This journal supplement provides graphs, tables, and narrative to summarize the current status of special education in the United States. The information is based on data from the following sources: "The 15th Annual Report to the Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act"; "The 1990 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey"; "The National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students"; and "Patterns in Special Education Delivery and Cost." Information presented includes: number of students with disabilities receiving special education services by age; disabilities of students receiving special education as a percentage of all students; percentage of students receiving special education services; demographic differences between secondary youth with disabilities and the general population; special education students in the school building and other sites; special education students served in the general classroom and other service modalities; special education teachers employed and needed; personnel other than special education teachers employed and needed; school completion and school leaving; expenditures on special education; factors influencing completing or dropping out; what happens after school; and projected 1990 racial/ethnic breakdown of students receiving special education by category. (DB)
Over the past years a number of national studies and reports have attempted to provide a clearer picture of the state of special education for students with disabilities. Who is being served, what does it take to serve them and what are the outcomes of this effort? This document was developed to present an accurate profile of these findings. It is based primarily on the most current data from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. 15th Annual Report to the Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act and the Office of the Civil Rights' 1990 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey, the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (NLTS), and Patterns in Special Education Delivery and Cost.

In this period of great debate about education in general and special education specifically, data are being presented and interpreted to support various points of view. This is occurring in the professional literature and the general media. For many professionals and the public it is increasingly difficult to distinguish fact from fiction. The consequence is often inaccurate perceptions about the state of special education for students with disabilities as well as inappropriate decision making. We hope that the following facts concerning the education of students with disabilities will better inform you so you can better inform others.

George E. Ayers
Executive Director
Where are students in special education being served?

Special Education Students in the School Building and Other Sites

4,994,169 Students Served
(School year 1991-'92)

- Regular School: 94.4%
- Separate School: 4.2%
- Home: 0.6%
- Residential Facility: 0.8%
- Other: 0.6%


Special Education Students Served in the General Classroom and Other Service Modalities

4,994,169 Students Served
(School year 1991-'92)

- General Classroom: more than 69.3%
- Separate Class: or at least 40% time 25.1%
- Separate School: or at least 60% time 4.2%
- Other: 15.5%


Who is providing special education benefits?

Special Education Teachers Employed and Needed to Serve Students with Disabilities, Ages 3-21

Teachers Needed
Teachers Employed

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21,638</td>
<td>22,852</td>
<td>26,788</td>
<td>30,206</td>
<td>29,102</td>
<td>29,511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 6th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 13th, 14th Annual Reports to Congress, 1984-1992.

Personnel Other Than Special Education Teachers Employed and Needed to Serve Students with Disabilities, Ages 3-21

Personnel Needed
Personnel Employed

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14,444</td>
<td>12,254</td>
<td>15,954</td>
<td>15,219</td>
<td>14,908</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Of the 608,504 personnel employed to provide for the education of students with disabilities, only 17,373 (2.9%) are local supervisors or administrators.

- The average teacher/pupil ratio in self-contained programs ranges from 1:3 for learning disabilities programs to 1:4 for programs serving students with hearing impairments, with an average ratio and average class size of 9 students.

- The average caseload for resource programs is 26 students, ranging from 10 students in mental retardation and visual impairment programs to 50 in programs for students with speech/language disabilities.

- Compared to general education teachers, special education teachers are statistically more likely to be female, younger, unmarried, have fewer years of teaching experience, and have earned a master's degree.


- Of 45 teaching areas, the four with the highest need and most considerable shortage are special education areas: Multiple Disabilities, Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, Learning Disabilities, and Speech Pathology/Audiology.

Who completes school and who leaves?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COMPLETED SCHOOL</th>
<th>DID NOT COMPLETE SCHOOL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disabilities</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Emotional Disturbance</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>54.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Impairments</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual Impairments</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairments</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Impairments</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in the General Population</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in the General Population with Demographic Characteristics similar to Youth with Disabilities</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


How much is spent on special education?

While no data are collected on the total amount of money expended to educate students with disabilities, it is possible to estimate. In 1990–91 the average cost of education in the U.S. was $5,266 per student. On average, the public spends 2.3 times this amount on students with disabilities. For a student with disabilities, it is estimated that an additional $6,845.80 was spent. In 1990–91, 4.8 million students with disabilities received special education services for a total additional cost of $12.86 billion.

Where does the money go?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Education</th>
<th>Special Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services/Administration</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


References


*This document reports data from NITS.
What happens after school?

The National Longitudinal Transition Study found that postschool outcomes are better for youth who have completed secondary school, taken vocational education while in school, spent more time in general education classes, and belonged to school or community groups. Outcomes were better for youth who had a transition plan in high school that specified a postschool outcome, such as employment, and for youth whose parents expected them to succeed and who were involved in their schooling.

Postsecondary Education

- In 1988, 7% of first-time, full-time college freshmen were students with disabilities. By 1991, this number had risen to 8.8% (Henderson, 1992. Based on data from the 1991 Cooperative Institutional Research Program survey of college freshmen.)

- The NLTS reports 37% of youth with disabilities who had graduated from high school 3 to 5 years earlier had enrolled in postsecondary vocational schools, such as employment, and for youth whose parents expected them to succeed and who were involved in their schooling.

- When they had been out of school 3 to 5 years, 57% of youth with disabilities were competitively employed as compared to 69% of the general population. Employment rates were highest for youth who had learning disabilities or speech impairments, and lowest for those who had multiple disabilities or orthopedic or visual impairments (NLTS).

- The rate of full-time competitive employment for youth with disabilities was 25% when they had been out of high school for 2 years. Three years later, it had risen dramatically for all disabilities to 43%. This rate is similar to the general population's full-time employment rate (46%) (NLTS).

- The wages of students who had been out of high school 3 to 5 years also increased dramatically. The percentage who earned more than $6 per hour rose to 40%. Increases were more frequent for youth who had learning disabilities, serious emotional disturbances, speech impairments, or sensory impairments. However, the median hourly wage for youth with all types of disabilities was just $5.72, less than $12,000 per year for full-time, year-round employment (NLTS).

Residential Status

- In the first 2 years out of high school, 83% of youth with disabilities lived with their parents. Three years later, 55% of this sample lived with their parents (NLTS).

Who is being served in special education? from page 1

Projected 1990 Racial/Ethnic Breakdown of Students Receiving Special Education Under Selected Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Category</th>
<th>Native American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Total Minority</th>
<th>Total White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of All Students in School</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from OCR, the National and State Summaries of Data from the 1990 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey. 1992.

Societal Involvement

- In 1986-87, 66% of youth in the general population who had been out of high school 3 to 5 years were registered to vote. Of students with disabilities, 51% were registered to vote (NLTS).

- By the time they had been out of high school 3 to 5 years, 15% of young men and 30% of young women with disabilities were married or living with someone of the opposite sex. These rates are similar to those in the general population (NLTS).

- The parenting rate for men was not different from that of the general population (16%), but the rate for young women with disabilities (41%) was much higher than for the general population (29%). The rate for female dropouts, 54%, was even higher. One in five single women with disabilities were mothers, and about one-third of single mothers with disabilities lived alone with their children (NLTS).

Services

- Parents reported that 30% of out-of-school youth with disabilities did not need adult services. Vocational services were needed by 60% of youth with disabilities who had been out of school for up to 5 years, and more than one-third of them were receiving these services (NLTS).

- Life skills training was reported as a need for 45% of youth with disabilities, and 30% were receiving this type of training (NLTS).