in Which the Student Resides ⁵⁹							
Tuition, Fees, and Related Service Personnel	\$39,228	1,188	Not a general education expenditure		\$39,228	\$46,618,846	11.4%
Facilities ⁶⁰	\$377	27,222	\$1,158	27,222	\$1,535	\$41,798,360	10.2%
Total Special and General Education Expenditure for Special Education Students	\$9,380	27,222	\$5,670	27,222	\$15,050	\$409,694,834	100%

**Table 19b
Special and General Education Spending for Preschool Special Education Students in Rhode Island, by
Service, 1999-2000⁶¹**

	Special Education Services for Special Education Students		General Education Services for Special Education Students		Total (General and Special) Education Expenditures for Special Education Students(7)	Total (General and Special) Education Expenditure Per Special Student Served(6)	Total (General and Special) Education Expenditures for Special Education Students(7)	5.0%
	Expenditure Per Special Education Student Served(2)	Total Number of Students Served(3)	Expenditure Per Special Education Student Served(4)	Total Population of Students Served(5)				
Service(1)								
District Central Office Administration and Support ⁶²	\$769	2,648	\$299	2,648	\$2,827,920	\$1,068	\$2,827,920	5.0%
Preschool Students in Schools Operated by the Public School District in Which the Student Resides								
General School Administration and Support	Not a special education expenditure		\$898	2,441	\$2,192,586	\$898	\$2,192,586	3.9%
Direct Instruction and Related Service Personnel	\$13,069	2,441	\$2,062	498	\$32,929,766	\$13,490	\$32,929,766	58.3%
Direct Instruction and Related Service Personnel ⁶⁵	\$5,086	25,821	\$3,526	22,755	\$211,559,364	\$8,193	\$211,559,364	51.6%
Non-Personnel Items ⁶³	\$1,398	2,441	\$75	1,954	\$3,559,350	\$1,458	\$3,559,350	6.3%
Summer School Programs	\$642	430	Data not available ⁶⁴		\$275,944	\$642	\$275,944	0.5%
Transportation	\$5,070	301	\$462	1,872	\$2,389,146	\$1,099	\$2,389,146	4.2%
Preschool Students Placed in Schools Not Operated By the Public School District in Which the Student Resides ⁶⁵								
Tuition, Fees, and Related Service Personnel	\$37,800	207	Not a general education expenditure		\$7,824,992	\$37,800	\$7,824,992	13.8%
Facilities ⁶⁶	\$862	2,648	\$844	2,648	\$4,516,784	\$1,706	\$4,516,784	8.0%
Total Special and General Education Expenditure for Special Education Students	\$18,602	2,648	\$2,741	2,648	\$56,516,488	\$21,343	\$56,516,488	100%

Footnotes for Table 19a

⁵⁰ The numbers in this table are weighted averages based on the estimated total population of students served in each category.

⁵¹ District central office expenditures support all students residing within the district, regardless of placement, except for students in homebound and hospital programs.

⁵² Special education expenditures for school administration refer to administration expenditures for special schools operated by the school district in which the student resides and special state schools. An expenditure estimate is included in the total expenditure calculation.

⁵³ General education expenditures for school administration refer to expenditures for general education schools operated by the school district in which the student resides.

⁵⁴ Students in homebound and hospital programs are not included under this service category.

⁵⁵ Associated with direct instruction and related service personnel.

⁵⁶ Assessment services included in this figure are provided by special education consulting teachers, psychologists, counselors, and social workers assigned to schools. Expenditures for assessment services provided by other personnel (i.e., district central office staff and general and special education teachers) are included in the expenditure data for district central office administration and support and direct instruction and related service personnel. Thus, these data are not the total expenditures for assessment services. The data do not allow the school-aged and preschool assessment expenditures to be disaggregated. However, the assessment expenditures apply primarily to school-aged students. Students placed in schools not operated by the public school district in which the student resides and students in homebound and hospital programs are not included in the estimate.

⁵⁷ Data are not available for summer school programs funded by general education; therefore no general education expenditure or estimated population served are provided.

⁵⁸ Homebound and hospital programs are not funded by general education. The data do not allow the school-aged and preschool homebound and hospital program expenditures to be disaggregated. However, we assume that the homebound and hospital program expenditures apply primarily to school-aged students.

⁵⁹ These students are served at a public or non-public institution or agency, excluding state special schools, for which the home district pays tuition or transfers funds.

⁶⁰ Expenditures on facilities are estimated using data from a variety of sources about the space requirements for different types of classroom and non-classroom buildings within districts, the cost per square foot of construction, and the average ages of school buildings in different parts of the country.

Footnotes for Table 19b

⁶¹ The numbers in this table are weighted averages based on the estimated total population of students served in each category.

⁶² District central office expenditures support all students residing within the district, regardless of placement, except for students in homebound and hospital programs.

⁶³ Associated with direct instruction and related service personnel.

⁶⁴ Data are not available for summer school programs funded by general education; therefore no general education expenditure or estimated population served are provided for this service.

⁶⁵ These students are placed at a public or non-public institution or agency, excluding state special schools, not operated by the public school district in which the student resides and for which the home district pays tuition or transfers funds.

⁶⁶ Expenditures on facilities are estimated using data from a variety of sources about the space requirements for different types of classroom and non-classroom buildings within districts, the cost per square foot of construction, and the average ages of school buildings in different parts of the country.

Expenditures by Special Education Funding Formula Type

Using data from the national Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP), Table 20 presents average special education expenditures by type of state special education funding formula in relation to Rhode Island's special education expenditures. The four special education funding formulas are pupil weights (state special education aid is allocated on a per student basis), flat grant (aid is fixed per student), resource-based (funding is based on an allocation of specific education resources), and percent reimbursement (aid a district receives is directly based on its expenditure for the program).

As shown, special education expenditure data were received from districts in 43 states. These states can be divided into four formula categories. Eighteen of these use pupil weights to allocate special education funds. Districts in resource-based allocation states show the lowest special education expenditure of the four types, while districts from the flat grant states show the highest per student expenditure. Rhode Island, which does not have a separate special education funding formula, shows higher special education expenditures than the averages reported in each of the four categories.

Table 20
Expenditures per Special Education Student, by Special Education Funding Formula Type, 1999-2000⁶⁷

Special Education Funding Formula Type ⁶⁸	Number of Students in SEEP Sample	Number of States Represented in SEEP	<i>Special Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	<i>General Education</i> Expenditure per Special Education Student	<i>Total</i> (Special and General) Education Expenditure per Special Education Student
Resource-based	1,844	11	\$7,314	\$4,314	\$11,628
Pupil weights	4,957	18	\$8,336	\$4,303	\$12,639
% Reimbursement	152	5	\$8,897	\$4,240	\$13,137
Flat Grant	1,341	9	\$8,710	\$4,770	\$13,480
Rhode Island	1,090	1	\$10,198	\$5,410	\$15,608

⁶⁷ Expenditure data obtained from the national Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP). Includes all special education students (ages 3-22), except those in homebound/hospital programs. Includes expenditures for transportation and capital.

⁶⁸ Funding formula type based on 1998-99 data. Source: Parrish and Anthony (2001).

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National SEEP Research Questions

Appendix A

Detailed Description of National SEEP Research Questions

I. What are the detailed average special education and general education per student expenditures for special education students, and how do they vary by type of student, school, placement, district, and state?

I.1 How much is spent on the identification and assessment of special education students?

- 1) What are the various forms of pre-referral activities (i.e., determining the initial eligibility of a potential special education student) currently in practice and what is spent on them?
- 2) What is spent on developing an IEP?
- 3) What is spent on maintaining an IEP?
- 4) What is spent on the assessment of special education students?
- 5) What is spent on developing standards to assess student performance?

