

Grants to States

State grants: Grants to States

(Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B, Section 611)

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data, and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2014 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: Ensure all children with disabilities served under the IDEA have available to them a free appropriate public education to help them meet challenging standards and prepare them for independent living and postsecondary education and/or competitive employment by assisting State and local educational agencies and families.

Objective: All children with disabilities will meet challenging standards as determined by national and State assessments with accommodations as appropriate.

National Assessment of Educational Progress Measures

Measure: The percentage of fourth-grade students with disabilities scoring at or above Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading.¹

Year	Target	Actual
2003	25	29
2005	35	33
2007	35	36
2009	37	34
2011	39	32
2013	40	

NOTES: As defined for purposes of NAEP, "students with disabilities" includes any student classified by a school as having a disability, including children who receive services under a Section 504 plan. These measures include data for "national public" schools only. "National public" is defined as: "public schools only. Includes charter schools; excludes Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense Education Activity schools."

¹ NAEP is a biannual assessment. No comparable NAEP assessments are scheduled for reading in 2012 and 2014.

Measure: The percentage of eighth-grade students with disabilities scoring at or above Basic on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in mathematics.¹

Year	Target	Actual
2003	23	29
2005	32	31
2007	33	33
2009	35	36
2011	37	36
2013	38	

NOTES: As defined for purposes of NAEP, “students with disabilities” includes any student classified by a school as having a disability, including children who receive services under a Section 504 plan. These measures include data for “national public” schools only. “National public” is defined as: “public schools only. Includes charter schools; excludes Bureau of Indian Education schools and Department of Defense Education Activity schools.”

¹NAEP is a biannual assessment. No comparable NAEP assessments are scheduled for mathematics in 2012 and 2014.

Additional information:

Fourth-grade Reading: NAEP defines “Basic” for students participating in the fourth-grade reading assessment as follows: “Fourth-grade students performing at the *Basic* level should be able to locate relevant information, make simple inferences, and use their understanding of the text to identify details that support a given interpretation or conclusion. Students should be able to interpret the meaning of a word as it is used in the text.”

Reading scores, measured every 2 years, decreased in 2009 and 2011, after moderate increases over the course of the previous 4 years. Both the 2009 and 2011 reading scores fell short of their targets. The data show that the majority of students with disabilities do not meet or exceed even the Basic levels of achievement at any of the grade levels tested. Likewise, students with disabilities score well below other students. On the 2011 fourth-grade reading assessment, only 32 percent of students with disabilities scored at or above Basic, while 71 percent of other students scored at or above Basic.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) collects data on the percentage of students with disabilities who are excluded from the NAEP assessments because of their disabilities. Exclusion rates are important to keep in mind when considering the performance of students with disabilities because increases in performance accompanied by reductions in students with disabilities tested might simply reflect higher exclusion rates among lower functioning students. Between 1998 and 2011, the exclusion rate for students with disabilities on fourth-grade reading assessments dropped from 41 percent to 23 percent. It should be noted that these percentages only include students with disabilities who have been included in the NAEP testing sample. Students in schools specifically for children with disabilities are not included in the NAEP sample.

The use of accommodations for students with disabilities, such as testing in small groups and extended time, has increased substantially. The share of the overall population that is students with disabilities who receive accommodations increased from 2 percent to 7 percent from 2000

to 2011. Among fourth-grade students with disabilities assessed in reading in 2011, 57 percent received accommodations.

Because many students with disabilities are excluded from NAEP testing, NAEP results cannot be generalized to the total population of students with disabilities.

Eighth-grade Mathematics: NAEP defines “Basic” for students participating in the eighth-grade mathematics assessment as follows: “Eighth-graders performing at the *Basic* level should complete problems correctly with the help of structural prompts such as diagrams, charts, and graphs. They should be able to solve problems in all NAEP content areas through the appropriate selection and use of strategies and technological tools—including calculators, computers, and geometric shapes. Students at this level also should be able to use fundamental algebraic and informal geometric concepts in problem solving. As they approach the *Proficient* level, students at the *Basic* level should be able to determine which of the available data are necessary and sufficient for correct solutions and use them in problem solving. However, these eighth-graders show limited skill in communicating mathematically.”

