

# PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGES 3-21) WITH DISABILITIES

**DEFINITION:** Number and percent of students (ages 3-21) in public schools identified as having a disability.

## SIGNIFICANCE

All children deserve to reach their full educational potential. Early identification of a disability, combined with effective interventions, can be instrumental in ensuring that a child is able to achieve that potential. Federal law guarantees that all children with disabilities have access to free, appropriate public education.

Approximately one out of every eight public school students in Louisiana has been diagnosed as having a disability. The most common diagnoses are learning disabilities and speech or language impairments, respectively accounting for 31% and 26% of all public school students with disabilities. Developmental delays, other health impairments, and mental disabilities are the next most common disabilities, each of which affects one in ten students receiving special education services for a disability.<sup>1</sup>

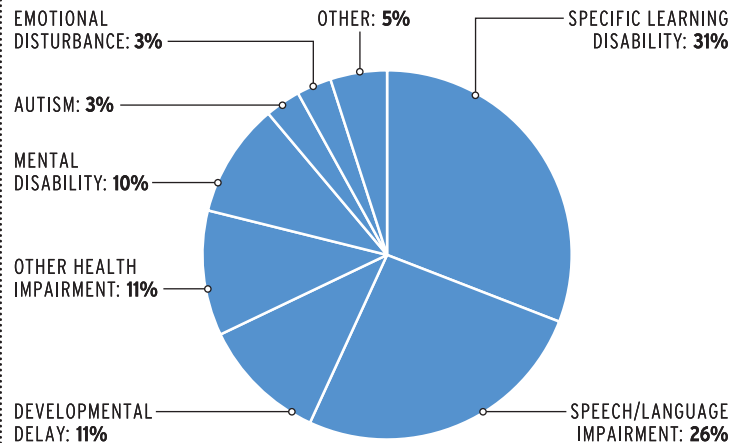
The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students receiving special education services be educated with children who are nondisabled, to the maximum appropriate extent. In the 2007 school year, 62% of Louisiana children receiving IDEA-Part B special education services were served primarily in a general education classroom, meaning that they spent at least 80% of their time in school in a “regular” classroom. Another 20.6% were in “resource with regular class,” spending 40%-79% of their day in a regular classroom. Just 15.3% were in a “self-contained” setting, where less than 40% of the day is spent in a regular classroom. Less than 3% of school-age students served by IDEA-Part B were in separate schools, residential facilities, hospital/homebound care, or correctional facilities.<sup>2</sup>

## RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY

Black public school students are slightly more likely than white public school students to be diagnosed with a disability. In the 2006-2007 school year, 13.9% of black public school students were diagnosed with a disability, compared to 12.6% of white students. Black students are overrepresented in some disability categories, and underrepresented in others. For example, 5.2% of black public school students have been diagnosed with a specific learning disability, while the same is true of 3.4% of white public school students. By contrast, 2.8% of black students were diagnosed with a speech or

## PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGES 3-21) IN SPECIAL EDUCATION BY DISABILITY CATEGORY IN LOUISIANA

School year 2006-2007



language impairment, while the same was true of 4.0% of white students.

Federal IDEA regulations require states to implement policies and procedures to “prevent the inappropriate over-identification or disproportionate representation by race and ethnicity of children as children with disabilities.”<sup>3</sup> The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) calculates a “risk ratio” by dividing one ethnic group’s risk for being identified as having a given disability by the risk of all other ethnic groups for being identified with that disability. A ratio of one indicates that there is no over- or underrepresentation, while ratios greater than one indicate overrepresentation. LDE found that 73% of districts had risk ratios greater than 1.5 for at least one disability category in FY 2006.<sup>4</sup>

## DATA SOURCE

Louisiana Department of Education’s annual “State Special Education Data Profile” report.

## DATA NOTE

East Baton Rouge Parish data includes data for “City of Baker” and “City of Zachary.” Data for Ouachita Parish includes data for the “City of Monroe” district. Data for Recovery School District schools are reflected in the data of the parish in which the school is located. Data for Washington Parish includes data for the City of Bogalusa. Data for Lab Schools, BESE, Type 2 charter schools, and Marine Institutes are not reflected in parish data, but are reflected in the statewide total.

## RATE CALCULATION

$100 * (\text{number of students ages 3-21 identified as having a disability} \div \text{total number of students ages 3-21})$

<sup>1</sup> Louisiana Department of Education, “State Special Education Profile 2008,” Louisiana Department of Education, retrieved from <http://www.doe.state.la.us/> on 5/1/2009.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs “IDEA Regulations: Disproportionality and Overidentification,” U.S. Department of Education, 2007, retrieved from <http://idea.ed.gov/> on 5/1/2009.

