

# MISSOURI SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2000-2001

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This Annual Report of the Missouri Special Education Advisory Panel is respectfully submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the State of Missouri. The reporting period is July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2001.

The report is a summary of Panel activities and recommendations during the reporting period. The Panel convenes on a regular basis in an effort to fulfill its role of advising the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) on issues specific to special education. The Panel operates in a collaborative spirit with the Division of Special Education in identifying and addressing areas of concern.

Additional information about the Panel can be found at: </divspeced/94142mainpage.html>. Comments about this report can be submitted in writing to the attention of the Special Education Advisory Panel Chairperson, Division of Special Education, P. O. Box 480, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102 or via email to the contact listed at the website above.

The Panel wishes to acknowledge the contributions of Melodie Friedebach, Debby Parsons, and Lina Browner, along with other DESE staff, for their assistance in providing essential information through a variety of reports and presentations.

## **MISSOURI’S VISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

We, the people of Missouri, believe that diversity enhances our culture; therefore, we commit our resources and efforts to accept, educate, and support all children and youth. All children and youth, being of diverse backgrounds and abilities, will have access to all learning activities with accommodations and supports to enable them to succeed. All children and youth are actively engaged in creating their own futures and are prepared for life as independent, informed, and empowered citizens; and, are embraced as vital, valued, and contributing members of their communities. Therefore, we need inclusive communities and schools that:

- recognize that all children and youth can learn;
- commit to providing equitable opportunities for all children and youth;
- build on the individual strengths and abilities of each child and youth;
- collaborate for the benefit of all children and youth; and,
- recognize and involve families as full partners.

The Panel is firmly committed to this vision. We believe that students in special education are deserving of fair and equitable treatment by the educational system. We believe that both students and local school districts should be held to high standards and that all students should receive an appropriate education to prepare them for life beyond the school years.

The Panel feels it has a strong responsibility to represent the interests of students with disabilities in achieving the best possible outcomes in the educational process. The best outcomes can be achieved when all stakeholders work together in a collaborative manner for the best interests of the individual student.

## **PANEL ACTIVITIES**

The Panel attempts to review a number of issues and division initiatives during the fiscal year. Obviously, some areas are of greater immediate concern than others and require more intense involvement by the Panel. Following is a synopsis of Panel activities accompanied by charts/graphs where appropriate.

## **OSEP/Continuous Improvement**

The federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) will be monitoring all states including Missouri regarding their compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). During this process, OSEP requires states to conduct a self-assessment, by stakeholders, of “cluster areas” identified by OSEP to have the greatest potential for impacting the outcomes for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities. The cluster areas identified by OSEP for Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are: General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education in Least Restrictive Environment, Parent Involvement, Secondary Transition, Transition from Part C to Part B. In addition to these areas, the Division of Special Education has established a cluster area focused upon special education services for preschool children.

The Panel is taking a leadership role by acting as the steering committee for the Part B cluster areas in Missouri. In order to accommodate this process, existing Panel subcommittees have been assigned to work on each of the “cluster areas” and to lead stakeholder discussions.

The Panel will conduct meetings with other identified stakeholder groups in determining Missouri's self-assessment process. The initial stakeholder meeting was held May 15-16, 2001. The larger group then split into smaller committees to address the various "cluster areas."

The second group of cluster meetings were held June 13-14 at the Lake of the Ozarks. Committee reports indicated that progress is being made in identifying goals indicators and information resources. Additional meetings are scheduled.

This process will continue to be a major activity of the Panel in the coming months.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Panel received an update on Local Improvement Grants (LIGs) to provide more dollars for professional development opportunities. The Panel feels that continuous professional development is vital to improvement in special education.