NAEP data for mathematics demonstrate slow progress. The performance of students with disabilities had improved steadily over baseline years and exceeded the 2009 target. However, in 2011, 8th grade math scores were flat and did not meet the target. The NAEP data also show that the majority of students with disabilities do not meet or exceed even the Basic levels of achievement at any of the grade levels tested. Likewise, students with disabilities score well below other students. On the 2011 math assessment, only 36 percent of eighth-graders with disabilities scored at or above Basic, while 77 percent of other eighth-grade students scored at or above Basic.

The NCES collects data on the percentage of students with disabilities who are excluded from the NAEP assessments because of their disabilities. Exclusion rates are important to keep in mind when considering the performance of students with disabilities because increases in performance accompanied by reductions in students with disabilities tested might simply reflect higher exclusion rates among lower functioning students. Between 2000 and 2011, the exclusion rate on eighth-grade mathematics assessments dropped from 32 percent to 19 percent. It should be noted that these percentages only include students with disabilities who have been included in the NAEP testing sample. Students in schools specifically for children with disabilities are not included in the NAEP sample.

The use of accommodations for students with disabilities, such as testing in small groups and extended time, has increased substantially. For example, whereas less than one quarter of the eighth-grade students with disabilities assessed in mathematics in 2000 received accommodations, 68 percent received accommodations in 2011.

Because many students with disabilities are excluded from NAEP testing, NAEP results cannot be generalized to the total population of students with disabilities.

Elementary and Secondary Education Measures

The Department has adopted 4 measures for the Special Education Grants to States program that are parallel with those used for the Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies program.

Data on the measures are collected annually through the Education Data Exchange Network (EDEN) and made available through EDFacts. Targets are based on a straight-line trajectory toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) goal to have all children performing at proficient or advanced levels by 2014. States were not required to test students in all grades 3 through 8 in 2005. However, they were required to test children in all grades 3 through 8 in 2006. The targets for 2007 were based on the incomplete 2005 tests. Targets for 2008 through 2012 were revised based on the more comprehensive 2006 data.

The first two measures focus on the percentages of students with disabilities scoring at the proficient or advanced levels in grades 3 through 8 on State reading and mathematics assessments. The other two measures focus on the differences between the percentages of students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading and mathematics assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3 through 8 scoring at these levels.

Measure: The percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	61.7	43.8
2010	69.4	43.9
2011	77.0	44.3
2012	84.7	
2013	92.4	
2014	100	

Measure: The percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	61.1	45.2
2010	68.9	46.3
2011	76.7	45.7
2012	84.4	
2013	92.2	
2014	100	

Measure: The difference between the percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State reading assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	18.5	28.3
2010	14.8	28.3
2011	11.1	28.1
2012	7.4	
2013	3.6	
2014	0	

Measure: The difference between the percentage of students with disabilities in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments and the percentage of all students in grades 3-8 scoring at the proficient or advanced levels on State mathematics assessments.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	20.5	27.5
2009	17.0	26.1
2010	13.6	25.3
2011	10.2	26.0
2012	6.9	
2013	3.4	
2014	0	

Additional information: As seen in the first two tables, States improved their performance with respect to students with disabilities on State mathematics and reading assessments between 2008 and 2010. However, in 2011, State scores improved in reading but regressed in mathematics. The data suggest States are making some progress in ensuring that students with disabilities who participate in State reading and math assessments are reasonably well-equipped to perform on these assessments, but that progress is not substantial enough to keep up with the increasing targets that would bring all students with disabilities to proficiency by 2014. It should also be noted that fewer than half of students with disabilities scored at the proficient or advanced levels in reading and math on State assessments (44.3 percent and 45.7 percent, respectively).

The latter two tables indicate that there continue to be significant gaps between the percent of students with disabilities scoring at proficient or advanced levels on State assessments in reading and math and the percent of all students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels

(28.1 percent and 26 percent, respectively). The improvement in scores among students with disabilities over the past few years has not been sufficient to significantly close those gaps.

Because definitions of proficient and advanced vary across States, the national data presented here, which simply aggregates State data, may not give a clear or entirely meaningful picture of student achievement. In addition, students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards, and students with disabilities whose disability has precluded them from achieving grade-level proficiency may take alternate assessments based on modified academic achievement standards. States may include scores from these assessments for the purposes of adequate yearly progress (AYP) decisions, but only up to a cap of 3 percent of the total population tested, a maximum of 2 percent from alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards and a maximum of 1 percent from alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. In 2011, approximately 20 percent of students with disabilities in grades 3 through 8 and high school were tested in math and reading using an alternate assessment (including those based on modified achievement standards and alternate achievement standards).