<sup>4</sup> Louisiana Department of Education, “Louisiana Annual Performance Report – Part B July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2008,” Louisiana Department of Education, 2009, retrieved from [www.doe.state.la.us/](http://www.doe.state.la.us/) on 5/1/2009.

# PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS (AGES 3-21) IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A DISABILITY (NUMBER AND PERCENT OF ALL STUDENTS)

	SY 2000		SY 2006		CHANGE SY 2000-2006	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	% change in rate*
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>94,709</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>87,312</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>-7,397</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Acadia	1,477	14.6	1,323	14.0	-154	-4.1
Allen	457	10.3	518	12.1	61	17.5
Ascension	2,160	14.2	2,499	13.5	339	-4.8
Assumption	563	11.9	621	14.5	58	21.8
Avoyelles	722	10.1	592	9.5	-130	-5.2
Beauregard	716	11.7	932	15.1	216	28.8
Bienville	337	12.9	276	11.6	-61	-10.2
Bossier	2,151	11.4	2,164	11.2	13	-1.8
Caddo	6,175	13.6	5,311	12.3	-864	-9.4
Calcasieu	4,458	13.7	4,864	14.9	406	9.0
Caldwell	215	11.3	245	13.4	30	19.3
Cameron	275	13.9	252	16.3	-23	17.2
Catahoula	186	9.7	192	10.6	6	9.9
Claiborne	435	15.0	416	16.1	-19	7.1
Concordia	361	9.1	444	11.2	83	22.8
De Soto	708	13.9	670	13.7	-38	-1.5
East Baton Rouge	5,913	10.9	6,364	11.6	451	7.1
East Carroll	189	10.1	220	14.5	31	42.8
East Feliciana	297	11.3	353	15.0	56	33.1
Evangeline	903	13.9	948	15.5	45	11.6
Franklin	400	10.0	390	11.4	-10	13.5
Grant	472	12.9	516	14.9	44	15.5
Iberia	2,246	15.3	2,066	14.6	-180	-4.3
Iberville	674	13.5	566	13.3	-108	-1.5
Jackson	281	10.8	238	10.8	-43	-0.5
Jefferson	7,487	14.6	4,502	10.3	-2,985	-29.6
Jefferson Davis	957	16.1	908	15.7	-49	-2.2
Lafayette	3,254	11.1	3,425	11.4	171	2.6
Lafourche	2,087	13.6	1,842	12.6	-245	-6.8
La Salle	227	8.5	278	10.4	51	22.1
Lincoln	740	11.0	856	12.9	116	17.3
Livingston	1,831	9.3	3,163	13.7	1,332	47.6
Madison	261	10.0	242	11.1	-19	10.9
Morehouse	810	14.8	787	15.6	-23	5.8
Natchitoches	818	11.5	893	12.8	75	11.7
Orleans	7,143	9.2	1,592	6.3	-5,551	-31.3
Ouachita	3,130	11.1	3,900	13.9	770	25.8
Plaquemines	534	10.7	369	10.2	-165	-4.5
Pointe Coupee	525	15.5	507	16.9	-18	9.4
Rapides	3,072	12.9	3,285	13.8	213	6.5
Red River	258	13.4	175	11.4	-83	-15.1
Richland	558	14.5	457	13.6	-101	-6.6
Sabine	659	14.9	598	14.2	-61	-4.5
St. Bernard	1,187	13.8	396	10.6	-791	-23.6
St. Charles	1,010	10.1	1,069	11.1	59	9.5
St. Helena	263	17.9	216	16.9	-47	-5.5
St. James	449	10.6	511	12.3	62	16.7
St. John the Baptist	1,228	18.8	1,016	15.1	-212	-19.4
St. Landry	2,250	14.3	2,174	14.1	-76	-1.4
St. Martin	1,264	14.5	1,090	12.7	-174	-12.4
St. Mary	1,554	14.3	1,504	15.4	-50	7.1
St. Tammany	5,012	15.3	5,424	15.3	412	-0.2
Tangipahoa	2,654	14.5	2,457	12.7	-197	-12.6
Tensas	227	20.4	154	19.1	-73	-6.6
Terrebonne	2,993	15.0	2,657	14.0	-336	-6.8
Union	376	10.4	428	13.9	52	33.6
Vermilion	1,312	14.5	1,281	14.1	-31	-2.6
Vernon	1,352	13.0	1,443	15.1	91	16.4
Washington	1,242	15.7	1,334	17.6	92	12.1
Webster	976	12.5	1,032	14.1	56	12.5
West Baton Rouge	432	11.4	434	12.3	2	7.6
West Carroll	270	10.7	295	12.9	25	20.0
West Feliciana	325	13.5	337	13.7	12	1.1
Winn	323	10.9	327	12.1	4	11.2

\*Note that the "percentage change" reflects the change in the rate, not the percentage change in the absolute number of children identified as having a disability.