I.2 What are the per student expenditures for personnel?

- 1) What is spent on instructional personnel?
- 2) What is spent on administrative personnel?
- 3) What is spent on other staff?

I.3 What are the per student expenditures for facilities, supplies, and technological supports?

I.4 What are the per student expenditures for transportation?

I.5 What are the per student expenditures for mediation and litigation?

- 1) What are the per student expenditures for implementation of due process, mediation, and dispute resolution?
 - 2) What are the per student expenditures on litigation regarding placement decisions and what potential impact might this have on future expenditures on special education?
 - 3) What is the relationship between expenditures on mediation and expenditures on litigation?
- I.6 What are the resources devoted to meeting the needs of students diagnosed as severely emotionally disturbed?
- I.7 What are the average per student expenditures devoted to encouraging parental involvement?
- I.8 What are the per student expenditures for other indirect costs, administrative and otherwise?
- I.9 What are the per student general education expenditures for special education students?
- I.10 What are the expenditures on the various special education programs and services received by special education students (e.g., general education classroom placement, special classrooms, and therapies)?
- I.11 How do the above expenditures vary by type of student, placement, school, district, and state?
- 1) Student characteristics:
 - Grade level
 - Age
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Gender
 - SES
 - Disability type
 - Cognitive/physical/behavioral needs
 - 2) Placement type:
 - Integrated public school
 - Regular classroom
 - Resource room
 - Special classroom
 - Related service room
 - Separate public school

Private school
Residential

3) School characteristics:

Size
Type (e.g., elementary, secondary, charter, magnet, alternative, cluster)
Poverty level
Urban/suburban/rural status
Race/ethnicity
Language fluency
Quality (e.g., teacher credentials, teacher mobility, teacher-to-student ratios)
Environment (e.g., violence level, student mobility)

4) District characteristics:

Size
Poverty level
Urban/suburban/rural status
Race/ethnicity
SES (e.g., assessed property values per student, median household income)
District-to-school funding allocation formulas
District philosophy (site-based decision-making, amount of auxiliary services)

5) State characteristics:

State-to-district funding allocation formulas
State regulations regarding service provision
State policies regarding identification
State philosophy (devolution to districts)

2. How do identification rates vary by type of school, district, and state?

2.1 What are the identification rates for students with specific types of disabilities?

2.2 How do the above rates vary by type of school, district, and state?

3. What are the emerging interactions among programs and blending of funds from education and other social service agencies to provide mandated services for students, and how do these vary by school, district, and state?

3.1 How do special education programs and services interact with general education, Title I, programs for limited-English proficient (LEP) students, and programs for migrant populations?

3.2 What other kinds of social service agencies (e.g., public health, Medicaid, mental health, law enforcement, or social services) are involved in direct provision or financial support of services to students with disabilities? What specific services are provided?

To what extent do these other social service agencies provide financial support for services provided within the schools? For example, to what extent have districts pursued Medicaid billing? What are the implications of the schools being the payer of last resort?

- 3.3 How do these interactions with other programs and other social service agencies vary by level (elementary versus secondary), program (e.g., general education, Title I, LEP), or poverty of students (e.g., percent eligible for free lunch)?
- 3.4 What impact has the new flexibility to blend funds to implement school-wide projects had on resource allocation to special education?
- 3.5 What percentage of federal special education “set aside” funds (Sec. 619) is retained at the state and how are these funds utilized? To what extent are these funds utilized for administration versus technical assistance, professional development, establishment of standards or assessment programs, or coordination with other programs?

4. What are the expenditure and service implications of the newly reemphasized movement to serve special education students in the least restrictive environment?

- 4.1 How do integration/mainstreaming practices vary by type of student, school, district, and state?
- 4.2 What are the excess expenditures on special education students in the LRE compared to other environments?
- 4.3 What impact does the movement towards more integrated/mainstreamed placements have on per student expenditures for the population of general education students who are affected?

5. How does the funding and provision of special education compare to and affect the funding and provision of general education, and how does this vary by type of school, placement, district, and state?

- 5.1 What is the share of total expenditure that goes to special education?
- 5.2 To what extent are special education resources used to serve general education students?
- 5.3 To what extent are general education resources used to serve special education students?
- 5.4 How do the above shares vary by type of school, placement, district, and state?

5.5 How, at the district level, does the amount spent on special education match up with the amount of resources targeted towards special education, and how does this vary by type of district and state?

6. How has the distribution of resources allocated to special education changed in relation to other resources over time: specifically, how do present findings compare to findings of previous national studies, such as Moore et al. (1988)?

6.1 How have per student expenditures for special education and general education services changed over the past decade, and has the ratio of special-to-general education expenditures per student changed?

6.2 How has the percentage of support for special education expenditures from federal, state, local public, and local private sources changed over time?

7. What are the characteristics of and expenditures on programs and services for preschool special education students?

7.1 What percentage of three-to-five year-old children identified as having special education needs are served in various settings (e.g., segregated public special education preschool, integrated public or private preschools, integrated or segregated public kindergarten)?

7.2 What are the per student expenditures for preschool students outlined in Question 1.1-II above?

7.3 What are the differences in the services provided to preschool special education students and K-12 special education students, and what are the implications of these differences for per student expenditures?

7.4 How are preschool services organized and funded by states? What are the implications of these provisions for the special education services provided?

7.5 What are state provisions regarding universal preschool, and what are the cost and service implications for the three-to-five year-old special education population?

7.6 How do preschool programs interact with other instructional or related service programs (e.g., Head Start) and how are these services coordinated?

8. What are the total current and projected costs of special education?

- 8.1 What is the total expenditure for special education services by SEAs? What is the total expenditure for special education services by LEAs? What is the total expenditure (in billions of dollars) for special education services in the U.S.?
- 8.2 What is the amount of fiscal year 1998 increased funding that was offset through states and local districts reducing planned increases in special education funding? Given the exceptions allowed under IDEA 1997 to the LEA requirement to maintain spending at the level of the prior year, what reductions in special education funding occurred in fiscal year 1998?
- 8.3 What is the expected offset of funding once the amounts appropriated for state grants exceed \$4.1 billion? In addition to the new exceptions to LEA maintenance of effort requirements, what is the expected impact of new provisions allowing localities to treat up to 20 percent of the increase in federal funds over the prior year as local funds once the amount exceeds \$4.1 billion?

National SEEP Sampling Plan

Appendix B

National SEEP Sampling Plan

The SEEP collected information about the implementation of special education programs in all of the states and in sampled school districts and schools within those states. The Common Core of Data (CCD) Surveys served as the sampling frame for the selection of LEAs (school districts) and schools. This frame was updated with information, provided by contractors working on ongoing U.S. Department of Education sponsored research efforts. This additional information included lists of state schools for special education students (e.g., schools serving students with severe hearing and visual impairments) and lists of agencies that serve primarily or exclusively special education students (e.g., county offices of education, intermediate educational units, and other regional cooperative agencies).

State Sample. For each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, existing documents and materials were collected on the use of state and federal special education funds (IDEA) at the state level and suballocations of state and federal special education funds to school districts and other agencies.

District Sample. A sample of 250 LEAs (school districts) was randomly selected, with a school district's probability of selection proportional to some function (e.g., the square root) of the total number of students enrolled in the district. These LEAs were selected from among the universe of approximately 14,000 general elementary and secondary school districts in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The district sample was nationally representative of all school districts and was stratified to insure the inclusion of LEAs from every state and the District of Columbia.