Objective: *Secondary school students will complete high school prepared for postsecondary education and/or competitive employment.*

Measure: The percentage of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) who graduate from high school with a regular high school diploma.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	58.0	59.0
2009	59.0	60.6
2010	60.0	62.6
2011	61.0	63.6
2012	62.0	
2013	63.0	
2014	64.0	

Measure: The percentage of students with disabilities who drop out of school.

Year	Target	Actual
2008	27.0	24.6
2009	26.0	22.4
2010	25.0	21.1
2011	24.0	

Note: The Department is no longer using this measure because it eliminated the “dropout” data element from data collection due to concerns with data validity and usability.

Additional information: From 2008 to 2011, States successfully increased their graduation rates among students with disabilities and exceeded the targets for the graduation rate the past

6 years. However, there have been significant changes to reporting requirements for graduation and dropout rates over the last 4 years.

The instructions States received from the Department for calculating and submitting their graduation and dropout rates changed substantially in 2009. Previously, States used various methods of defining and calculating graduates and dropouts. Beginning in 2009, through their Annual Performance Reports (APR), States were asked to report using the calculation and timeline required under ESEA. The graduation rate under ESEA is a cohort rate that defines a graduate as someone who receives a diploma in 4 years and adjusts for transfers in and out of the school. Students who receive modified diplomas or GEDs do not count as graduates in this calculation. States may receive permission from the Department to report data on cohorts of different lengths of time (such as a 5- or 6-year cohort).

The new graduation rate calculation requires States to track students using a longitudinal data system, which not all States have fully implemented. Most States did comply with the new requirements for reporting graduation rate data in 2009. Only 9 States reported graduation rates using previous methods with data compiled under Section 618 of the IDEA. In the 2010-11 school-year, all but 4 States used the new methods for calculating their graduation rates.

For the 2010-11 school-year, the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education eliminated the State-reported data element "dropout" from the Consolidated State Performance Report for all students and subgroups due to substantial concerns with the validity and usability of the data. In an attempt to reduce the reporting burden of States, they are no longer required to report this data element.

Postsecondary Outcomes

One of the purposes of the IDEA is to help prepare children with disabilities for further education, employment, and independent living. The Department recently developed an indicator on employment and postsecondary education. This indicator tracks the percentage of students who are no longer in secondary school that had individualized education programs (IEPs) in effect at the time they left school, and were: a) enrolled in higher education within 1 year of leaving high school; b) enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within 1 year of leaving high school; or, c) enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed or in some other form of employment within 1 year of leaving high school. Data for this indicator will be collected directly from the States on an annual basis. The Department believes that this is a critical indicator for the program, since it is a reflection of the ultimate results of efforts to provide special education under the Grants to States program. The Department collected baseline data in fall 2011 and 2012 and identified numerous data quality and collection issues across States. The Department is working with States to provide technical assistance to identify improvement activities to produce meaningful data on postsecondary outcomes. The Department will not report these data or establish a baseline until next year when the data are likely to be more reliable.

Efficiency Measure

Measure: The average number of workdays between the completion of a site visit and the Office of Special Education Program's (OSEP) response to the State.

Year	Target	Actual
2009	90	87
2010	88	66
2011	86	
2012	86	
2013	75	
2014	75	

Additional information: In 2010, the most recent year for which data are available, the Department completed 16 site visits. OSEP responded to States, on average, within 66 days of a site visit. This result surpasses the target for this measure in 2010 and is an improvement over the prior 3 years. In 2012, the Department modified its accountability system to improve efficiencies and balance its focus on improved results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. OSEP is developing a modified efficiency measure and anticipates it being operational for the FY 2014 data collection. In the meantime, OSEP continues to meet its statutory monitoring responsibilities through the SPP/APR process, fiscal monitoring, and its work with State dispute resolution systems.