## **COMPLAINT RESOLUTION**

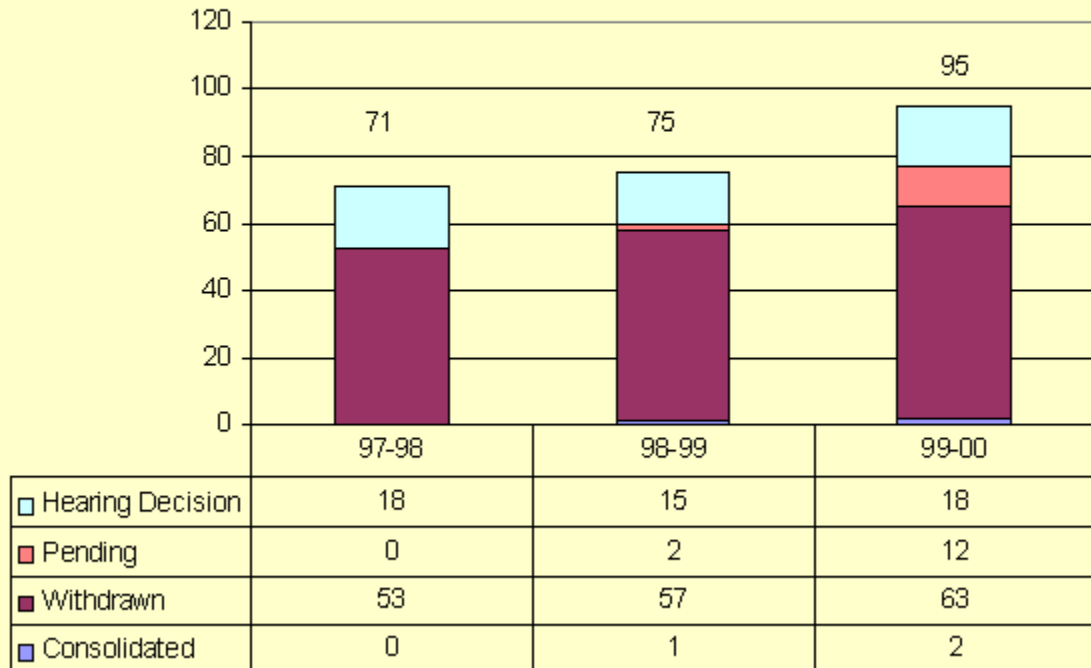
There are three complaint resolution processes in Missouri: Child Complaint, Due Process, and Mediation. Parents/persons who believe that local school districts or other responsible public agencies have violated either state or federal regulations implementing IDEA, may file Child Complaints. DESE investigates the complaints and issues decisions, finding the district in or out of compliance unless the complaint is withdrawn. A single complaint may include several allegations. A three-member panel resolves Due Process Hearings filed. The Due Process Panel renders the decision. The parties may request Mediation to attempt to resolve the issue in lieu of the due process hearing. Data on these processes is listed below.

The panel took an in-depth look at Missouri's approach to Due Process. Heidi Atkins Lieberman (Division of Special Education legal counsel) presented information to the Panel with an overview of Due Process in Missouri and reviewed hearing decisions. There were 22 Due Process decisions during the 1999-2000 fiscal year. 18 of the decisions were from hearings that were filed during that fiscal year and 4 were filed in previous fiscal years. She advised the Panel that "appropriateness of services" was the major concern of Due Process during the year.

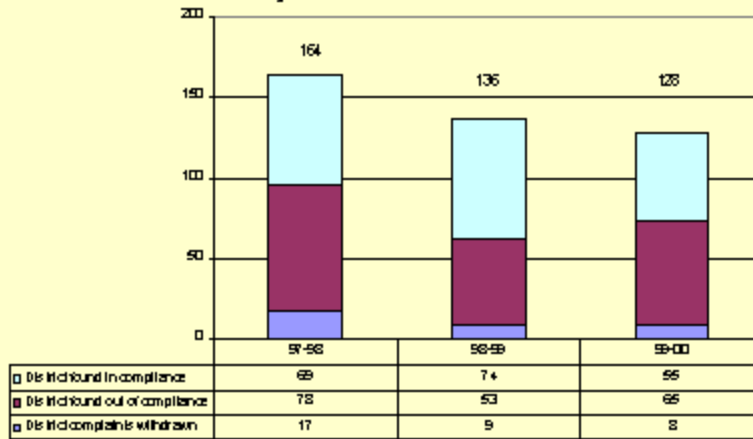
At the December meeting, the Panel heard presentations from three parents and a parent advocate about their struggles with individual school districts and Due Process. Their presentations outlined the difficulties and obstacles sometimes encountered by parents in the area of Due Process.

The Panel recommended modifications to the Child Complaint letter sent to parents making it more "parent friendly" and the process less burdensome. The Panel also suggested that DESE consider funding mediation prior to Due Process. The Panel was advised by DESE that there would be a mini-study to determine the effectiveness of such a program.

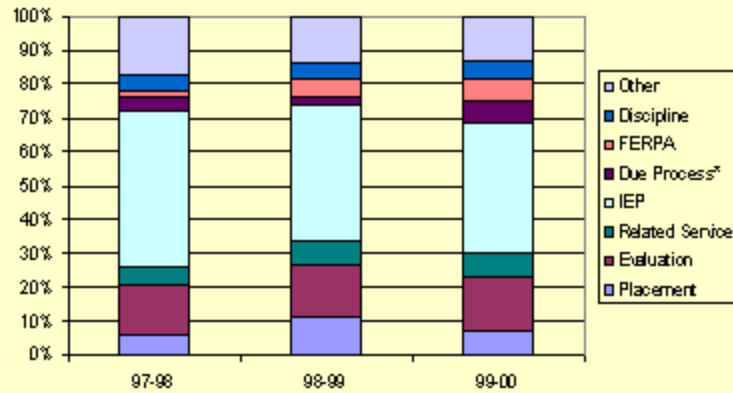
## Due Process Hearing Requests by Fiscal Year