Sample of Intermediate Educational Units (IEUs). In addition to the 250 general LEAs, we selected up to a maximum of 30 IEUs. These IEUs were selected from among those that serve students who reside in the 250 LEAs selected for the national sample and who were counted for state reporting purposes on the roles of the IEU. That is, only those IEUs that received funding directly from the state to support one or more of the students they served were included in the sample.

Central office staff. A 100% sample (up to a maximum of 6) central office staff were selected from each LEA to complete a survey about time allocation among various activities related to the administration and support of the special education program. These staff included the director of special education, all psychologists up to a maximum of 2, and the remainder from among other administrative and support staff.

Base school sample. The sample included 800 schools comprised of approximately 500 elementary schools, 200 secondary (i.e., middle, junior high, and high) schools, and 100 special education schools. Of the 100 special education schools, 50 were selected from general elementary and secondary school districts, up to 30 were selected from IEPs affiliated with the national sample, and 20 were selected from among the state schools for special education students. The number of elementary and secondary schools selected was proportional to the district's enrollment; however, a minimum of two elementary schools was selected in every district (except for districts with only a single school). This base school sample was used for comprehensive data collection. Information about all personnel and non-personnel resources used by the school to provide both general and special education services was collected. In addition, data from each school campus was collected about any personnel or non-personnel resources deployed through any arrangements with local consortia, cooperatives, or IEPs with which the district is affiliated.

Clustered school sample. An additional sample of about 50 elementary and 20 secondary schools offering what we refer to as "clustered programs" was selected. In these clustered programs, we collected data only on special education teachers and related service providers in special programs for high-cost and/or low incidence special education populations who have been clustered in selected elementary and secondary schools located within the districts selected for the national sample. (That is, these schools were not targeted for the comprehensive data collection planned for the base school sample.) In these cases, special education students with certain low incidence disabilities or who exhibit severely involved disabilities were clustered into selected non-special education schools in order to take advantage of economies of scale in meeting their specific needs. These clustered schools were identified based on discussions with the director of special education in the district. The sample of clustered programs was selected based on a stratified sample determined by the various combinations of disabilities (both low and high incidence) served in each of the schools.

Teachers and other service providers.

The study sampled five types of school staff: approximately 4,000 general education classroom teachers, 1,150 special class teachers, 2,000 special education resource specialists or teachers, 470 related service providers (e.g., speech/language specialists), and 1,800 special education teachers' assistants or aides. Each of these samples was drawn from two sources: the **base school sample** and the **clustered school sample**. The **base school sample** included general education staff, while the **clustered school sample** did not. Only special education teachers, related service providers, and special education aides were sampled from the **clustered school sample**.

Special education students with internal placements. The sample of special education students with internal placements (i.e., served in public schools operated by the district) was drawn from the classes and caseloads of the special education teachers and service providers described above. Each special education classroom or resource teacher and each related service provider was asked to select two special education students at random from their classes or caseloads. Specifically, each teacher or service provider was asked to select one low incidence and one high incidence student from their caseloads. If the individual served only one of these two categories (low or high incidence) of students, both students were selected from that category. The total sample of special education students with internal placements was approximately 7,200.

Special education students placed in non-public institutions. The sample of special education students placed in non-public institutions was drawn from the list of students served in schools or agencies not operated by the district. This list was available from the LEA director of special education. A 20% sample of special education students (up to a maximum of 6) was randomly selected from each sampled LEA. The sample was split in half among students with high and low incidence disabilities. If the sample did not split evenly, 1 more low incidence student was selected than high incidence students. (For example, if a 20% sample turned out to be 5 students, we selected 3 low incidence and 2 high incidence students.) The total sample of special education students with these placements was approximately 1,200.

Rhode Island SEEP Data Collection Methods

Appendix C

Data Collection Plan

To minimize the reporting burden, the SEEP relies heavily on existing documents and materials, in whatever form they are readily available. Specifically, the study is requesting documents related to the use of special education resources. These materials include budgets, enrollment reports, personnel listings, rosters, and schedules. Accompanying instructions explain that the information requested can be provided one of three ways: 1) submitting pre-existing printed reports, 2) providing electronic files on disk, or 3) completing the hard copy forms provided by us. AIR data collectors have been trained to aggregate the data, using telephone follow-ups as needed to ensure accurate identification of data categories.

At the district and school levels, self-administered surveys/questionnaires gather information from the staff most knowledgeable about special education programs, and from general education staff who interact with special education students. These surveys are modular in design so that different sections can be completed by different individuals. There are also surveys for teachers and teacher assistants, which solicit information on how they spend their time, their participation in professional development, and the resources available in their classrooms. The surveys use multiple-choice questions as much as possible, so that they can be completed and summarized easily.

Specific descriptions of the data collection instruments are as follows:

- **State Questionnaire for the State Director of Special Education Programs**, a questionnaire and request for documents and materials regarding state funding for special education, state budgets for federal education funds retained at the state level, federal funding allocations for all districts and other agencies in the state, and state programs related to special education.
- **District Questionnaire.** This questionnaire is divided into four sections:
 - ▶ **Part I** focuses on general demographic and other information about the district.
 - ▶ **Part II** focuses on detailed information about the special education program. The data requested include enrollments, levels of service, budgets, expenditures,

decision making, professional development, and other related items. We also request backup documentation for all information provided in the questionnaire items.

- ▶ **Part III** is directed toward the director of fiscal services, and includes items about general revenues, expenditures, personnel benefit policies and payroll data for the sample schools. Part of the information is collected by specific questions, while the payroll information is requested in the form of electronic files or hardcopy records.
- ▶ **Part IV** is directed toward the director of transportation in the district, and asks for information to help us determine the total costs of transportation and how much of these funds is used to support special education transportation services.
- **Central Office Staff Questionnaire.** This questionnaire is primarily for gathering information about how central office staff use their time. Specifically, it asks about time spent on coordination with other agencies, due process and mediation, litigation, and IEP activities, and initial eligibility determination. To benchmark this information, we also ask about basic job and background characteristics for each individual.
- **School Questionnaire.** The school questionnaire is a five part instrument, analogous to the District Questionnaire, to be completed by persons knowledgeable about the special education programs and/or able to provide school demographic, budget, and staffing information. This questionnaire will be sent to all schools in the sample. Each part is described in more detail below.
 - ▶ **Part I** covers general information about school characteristics, demographics, and programs. It includes a request for documents and materials that could provide the information needed: a roster of all school employees, a roster of teachers and class sizes or caseloads (or master class schedules), schedule of aide time allocations to classrooms, a list of other personnel (paid or unpaid) who provide services in the school, and school-level budgets for specified federal education programs.
 - ▶ **Part II** asks for detailed enrollment data for the special education programs at the school. Part II itself is divided into three sections: II-A, II-B, and II-C. Each part is almost identical, but is focused on a different type of special education program that may be operating at the school. Part II-A focuses on the standard special education program that is operating in almost all regular elementary or secondary schools and any special education school. Part II-B focuses on special education programs that may be housed at the school site, but which are operated directly by the district office. Enrollments in these types of programs are generally not regarded as part of the total school enrollment. Part II-C focuses on special education programs that are housed at the school site, but which are operated by external agencies such as a county office of education or other intermediate education agencies. Again, enrollments in these types of programs are generally not regarded as part of the total school enrollment.
 - ▶ **Part III** of the school data collection instruments is a request for certain documents and materials from the school. Specifically, it requests information on personnel (both general and special education) serving students at the school, and non-personnel budgets for items such as instructional supplies, and equipment. We will be requesting a comprehensive list of personnel in order to obtain a

complete picture of all services necessary for the operation of the school as well as to provide specific services to certain general and special populations of students. While electronic files will be requested when available, we will most commonly receive hardcopy materials from the schools, which AIR staff will then use to code personnel and non-personnel expenditure information.