Other Performance Information

IDEA National Assessment

Section 664 of the IDEA requires the Department to conduct a national assessment of activities carried out with Federal funds. To implement this requirement, funds requested for the Special Education Studies and Evaluation program in the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) account are being used to conduct an independent evaluation of the program. As required by the IDEA, the IDEA National Assessment addresses the extent to which States, districts, and schools are implementing the IDEA programs and services to promote a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible and in partnership with parents. The National Assessment will also address the effectiveness of the IDEA programs and services in promoting the developmental progress and academic achievement of children with disabilities. The National Assessment includes the following activities:

Analytic Support. A report published in January 2010, Patterns in the Identification of and Outcomes for Children and Youth with Disabilities (Patterns) (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20104005/index.asp>), provided a synthesis of existing evidence and new analyses of extant data sources to address research questions for the IDEA National Assessment, targeting three topic areas: (1) identification of children for early intervention and special education, (2) declassification of children for early intervention and special education services, and (3) developmental and academic outcomes for children with disabilities. Among

the data sources used for the study are the NAEP data from State academic assessments of children with disabilities, data submitted by States to the Department pursuant to section 618 of the IDEA, population counts by State and year from the NCES Common Core of Data and the National Vital Statistics System, and data gathered from four national longitudinal studies of children with disabilities (National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study, Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study, Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, and National Longitudinal Transition Study-2).

From 1997 to 2005, the percent of children aged 6 to 17 served under IDEA increased from 12.3 to 12.9. The percentage varies by race/ethnicity, with a low of 6.3 percent for Asian children served under IDEA up to a high of 16.7 percent for black children. There is also variation by State, ranging from 9.9 percent up to 18.6 percent. From 1997 to 2005, the largest increases in disability types were autism, a 400 percent increase among children ages 10 to 17 years, and developmental delay, almost a 2,000 percent increase among children ages 3 to 9 years. The study cited research on declassification (Holt, McGrath, and Herring 2007) that showed almost 50 percent of children eligible in kindergarten were no longer eligible for services by third grade. Children with speech/language impairment are the most likely to be declassified within 2 years (34 percent). Declassified children had higher literacy and math outcomes than children who continued to receive services under IDEA.

The Patterns study confirms data presented above that children with disabilities are performing increasingly well on NAEP tests, but that they are still far behind their non-disabled peers. Children with disabilities also have a much larger range of performance on the NAEP exam than do children without disabilities. State assessment data point to a wide array of outcomes and standards for proficiency. In 4th grade math and reading, the percent of children with disabilities who scored proficient or above on a State's assessment ranged from just less than 10 percent up to 80 percent.

Implementation Study. The final report for the IDEA National Assessment Implementation Study was published in July 2011. This study collected data from State agencies and school districts to address implementation questions for the IDEA National Assessment in four broad areas targeted for this study: (1) services to young children with disabilities; (2) identification of children and youth with disabilities; (3) efforts to promote positive developmental and educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities; and (4) dispute resolution and mediation. Data collection included three surveys of State administrators: (1) IDEA Part B administrators responsible for programs providing special education services to school-aged children with disabilities ages 6-21; (2) IDEA Part B section 619 coordinators who oversee preschool programs for children with disabilities ages 3-5; and (3) IDEA Part C coordinators who are responsible for early intervention programs serving infants and toddlers. A fourth survey collected district level data from a nationally representative sample of local special education administrators about preschool and school-age programs for children with disabilities ages 3-21.

The study specifically focused on implementation related to new or revised provisions from the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA. One such provision, Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS), allows districts to use up to 15 percent of their Part B funds to provide services to children not yet identified as in need of special education. Three percent of districts are required to use CEIS due to significant disproportionality and 11 percent of districts are voluntarily implementing CEIS. Of the districts that implement CEIS, it is used at the elementary school level in 93 percent of districts and focuses on literacy instruction in 84 percent of districts. The study found that the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) is also widespread, and is being used in 71 percent of districts nationally. Similar to CEIS, RTI is most commonly used in

elementary schools and in reading/language arts. However, only 41 percent of districts reported using IDEA funds for RTI, while 80 percent of districts reported using their own general funds.

The study looked at qualifications and distribution of "highly qualified" special education personnel. Almost 90 percent of special education teachers meet their State's definition of highly qualified, but States range from 56 percent to 100 percent. Districts reported difficulty finding qualified personnel for secondary schools, particularly those trained in math and working with students with emotional disturbances and with autism. The most common method districts use to increase the qualifications of their staff, implemented by 64 percent of all districts and 76 percent of districts facing routine shortages of quality applicants, is to provide professional development. No other approach was used by more than 25 percent of districts.

Finally, the study found that dispute resolution events are very infrequent, with 23 or fewer events for every 10,000 students served between 2004 and 2008. The number of due process hearing requests over that time has been steady at about 21 requests per 10,000 students, but the frequency of due process hearings completed has decreased from 3.36 hearings per 10,000 students in 2004 to 1.61 hearings in 2008.

