

Special Education Program: 2015-2016

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At-a-Glance

Special Education provides services and supports designed to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities. The special education program is required to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by meeting established standards in reading and mathematics. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) also requires districts to monitor test performance, participation, graduation rates, along with other non-academic indicators through the Performance Based Monitoring Analysis System (PBMAS). The purpose of this evaluation was to examine the characteristics, academic performance, and outcomes of students who received special education services during the 2015-2016 school year.

Special Education Population

The special education population for the district was 11,824 as of October 30, 2015 and represented 7.5 percent of the district population, below the PBMAS standard of 8.5 percent. This was a slight increase in enrollment from last year. Over the last eight years enrollment in special education has remained relatively consistent between years. As shown in Table 1, a greater proportion of students enrolled in special education were reported to be African American (32.9%) compared to the total percentage of African American students reported by the district (22.6%). This resulted in a difference rate of 10.3 and a PBMAS performance level of three in SY 2015-16. This difference rate has been steadily decreasing since SY 2008-09 but has exceeded the maximum cut point for this indicator resulting in the district receiving a PBMAS performance level of three for this indicator.

Table 1: African American Representation by School Year

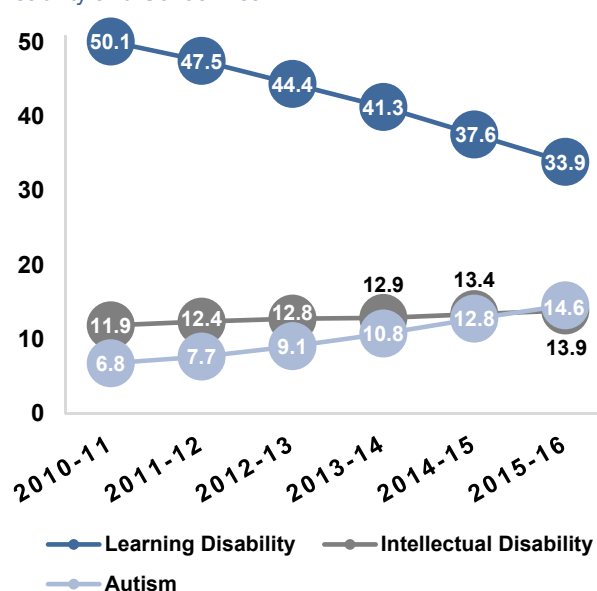
SY	SPED % AA	District % AA	Rate	Level
2008-09	41.2	27.6	13.6	3
2009-10	38.9	26.4	12.5	3
2010-11	37.6	25.3	12.3	3
2011-12	36.9	24.8	12.1	3
2012-13	35.3	24.1	11.2	3
2013-14	34.4	23.7	10.7	3
2014-15	33.9	23.2	10.7	3
2015-16	32.9	22.6	10.3	3

While African American students have been over-represented in special education, there was a lower percentage of Hispanic students enrolled in special education (60.4%) than the percentage of Hispanic students in the district (70.1%). There was also a lower proportion of English language learner

(ELL) students who received special education services (32.5%) than the proportion of ELL students in the district (42.9%).

The most commonly reported primary disabilities among students enrolled in special education during SY 2015-16 were learning disability (33.9%), autism (14.6%), other health impairment (14.1%), and intellectual disability (13.9%). The top three primary disabilities of students enrolled in special education were compared between SY 2010-11 and SY 2015-16 to identify any trends in the services provided to students. The percentage of students identified to have autism has more than doubled from 6.8 percent in SY 2010-11 to 14.6 percent in SY 2015-16. At the same time, the percentage of students identified to have a learning disability as their primary disability has declined from half (50.1%) of all special education students in SY 2010-11 to one-third (33.9%) of all special education students in SY 2015-16 (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percent of Special Education Students by Primary Disability and School Year



The out-of-school suspension (OSS) indicator data were also compared over an eight year period and are reported by year in Table 2. The OSS rate is a lagging variable and always reflects data from the previous school year. The difference rate decreased from 11.3 in SY 2013-14 to 9.4 in SY 2014-15. As a result, the district received a performance level of one on this indicator in the 2016 PBMAS Report.