- **Special Education Teacher and Service Provider Questionnaire.** This will be administered to almost all special education teachers and service providers within the sample schools. The questionnaire is a self-administered survey. The major focus of this questionnaire is to obtain information on the specific structure and characteristics of the service delivery system for special education. We want to know how much time special education teachers spend in various settings such as the general education classroom, special classes, and separate resource rooms. We also want to know the class sizes, subjects taught, and composition of students (by disability and by eligibility for other programs such as Title I). In addition, the questionnaire asks for information on the educational background, current job responsibilities, and professional development activities of teachers or related service providers and on the time spent on non-teaching activities and responsibilities.
- **General Education Teacher Questionnaire.** This will be administered to a 20 percent sample of general education teachers (up to a maximum of 6 at the elementary level and 9 at the secondary level) selected from within the sample schools. The questionnaire is a self-administered survey. This questionnaire has the same basic items as the **Special Education Teacher Questionnaire**, but has been customized for general education classroom teachers. A primary goal is to determine the extent to which special education students are served in the general education classroom.
- **Special Education Teacher Aide Questionnaire.**
This will be administered to almost all special education teacher aides from the sample schools. This questionnaire is a self-administered survey; it is primarily focused on collecting information on how special education aides spend their time, and on their background and training.
- **Special Education Student Information Forms.** These include two different surveys: one for special education students with internal placements, and one for special education students with external placements.
 - ▶ **Students with internal placements.** Each special education teacher or service provider included in the sample will be given procedures for selecting a sample of 2 students from within their own classes or caseloads, and will be asked to complete a survey describing the detailed configurations of services provided to children with internal placements. The questionnaire will collect background information on student needs and functional abilities. These teachers and service providers will complete the special education student information form designed for internal placements (i.e., those served in the public schools within the district).

- ▶ **Students with external placements.** A somewhat different form will be completed for a 20 percent sample (up to a maximum of three) of special education students who have been assigned to external placements (i.e., placements in private schools or public schools not operated by the district, for which the district pays tuition or transfers funds). This questionnaire will collect information on student needs and functional abilities along with information on tuition paid or transfers of funds made.

Rhode Island SEEP District and School Response Rates

Appendix D

Summary of Rhode Island SEEP District and School Response Rates

The table below highlights the response rates for district and school surveys as well as district documents. At the district level, the survey with the highest response rate (77.8%) was the District Part II Special Education Program survey. On average, about two-thirds of the other four surveys were returned. In addition, about one-third of the districts provided budgetary and payroll documents. Data also show that response rates were similarly high at the school level. At the school level, all surveys exceeded a 50% response rate. The highest survey response rate was for Part I, School Programs and Demographics, at 77.8%. The response rates for teachers and aides were between 56-66%, and 51.6% of the special education teachers returned a survey about a special education student. Detailed response rates by district, school, and data collection instrument type are provided on the following pages.

Rhode Island SEEP Final Response Rates

	COUNT SENT	COUNT RECEIVED	RESPONSE RATE
DISTRICT SURVEYS			
Part I - District Demographics	36	26	72.2%
Part II - Special Education Program	36	28	77.8%
Part III - Fiscal and Payroll Information	36	23	63.9%
Part IV - Transportation	36	25	69.4%
Central Office Staff ⁶⁹	36	23	63.9%
Student Information Form-Externally Placed ⁷⁰	**	70	**
DISTRICT DOCUMENTS			
District Budget		14	38.9%
Non-Personnel Budget		10	27.8%
Payroll Report		15	41.7%
SCHOOL SURVEYS			
Part I - Programs and Demographics	107	80	74.8%
Part IIA - School-Operated Special Education Programs	107	77	72.0%
Part IIB - District-Operated Special Education Programs	107	68	63.6%
Part IIC - IEU-Operated Special Education Programs	107	65	60.7%
Part III - Roster Requests	107	79	73.8%
General Education Teacher	731	483	66.1%
Special Education Teacher	1076	607	56.4%
Special Education Aide	384	242	63.0%
Student Information Form-Internally Placed ¹	2152	1111	51.6%

⁶⁹ Six Central Office Staff surveys were sent to the number of sample districts, as indicated in the “count sent.” The “count received” shows the number of districts responding by returning at least one Central Office Staff survey.

⁷⁰ Three Externally Placed Student Information Forms were uniformly sent to each sample district because we did not know the actual population number of this group. For this reason we are unable to calculate a response rate for this survey.

RHODE ISLAND DISTRICT SURVEY RESPONSE RATE - FINAL													
AIR ID	Lea ID	District Name	District survey components received				Districts surveys sent			District documents received			
			Part I - district demographics	Part II - Special education	Part III - Fiscal & payroll info	Part IV - Transportation	Central Office Staff	Student information form-External	Total Central Office Staff	Total Student information form-External	Dist Budget	Non-Per Budget	Payroll
RI-01	4400720	NEWPORT SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-02	4400840	PAWTUCKET SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-03	4400030	BARRINGTON SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-04	4400065	BRISTOL-WARREN REG DIST	1	1	1	1	2	3	6	3	1	0	0
RI-05	4400090	BURRILLVILLE SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	3	1	0	1
RI-06	4400120	CENTRAL FALLS SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-07	4400150	CHARIHO REG DIST	1	1	1	1	3	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-08	4400210	COVENTRY SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	2	3	6	3	0	0	1
RI-09	4400240	CRANSTON SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-10	4400270	CUMBERLAND SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-11	4400300	EAST GREENWICH SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	4	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-12	4400330	EAST PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	1	1
RI-13	4400360	EXETER-W GREENWICH REG DIST	1	1	1	1	3	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-14	4400390	FOSTER ELEM SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-15	4400420	FOSTER-GLOCESTER REG DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-16	4400450	GLOCESTER ELEM SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-17	4400510	JAMESTOWN SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	3	1	0	1
RI-18	4400540	JOHNSTON SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-19	4400570	LINCOLN SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-20	4400600	LITTLE COMPTON SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-21	4400630	MIDDLETOWN SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	2	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-22	4400660	NARAGANSETT SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	1	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-23	4400690	NEW SHOREHAM SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-24	4400750	NORTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-25	4400780	NORTH PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-26	4400810	NORTH SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	3	3	6	3	1	0	0
RI-27	4400870	PORTSMOUTH SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-28	4400900	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	0	0	1
RI-29	4400960	SCITUATE SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	2	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-30	4400990	SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-31	4401020	SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	1	0	1
RI-32	4401050	TIVERTON SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-33	4401110	WARWICK SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-34	4401140	WEST WARWICK SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	0	0	0
RI-35	4401170	WESTERLY SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	6	3	6	3	1	1	1
RI-36	4401200	WOONSOCKET SCH DIST	1	1	1	1	5	3	6	3	0	0	0
TOTALS			25	28	22	25	79	70	216	108	14	10	15
36	Rhode Island	Final Response Rate	69.4%	77.8%	61.1%	69.4%	36.6%	64.8%			38.9%	27.8%	41.7%
Final Response Rate Across SEEP States			46.4%	52.1%	44.2%	45.7%	32.9%	31.1%			29.3%	18.3%	27.1%