Impact Evaluation of Response to Intervention Strategies. Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-step approach to providing early and more intensive intervention and monitoring within the general education setting. In principle, RTI begins with research-based instruction and behavioral support provided to students in the general education classroom, followed by screening of all students to identify those who may need systematic progress monitoring, intervention, or support. Students who are not responding to the general education curriculum and instruction are provided with increasingly intense interventions through a "multi-tiered" system, and they are frequently monitored to assess their progress and inform the choice of future interventions, including possibly special education for students determined to have a disability. The IDEA permits some Part B special education funds to be used for "early intervening services" such as RTI and also permits districts to use RTI to inform decisions regarding a child's eligibility for special education.

This RTI evaluation will employ a quasi-experimental design to examine the natural variations in elementary school reading instruction, intervention, and support among districts and schools already implementing RTI across the Nation, to address the following research questions:

- What are the impacts of different RTI models on academic outcomes – such as reading achievement, grade promotion, and special education identification – for students in elementary school?
- Do the impacts of RTI models vary by subgroup of students?

Data collection on RTI implementation and on student outcomes including reading achievement, grade promotion, and identification for special education was based on the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. The report for this study is scheduled for release in 2013.

Other Studies: The Department sponsored the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) and the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) to provide nationally representative information about secondary-school-age youth who were receiving special education services in 1985 and 2000, respectively. Data collection consisted of telephone interviews or mail surveys with youth or the youth's parents if the youth were not able to respond themselves. The National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE), in a September 2010 report, Comparisons Across Time of the Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities up to 4 Years After High

School, compared the changes in outcomes among youth in the NLTS and NLTS2 who had been out of high school for up to 4 years. The report focused on changes in rates of postsecondary education, employment, engagement in either postsecondary education or employment, household circumstances and community integration. Researchers also compared outcomes of youth with disabilities to the general population and across subgroups including disability category, gender, race/ethnicity, household income, high school completion status, and length of time since leaving high school.

According to the NCSER report, youth with disabilities were more likely to have enrolled in postsecondary education within 4 years of leaving high school in 2005 than in 1990. Almost half (46 percent) of all youth with disabilities had spent some time in postsecondary education in 2005. The rate of youth with disabilities who were currently enrolled in postsecondary education and/or employed was 86 percent in 2005, a 21 percentage-point increase over 1990. This increase is likely attributable to an increase in youth who were concurrently enrolled in postsecondary education and employed, given that rates of engagement in only one of these activities did not change significantly over that period of time. The report also illustrated the increasingly important connection between high school completion and postsecondary outcomes, as high school completers had significant and positive changes between 1990 and 2005 in a greater number of outcome measures than non-completers. Youth with disabilities from low-income households increased their postsecondary enrollment rate by 16 percentage points to 35 percent in 2005, but a significant enrollment gap remains between the highest and lowest income households. Similarly, in 2005, youth with disabilities enrolled in postsecondary education at a rate well below the general population, specifically, 46 percent compared to 63 percent.

Impacts of School Improvement Status on Students with Disabilities. As part of the IDEA National Assessment, IES is studying changes in student outcomes after schools adopt programs focused on improving academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The focus of the study is on comparing outcomes for students with disabilities in elementary and middle schools identified for improvement with corresponding outcomes in schools not identified for improvement but still accountable for the performance of students with disabilities (SWD).

The evaluation relied on existing data and surveys of school principals in 2010 and 2011. Key outcomes for this study align with the outcomes identified in section 664 of the IDEA, which relate to: academic achievement (including reading and mathematics); participation in the general education curriculum; receipt of special education services; receipt of such services in the least restrictive appropriate environment; and grade transitions.

The Interim Report on the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in School Accountability Systems was released in May 2012. This report presented data on schools in 40 States. For these 40 States, 35 percent of public schools have a large enough population of SWD to be required to meet SWD subgroup accountability standards for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Nine percent of all public schools in 37 States failed to make AYP in the 2008–09 school year because of SWD subgroup performance and other reasons, and 5 percent missed it solely because of SWD subgroup performance. Among schools with a large enough population of SWD to be required to meet the accountability standards for the duration of the study, 44 percent were identified for school improvement. By comparison, 24 percent of schools with small SWD populations were identified for improvement. The final report is scheduled for release in early 2013.