Table 2: Out of School Suspension Rate by School Year

SY	SPED % OSS	District % OSS	Diff Rate	Perf Level
2007-08	36.1	19.0	17.1	N/A
2008-09	40.6	21.1	19.5	2
2009-10	34.0	17.9	16.1	2
2010-11	25.1	13.3	11.8	2
2011-12	20.8	11.6	9.2	1
2012-13	28.6	15.1	13.5	2
2013-14	25.8	14.5	11.3	2
2014-15	22.6	13.2	9.4	1

STAAR 3-8 and STAAR EOC Performance

STAAR was the most commonly tested version of the assessment for special education students. The least commonly tested version was *STAAR Alt 2* although the percentage of special education students tested with *STAAR Alt 2* increased this year to 19.2 percent from 16.6 percent in SY 2014-15. Students who were tested with the *STAAR* version outperformed students who took the *STAAR A* version; students tested with *STAAR Alt 2* demonstrated the best performance.

As shown in Table 3, the percentage of special education students who reached the satisfactory level increased in every subject on *STAAR 3-8* and *STAAR EOC* exams compared to SY 2014-15. Students improved the most on the *STAAR 3-8* Science and Algebra EOC exams (13.6 and 10.8 percentage points respectively).

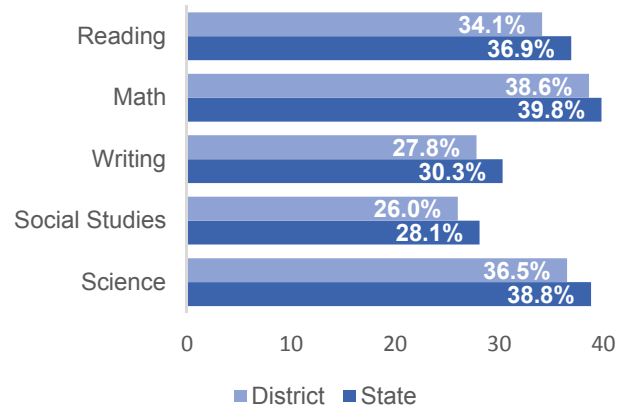
Table 3: Percentage of Special Education Students at the Satisfactory Standard: SY 2014-15 and SY 2015-16

Subject	2014-15	2015-16	Change
STAAR 3-8			
Reading	28.7	34.1	5.4
Mathematics	29.4	38.6	9.2
Writing	21.6	27.8	6.2
Science	22.9	36.5	13.6
Social Studies	19.2	26.0	6.8
STAAR EOC			
Algebra	24.8	35.6	10.8
English I	15.2	20.8	5.6
English II	14.6	22.9	8.3
Biology	40.8	43.4	2.6
U.S. History	46.3	52.5	6.2

Note: STAAR results from SY 2014-15 were recalibrated to the Phase-in 2, level II performance standards for comparative purposes.

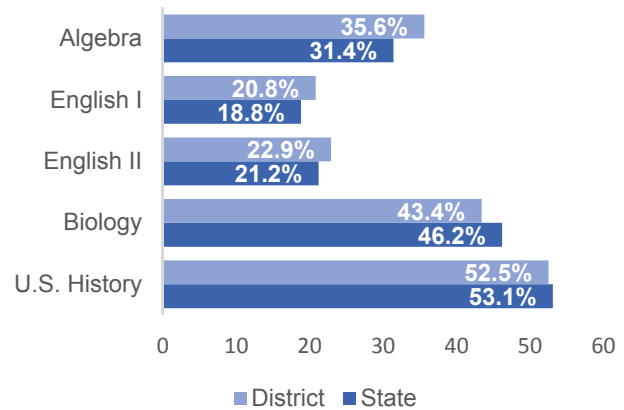
The STAAR results of special education students in the district were compared to special education students at the State level in Figure 2. Although district students outperformed state special education students in some grade levels, generally, a higher percentage of state special education students were at the satisfactory level on *STAAR 3-8* exams than students in the district.

Figure 2: Percent of Special Education Students at the Satisfactory Level by STAAR 3-8 test



The percentage of district special education students who reached the satisfactory standard on *STAAR EOC* exams were compared to state special education students in Figure 3. Special education students in the district outperformed state students in Algebra, English I, and English II EOC exams. A higher percentage of state special education students reached the satisfactory level in Biology and U.S. History EOCs

Figure 3: Percent of Special Education Students at the Satisfactory Level by STAAR EOC test



Recommendations

The following summary recommendations are offered to program staff in the Department of Special Education:

- Continue to monitor African American representation in special Education.
- Monitor the proportion of discretionary out-of-school suspensions given to special education students compared to the placement rate of all students in attendance.
- Ensure schools are properly resourced for students with autism.
- Investigate the increased participation rates for *STAAR Alt 2* exams.

For more information, see EA16-519-2, available at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>.