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

School survey components received

School survey components sent

received

AIR ID	District Name	School Name	Part I - programs sch & dems.	special ed. sch oper. Pgms	special ed. district oper pgms in sch	special ed. I/EU oper pgms in	Part III - roster requests	Gen Ed teacher	Sp Ed Teacher	Sp Ed Aide	Student Information forms - Internal placement	Total Gen Ed teacher	Total Sp Ed Teacher	Total Sp Ed Aide	Information forms - Internal placement	Staff Roster	Class Size	Master Class	Aides Sch.	School Budget
RL01-01	NEWPORT SCH DIST	GRANSTON - CALVERT	1	1			1	6	9	2	18	6	10	2	20	1	0	0	1	0
RL01-02	NEWPORT SCH DIST	Sheffield School	1	1	1	1	1	6	7	1	14	6	7	1	14	1	1	1	1	1
RL02-01	PAWTUCKET SCH DIST	NATHANAEL GREENE SCHOOL	1	1			1	6	13	3	21	6	13	4	26	1	1	0	1	1
RL02-02	PAWTUCKET SCH DIST	SAMUEL SLATER JUNIOR HIGH	1		1	1	1	9	13	6	20	9	15	6	30	1	0	1	0	1
RL02-03	PAWTUCKET SCH DIST	JOSEPH JENKS JUNIOR HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	6	10	6	17	9	15	6	30	1	1	1	1	1
RL02-04	PAWTUCKET SCH DIST	FLORENCE S. CURTIS SCHOOL		1	1	1	1		10		20		15		30	0	0	0	0	0
RL03-01	BARRINGTON SCH DIST	NAVYATT SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	4	8	3	14	6	10	3	20	1	1	0	0	0
RL03-02	BARRINGTON SCH DIST	PRINDROSE HILL SCHOOL	1	1			1	6	7	4	12	6	12	4	24	1	1	1	1	1
RL03-03	BARRINGTON SCH DIST	BARRINGTON HIGH SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	7	11	6	18	9	16	6	32	0	0	1	1	1
RL04-01	BRISTOL-WARREN REG DIST	ROCKWELL SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	4	10	6	15	4	30	1	0	0	1	1
RL04-02	BRISTOL-WARREN REG DIST	GUTTERS SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	7	3	12	6	15	4	30	0	1	0	1	0
RL04-03	BRISTOL-WARREN REG DIST	MT HOPE HIGH SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	8	3	16	9	15	6	30	1	1	1	0	1
RL05-01	BURRILLVILLE SCH DIST	STEELE FARM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	8	4	14	6	13	4	26	1	1	0	0	0
RL05-02	BURRILLVILLE SCH DIST	WILLIAM CALLAHAN SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	5	10	4	20	6	12	4	24	1	0	0	0	1
RL05-03	BURRILLVILLE SCH DIST	BURRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL	1				1	8	16	6	30	9	17	6	34	1	1	1	1	0
RL06-01	CENTRAL FALLS SCH DIST	VETERANS MEMORIAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	10	4	16	6	14	4	28	1	0	0	0	0
RL06-02	CENTRAL FALLS SCH DIST	ROBERTSON SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	5	4	1	5	6	9	1	18	1	1	0	0	1
RL06-03	CENTRAL FALLS SCH DIST	CENTRAL FALLS JR SR HIGH	1	1			1	2	11	5	19	9	22	6	44	1	0	0	0	0
RL07-01	CHARHO REG DIST	HOPE VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL										6	7		14	0	0	0	0	0
RL07-02	CHARHO REG DIST	CHARHO REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	9	21	6	40	9	23	6	46	1	0	1	1	1
RL08-01	GOVERNTRY SCH DIST	OAK HAVEN SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	7	2	14	6	10	2	20	1	1	0	1	1
RL08-02	GOVERNTRY SCH DIST	WASHINGTON OAK SCHOOL	1		1	1	1	6	7	3	10	6	25	4	50	0	0	0	0	0

AIR ID	District Name	School Name	Part I - programs & dems.	Part IIA - special ed, sch oper. Pgms	Part IIB - special ed, district oper pgms in sch	Part IIC - special ed, IEU oper pgms in sch	Part III - roster requests	Gen Ed teacher	Sp Ed Teacher	Sp Ed Aide	Student information forms - internal placement	Total Gen Ed teacher	Total Sp Ed Teacher	Total Sp Ed Aide	Total Student information forms - internal placement	Staff Roster	Class Size	Master Class	Aides Sch.	School Budget
RI-09-01	CRANSTON SCH DIST	DANIEL D. WATERMAN SCHOOL	1	1			1	6	8		8	6	8		16	1	1	0	0	1
RI-09-02	CRANSTON SCH DIST	JOHN W. HORTON SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	5	2	9	6	10	4	20	1	0	0	0	1
RI-09-03	CRANSTON SCH DIST	W. R. DUTEMPLE SCHOOL	1	1	1			3	6		11	6	10	2	20	0	0	0	0	0
RI-09-04	CRANSTON SCH DIST	EDEN PARK SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	6	1	12	6	11	2	22	1	0	0	0	0
RI-09-05	CRANSTON SCH DIST	CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST	1	1	1	1	1	6	17	3	33	9	29	6	58	1	0	0	0	0
RI-09-06	CRANSTON SCH DIST	HUGH B. BAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL	1	1				4	8		16	9	26		52	0	0	0	0	0
RI-09-07	CRANSTON SCH DIST	WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	9	15	3	30	9	18	4	36	1	1	1	1	1
RI-10-01	CUMBERLAND SCH DIST	GARVIN MEMORIAL	1	1	1	1	1	6	10	5	18	6	12	6	24	1	1	0	0	0
RI-10-02	CUMBERLAND SCH DIST	CUMBERLAND HILL SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	5	9	3	16	6	14	4	28	0	0	0	0	1
RI-10-03	CUMBERLAND SCH DIST	CUMBERLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL										9	15	6	30	0	0	0	0	0
RI-11-01	EAST GREENWICH SCH DIST	FRENCHTOWN SCHOOL										6	8	4	16	0	0	0	0	0
RI-11-02	EAST GREENWICH SCH DIST	EAST GREENWICH HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	8	13	4	7	9	15	6	30	1	0	0	0	1
RI-12-01	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	WADDINGTON SCHOOL										6	12	4	24	0	0	0	0	0
RI-12-03	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	ORLO AVENUE SCHOOL										6	8	4	16	0	0	0	0	0
RI-12-04	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	EAST PROVIDENCE HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	9	14	6	34	9	18	6	36	1	1	1	0	0
RI-13-01	EXETER-W GREENWICH REG DIST	METCALF SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	5	12	3	22	6	14	4	28	1	1	0	0	0
RI-13-02	EXETER-W GREENWICH REG DIST	MILDRED E. LINEHAM SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	5	4	10	6	9	4	18	0	0	0	0	0
RI-13-03	EXETER-W GREENWICH REG DIST	EXETER-W GREENWICH REG. JR.	1	1	1	1	1	7	9	2	18	9	14	6	28	1	1	1	1	1
RI-14-01	FOSTER ELEM SCH DIST	CAPT. ISAAC PAINE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	6	6	12	4	24	0	0	0	0	0
RI-15-01	FOSTER-GLOUCESTER REG DIST	PONAGANSET MIDDLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	9	5	6	10	9	12	6	24	1	0	0	0	1
RI-15-02	FOSTER-GLOUCESTER REG DIST	PONAGANSET HIGH SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	5	8	3	5	6	11	6	22	0	0	0	0	0

AIR ID	District Name	School Name	Part I - Programs sch & dems.	Part IIA - special ed, sch oper. Prgms	Part IIB - special ed, district oper prgms in sch	Part IIC - special ed, IEU oper prgms in sch	Part III - roster requests	Gen Ed teacher	Sp Ed Teacher	Sp Ed Aide	Student Information forms - internal placement	Total Gen Ed teacher	Total Sp Ed Teacher	Total Sp Ed Aide	Total Student information forms - internal placement	Staff Roster	Class Size	Master Class	Aides Sch.	School Budget
RL16-01	GLOUCESTER ELEM SCH DIST	WEST GLOUCESTER ELEMENTARY										6	12	4	24	0	0	0	0	0
RL17-01	JAMESTOWN SCH DIST	JAMESTOWN SCHOOL-MEIROSE	1	1	1	1	1	6	9	3	16	6	11	4	22	1	1	0	0	1
RL18-01	JOHNSTON SCH DIST	THORNTON SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	2	9	2	21	6	14	4	28	0	1	0	0	1
RL18-02	JOHNSTON SCH DIST	WINSOR HILL SCHOOL	1		1	1	1	6	3	2	6	6	7	2	14	1	1	0	1	0
RL18-03	JOHNSTON SCH DIST	JOHNSTON SENIOR HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	8	12	3	22	9	14	6	28	1	1	1	0	1
RL19-01	LINCOLN SCH DIST	NORTHERN LINCOLN ELEM SCHOOL		1	1	1		1				8	15	4	30	0	0	0	0	0
RL19-02	LINCOLN SCH DIST	LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	8	3	3	5	9	8	6	16	1	1	1	0	0
RL20-01	LITTLE COMPTON SCH DIST	WILBUR & MCMAHON SCHOOLS	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	4	7	6	9	4	18	1	1	0	1	0
RL21-01	MIDDLETOWN SCH DIST	LINDEN SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	12	4	22	6	14	4	28	1	1	0	1	1
RL21-02	MIDDLETOWN SCH DIST	AQUIDNECK SCHOOL	1	1			1	6	3	4	6	6	12	4	24	1	0	0	0	1
RL21-03	MIDDLETOWN SCH DIST	JOSEPH H. GAUDET SCHOOL	1	1			1	9	13	6	26	9	17	6	34	1	1	0	0	0
RL22-01	NARRAGANSETT SCH DIST	NARRAGANSETT ELEMENTARY	1	1	1	1	1	6	14	3	28	6	20	4	40	0	0	0	0	0
RL22-02	NARRAGANSETT SCH DIST	NARRAGANSETT HIGH SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	3	8		15	9	14	2	28	0	0	0	0	0
RL23-01	NEW SHOREHAM SCH DIST	BLOCK ISLAND SCHOOL						2				6	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
RL24-01	NORTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	STONY LANE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	3	2	6	6	3	2	6	1	1	1	1	1
RL24-02	NORTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	DAVISVILLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	2	2	6	1	4	2	1	1	0	1	0
RL24-03	NORTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	NORTH KINGSTOWN SR HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	7	8	5	17	9	10	6	20	1	1	1	0	1
RL25-01	NORTH PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	MARIVILLE SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	4	4	6	3	4	6	1	1	0	0	1
RL25-02	NORTH PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	DR. EDWARD RICCI SCHOOL	1	1			1	6	5	1	5	6	5	1	10	1	1	1	1	1
RL25-03	NORTH PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	BIRCHWOOD SCHOOL	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	9	5	4	10	1	1	0	0	0
RL26-01	NORTH SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	DR. HALLWELL SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	9	2	18	6	10	2	20	1	1	1	0	1

AIR ID	District Name	School Name	Part I - programs & dems.	Part IIA - special ed, sch oper. Prgms	Part IIB - special ed, district oper pgms in sch	Part IIC - special ed, IEU oper pgms in sch	Part III - roster requests	Gen Ed teacher	Sp Ed Teacher	Sp Ed Aide	Student information forms - internal placement	Total Gen Ed teacher	Total Sp Ed Teacher	Total Sp Ed Aide	Total Student information forms - internal placement	Staff Roster	Class Size	Master Class	Aides Sch.	School Budget
RI-26-02	NORTH SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	N. SMITHFIELD JR-SR HIGH				1	1	7	6	3	12	9	8	3	16	0	0	1	0	1
RI-27-01	PORTSMOUTH SCH DIST	MELVILLE SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	4	5		10	6	6		12	1	1	0	0	0
RI-27-02	PORTSMOUTH SCH DIST	PRUDENCE ISLAND SCHOOL	1	1			1				1	3	1		2	1	1	0	1	0
RI-27-03	PORTSMOUTH SCH DIST	PORTSMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL	1				1	4	3		6	9	7	6	14	1	0	0	1	0
RI-28-01	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	PLEASANT VIEW SCHOOL										6	12	4	24	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-02	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	VEAZIE ANNEX II										3	1		2	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-03	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	BROAD STREET SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	3	2	6	6	3	2	6	1	1	0	0	1
RI-28-04	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	CARL G. LAURO SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	6	2	12	6	6	4	12	1	1	1	1	1
RI-28-05	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	WEBSTER AVENUE SCHOOL										6	4	2	8	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-06	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	MARTIN LUTHER KING SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	5	2	1	3	6	6	5	12	1	1	0	1	1
RI-28-07	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	FEINSTEIN HIGH SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	2	2	4	9	2	3	4	1	1	1	0	0
RI-28-08	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL										9	23	6	46	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-09	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	MOUNT PLEASANT HIGH	1	1			1	1	11	2	22	9	27	6	54	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-10	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	NATHANIEL GREENE MIDDLE										9	9	6	18	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-11	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	ROGER WILLIAMS MIDDLE	1				1	8	3	4	7	9	5	5	10	0	0	0	0	0
RI-28-12	PROVIDENCE SCH DIST	OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION	1	1	1		1		2		4		2		4	1	0	0	0	1
RI-29-01	SCITUATE SCH DIST	HOPE SCHOOL										6	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0
RI-29-02	SCITUATE SCH DIST	CLAYVILLE SCHOOL	1	1			1	3				6	2		4	0	0	0	0	0
RI-29-03	SCITUATE SCH DIST	SCITUATE MIDDLE SCHOOL						2		2		9	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
RI-30-01	SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	OLD COUNTY ROAD SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	2	3	4	6	2	3	4	1	1	0	1	0
RI-30-02	SMITHFIELD SCH DIST	SMITHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL										9	6		12	0	0	0	0	0
RI-31-01	SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	HAZARD SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	9	3	16	6	9	3	18	1	0	0	1	1
RI-31-02	SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCH DIST	WAKEFIELD SCHOOL	1	1	1		1	6	5	4	8	6	5	4	10	1	1	0	0	0

AIR ID	District Name	School Name	Part I - programs & dems.	Part IIA - special ed. sch oper. Prgms	Part IIB - special ed. district oper. prgms in sch	Part IIC - special ed. IEU oper. prgms in sch	Part III - roster requests	Gen Ed teacher	Sp Ed Teacher	Sp Ed Aide	Student Information forms - Internal placement	Total Gen Ed teacher	Total Sp Ed Teacher	Total Sp Ed Aide	Total Student Information forms - Internal placement	Staff Roster	Class Size	Master Class	Aides Sch.	School Budget
R-31-03	SOUTH KINGSTOWN SCH/DIST	SOUTH KINGSTOWN, JR. HIGH	1	1	1	1	1	4	7	4	14	9	8	4	16	1	1	1	0	1
R-32-01	TIVERTON SCH/DIST	FORT BARTON SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	5	1		2	6	3		6	1	1	1	0	1
R-32-02	TIVERTON SCH/DIST	POCASSET SCHOOL.										6	4	4	8	0	0	0	0	0
R-32-03	TIVERTON SCH/DIST	TIVERTON MIDDLE SCHOOL.	1	1	1		1	7	7	2	14	9	10	3	20	1	0	0	0	0
R-33-01	WARWICK SCH/DIST	GREENWOOD SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	6	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	0
R-33-02	WARWICK SCH/DIST	OAKLAND BEACH SCHOOL.						2	4		7	6	5	4	10	0	0	0	0	0
R-33-03	WARWICK SCH/DIST	SCOTT SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	3				6	6	4	12	1	0	0	0	0
R-33-04	WARWICK SCH/DIST	WARWICK NECK SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	4	2	6	1	4	2	1	0	0	0	0
R-33-05	WARWICK SCH/DIST	GORTON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.						5	1	3	2	9	8	3	16	0	0	0	0	0
R-33-06	WARWICK SCH/DIST	TOLL GATE HIGH SCHOOL.		1	1	1		1	7	5	12	9	9	6	18	0	0	0	0	0
R-33-07	WARWICK SCH/DIST	WINMAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.						4	5	5	10	9	8	6	16	0	0	0	0	0
R-34-01	WEST WARWICK SCH/DIST	GREENBUSH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1		4	7	2	14	6	8	2	16	0	0	0	0	0
R-34-02	WEST WARWICK SCH/DIST	PROVIDENCE STREET SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	4	4	1	8	6	5	2	10	1	1	0	0	1
R-34-03	WEST WARWICK SCH/DIST	WEST WARWICK HIGH SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	9	9	6	18	9	9	6	18	1	1	1	1	0
R-35-01	WESTERLY SCH/DIST	SPRINGBROOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.	1	1			1	6	3	4	6	6	3	4	6	0	0	0	1	1
R-36-01	WOONSOCKET SCH/DIST	CITIZENS MEMORIAL SCHOOL.						5	3		6	6	5	2	10	0	0	0	0	0
R-36-02	WOONSOCKET SCH/DIST	HARRIS SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	4	3		6	6	3	6	6	0	0	0	0	0
R-36-03	WOONSOCKET SCH/DIST	FIFTH AVENUE SCHOOL.	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	2	2	6	4	4	8	1	0	0	0	1
R-36-04	WOONSOCKET SCH/DIST	WOONSOCKET HIGH SCHOOL.						6	9	1	18	9	15	6	30	0	0	0	0	0
R1-SE-01		RI. SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF											9	3	18	0	0	0	0	0
		TOTALS	80	77	68	65	79	483	607	242	1111	731	1076	384	2152					
107	Rhode Island	Final Response Rate	74.80%	72.00%	63.60%	60.70%	73.80%	66.10%	56.40%	63.00%	51.60%									
		Response Rate Across States	55.80%	53.70%	46.90%	46.60%	51.30%	56.60%	49.60%	56.00%	47.50%									

Definitions of Educational Environments

Appendix E

Definitions of Educational Environments

The educational environments in this report are placement categories, as defined by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education.⁷¹ The method of classifying students into these educational environments is as follows:

(1) *General Education Class*: A regular class includes students receiving special education and related services outside the general education classroom for less than 21 percent of the school day. Therefore, these students spend a majority of their education program with non-disabled peers inside the general education classroom. This may include children and youth with disabilities placed in: (a) a general education class with special education/related services provided within general classes, (b) a general education class with instruction within the general class and with special education/related services provided outside general classes, or (c) a general education class with special education services provided in resource rooms. Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a general class includes children who receive services in programs designed primarily for non-disabled children, provided the children with disabilities are in a separate program (i.e., not served with non-disabled children) for less than 21 percent of the time receiving services. This may include, but is not limited to, Head Start Centers, public or private preschool and child care facilities, preschool classes offered to an age-eligible population by the public school system, kindergarten classes, and classes using co-teaching models (special education and general education staff coordinating activities in the general education setting).

(2) *Resource Room*: A resource room includes students receiving special education and related services outside the general education classroom for at least 21 percent but no more than 60 percent of the school day. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) resource rooms with special education/related services provided within the resource room, or (b) resource rooms with part-time instruction in a general education class. Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a resource room includes children who receive services in programs designed primarily for non-disabled children, provided the children with disabilities are in a separate program (i.e., not served with non-disabled children) for 21 to 60 percent of the time receiving services. This includes, but is not limited to, Head Start Centers, public or private preschools or child care facilities, preschool classes offered to an age-eligible population by the public school system, and kindergarten classes.

⁷¹ Source: "OSEP IDEA, Part B Data Collection History" (September 2001).

(3) *Separate Special Education Class*: A separate special education class includes students receiving special education and related services for more than 60 percent of the school day in a separate class. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) self-contained special classrooms with part-time instruction in a general education class, or (b) self-contained special classrooms full-time on a regular school campus. Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a separate class includes children who receive services in programs in which the children are in a separate program (i.e., not served with non-disabled children) for 61 to 100 percent of the time receiving services. It does not include children who receive education programs in public or private separate day or residential facilities.

(4) *Public Separate Facility*: Public separate facilities include students receiving special education and related services for greater than 50 percent of the school day in a separate special education day school in a public school district, or in a state special education school. This may include children and youth placed in: (a) public day schools for students with disabilities, or (b) public day schools for students with disabilities for a portion of the school day (greater than 50 percent) and in general education school buildings for the remainder of the school day.

Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a public separate school facility includes children who are served in publicly operated programs, set up primarily to serve children with disabilities that are not housed in a facility with programs for children without disabilities. Children must receive special education and related services in the public, separate day school for 50 percent or more of the time receiving services.

(5) *Private separate facility*: Private separate facilities include students receiving education programs in these facilities, including children and youth with disabilities receiving special education and related services, at public expense for greater than 50 percent of the school day. This may include children and youth placed in private day schools for students with disabilities or private day schools for students with disabilities for a portion of the school day (greater than 50 percent) and in regular school buildings for the remainder of the school day. Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a private separate school facility includes children who are served in privately operated programs, set up primarily to serve children with disabilities that are not housed in a facility with programs for children without disabilities. Children must receive special education and related services in the private separate day school for 50 percent or more of the time receiving services.

(6) *Home/hospital*: Homebound/hospital placement includes students receiving education programs in hospital programs or homebound programs. Optional placement instructions for 3- through 5-year-olds state that a homebound/hospital placement includes children who are served in either a home or a hospital setting. Unlike the other placements, home/hospital placement does not have a percentage of time served associated with it. For children 3-5 years old receiving special education related services in home settings, include children who receive services in the home provided by a professional or paraprofessional who visits the home on a regular basis. Examples include a child development worker or speech services provided in the child's home. For children 3-5 years old receiving special education or related services in a hospital setting, include children who receive services as inpatients or as outpatients. Also include children who receive services in a clinic as outpatients.

The remaining placements provided by OSEP in the Report to Congress (i.e., public residential facility, private residential facility, and correctional facility) are not included in these analyses due to the nature of the SEEP surveys.

The “Abilities Index”

Appendix F

II. The ABILITIES Index⁷²

Please rate the student’s abilities on the table on the following page. Ratings in each area are made on a scale of 0 to 5, with **0 indicating normal ability, 1 (suspected disability) indicating some questions about the child’s ability, and 5 indicating extreme or profound disability**. In making each rating, think about the child compared to other children the same age. Guidelines follow to assist you in making each rating.

Audition (Hearing) - Think about the child’s ability to hear in everyday activities. Score hearing for each ear separately. A score of 5 (Profound Loss) means that the child has no hearing. Rate the child’s hearing without a hearing aid. If the child uses a hearing aid, please check this box:’

Behavior and Social Skills - Two ratings are made in this area, one for social skills and one for inappropriate or unusual behavior. Social skills refer to the child’s ability to relate to others in a meaningful manner. Inappropriate and unusual behavior may include fighting, hitting, screaming, rocking, hand flapping, biting self, etc.

Intellectual Function (Thinking and Reasoning) - This rating reflects the child’s ability to think and reason. Think about the way the child solves problems and plays with toys and compare this to other children of the same age.

Limbs (Use of Hands, Arms, and Legs) - Think about the child’s ability to use his or her hands, arms, and legs in daily activities. Score left and right limbs separately. A Score of 5 (Profound difficulty) means that the child has no use of a limb.

Intentional Communication (Understanding and Communicating with Others) - Two ratings are made, one for the child’s ability to understand others and one for the child’s ability to communicate with others. This rating includes attempts to communicate in ways other than talking (signs, gestures, picture boards). Think about the child’s ability to understand and communicate with others and compare this to other children of the same age.

⁷²This section is based on “The Abilities Index” developed by Rune J. Simeonsson and Donald B. Bailey of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Tonicity (Muscle Tone) - Think about the child's muscle tone. Normal means that the child's muscles are neither tight nor loose. If the child's muscle tone is not in the normal range, place an "X" in each box that indicates the degree of tightness or looseness or both. Two ratings should be made since, in some children, tightness or looseness can vary in different parts of the body or from one time to the next.

Integrity of Physical Health (Overall Health) - Think about the child's general health. Normal means the usual health problems and illnesses typical for a child this age. If there is a health problem, ratings should be made indicating the degree to which health problems limit activities. Ongoing health problems may include seizures, diabetes, muscular dystrophy, cancer, etc.

Eyes (Vision) - Think about the child's ability to see in everyday activities. Score both the left and right eye. A score of 5 (Profound Loss) means that the child has no vision. Rate the child's vision without glasses. If the child uses glasses, please check this box:

Structural Status (Shape, Body Form, and Structure) - This rating reflects the form and structure of the child's body. Normal means that there are no differences associated with form, shape, or structure of the body parts. Differences in form include conditions like cleft palate or clubfoot; differences in structure include conditions like curved spine and arm or leg deformity. Ratings should indicate how much these differences interfere with how the child moves, plays, or looks.

Student Abilities Index ⁷³

7. In each column, place an X in the space that best describes the child. Please note that multiple Xs should be recorded under A (Audition), B (Behavior), L (Limbs), I (Intentional Communication), T (Tonicity), and E (Eyes).

	A Audition Rate Both		B Behavior & Social Skills Rate Both		I Intellectual Functioning		L Limbs (Use of hands, arms, and legs) Rate All				I Intentional Communication Rate Both		T Tonicity (Muscle Tone) Rate Both		I Integrity of Physical health		E Eyes (Vision) Rate Both		S Structural Status
	Left Ear	Right Ear	Social Skills	Inapprop. Behavior	Thinking & Reasoning	Left Hand	Left Arm	Left Leg	Right Hand	Right Arm	Right Leg	Under- standing others	Communicati ng with others	Degree of tightness	Degree of looseness	Overall Health	Left Eye	Right Eye	Shape, Body Form & Structure
0	Normal	Normal	All behaviors typical & appropriate for age		Normal for age	Complete normal use		Complete normal use			Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	General good health	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal
1	hearing loss		Suspected disability	Inapprop. Behavior	Suspected disability	Suspected difficulty		Suspected difficulty			Suspected disability	Suspected disability	Suspected disability	Suspected disability	Suspected health problems	Suspected vision loss		Suspected difference or interference	
2	Mild hearing loss		Mild disability	Mildly inapprop. behaviors	Mild disability	Mild difficulty		Mild difficulty			Mild disability	Mild disability	Mild disability	Mild disability	Minor ongoing health problems	Mild vision loss		Mild difference or interference	
3	loss		Moderate disability	Moderately inapprop. behaviors	Moderate disability	Moderate difficulty		Moderate difficulty			Moderate disability	Moderate disability	Moderate disability	Moderate disability	Ongoing but medically-controlled health problems	Moderate vision loss		Moderate difference or interference	
4	loss		Severe disability	Severely inapprop. behaviors	Severe disability	Severe difficulty		Severe difficulty			Severe disability	Severe disability	Severe disability	Severe disability	poorly-controlled health problems	Severe vision loss		Severe difference or interference	
5	loss		Extreme disability	Extremely inapprop. behaviors	Profound disability	Profound difficulty		Profound difficulty			Profound disability	Profound disability	Profound disability	Profound disability	Extreme health problems, near total restriction of activities	Profound vision loss		Extreme difference or interference	

⁷³This section is based on "The Abilities Index" developed by Rune J. Simeonsson and Donald B. Bailey of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Definitions of Special Education Funding Formulas

Appendix G

Definitions of Special Education Funding Formulas

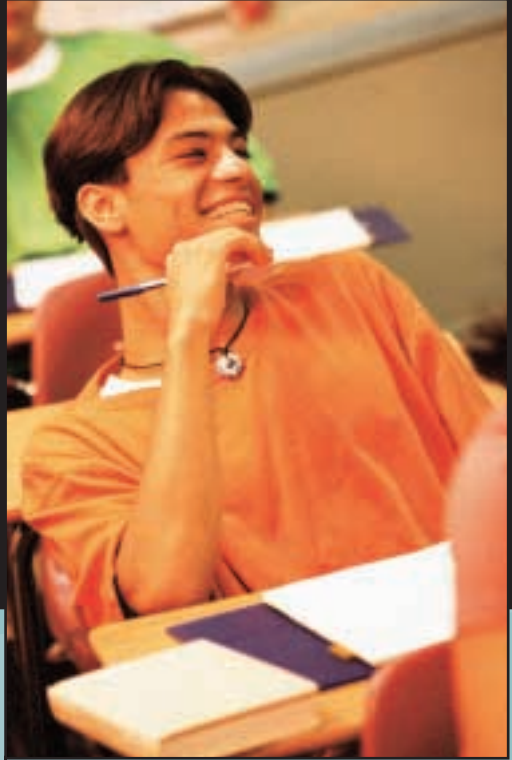
The formulas used by states to distribute funds for special education vary considerably in their general orientation as well as in the detailed provisions. Although a number of frameworks for classifying state special education funding approaches have been suggested over the past two and a half decades, there is much overlap among categories and substantial variation among states' funding formulas within categories of classification. Furthermore, state funding formulas often utilize a combination of these approaches. With these caveats in mind, state funding formulas can be classified into four broad categories.

Pupil Weights - Under a weighted special education funding system, state special education aid is allocated on a per student basis. The amount of aid is based on the funding “weight” associated with each special education student. Most weighting systems provide more funding for those special education students who are expected to cost more to serve by assigning them a larger funding weight. These differentials are based on expected costs because they may not hold true for any one special education student. Funding weights are differentiated on the basis of student placement (e.g., pull-out, special class, private residential), disability category (as shown below for Kentucky), or some combination of the two.

Flat Grant - Under this system, funding is based on a fixed funding amount per student. In North Carolina, for example, total state funding available for special education is divided by the special education count for the state to determine the amount of state aid to be received by districts per special education student. A variation to this approach is based on a count of all students in a district, rather than the number of special education students. California’s “census-based” approach is one example.

Resource-based - Funding is based on an allocation of specific education resources, such as teachers or classroom units. Unit rates are often derived from prescribed staff/student ratios by disability condition or type of placement. Resource-based formulas include unit and personnel mechanisms in which distribution of funds is based on payment for specified resources, such as teachers, aides, or equipment.

Percent Reimbursement - Under a percent reimbursement system, the amount of state special education aid a district receives is directly based on its expenditure for the program. Districts may be reimbursed for 100 percent of their program expenditures or for some lesser percentage. Usually there is some basis for determining what costs are and are not allowable, and there may be overall caps on the number of special education students who can be claimed for funding purposes.



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