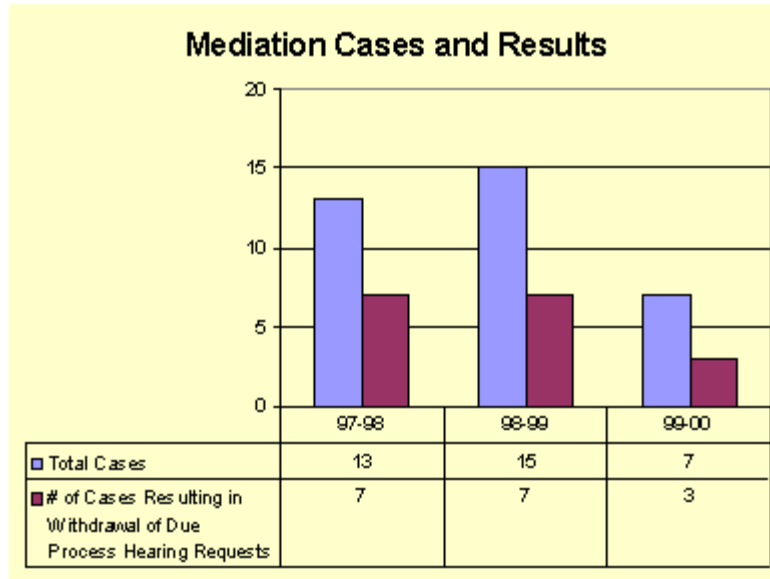
### Missouri IDEA, Part B Child Complaints by Resolution Status



### Missouri IDEA, Part B Child Complaint Allegations by Category



\* Includes Hearing Officer Impartiality complaints.



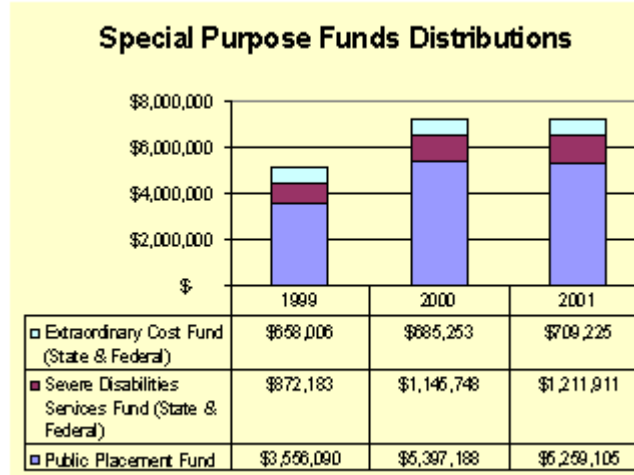
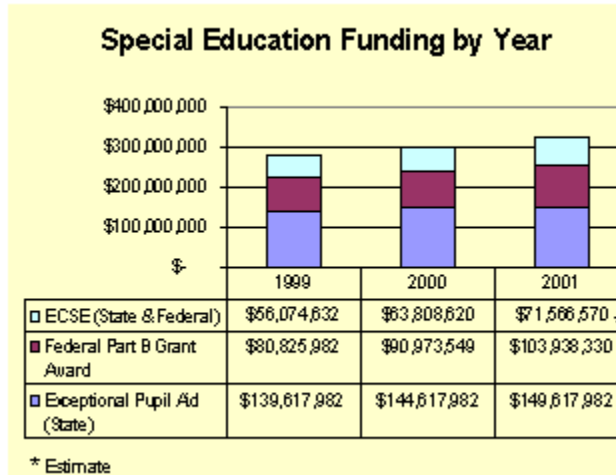
## STATE IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (SIG)

The Panel was updated on the current status of funds distribution for the grants. Some Panel members expressed concern about how funding decisions are made and the Panel's role in this process. The Panel was informed that the grant specifies the Panel has the role of advising DESE on the activities and implementation of the SIG. The Panel is to review SIG outcomes and made recommendations for change. A subcommittee was formed to fulfill this role for the Panel.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

*Missouri serves 137,383 students with disabilities ages 3-22 in 524 Public school districts, State Schools for Severely Handicapped (SSSH), Missouri School for the Blind (MSB), Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD), Department of Corrections (DOC), and Division of Youth Services (DYS). The major funding sources and amounts for special education are shown below.*

*The Panel was updated on the Extraordinary Cost Fund proposal to allow local districts with the greatest need to have first access to the fund to meet extraordinary costs. The Panel agrees with this proposal.*



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

The Panel received additional information and reviewed the topics listed below:

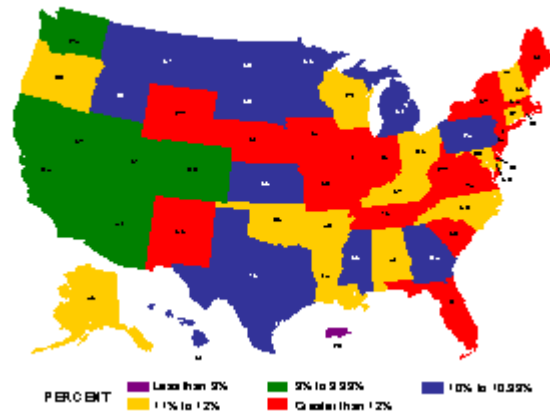
- update on the Blind Task Force activities;
- updates on various budget issues; and,
- subcommittee work on the following: Meeting the Challenge, School Violence, School Funding, and Education Collaboration.

## DATA

The Panel will begin reviewing, on an annual basis, information regarding special education in Missouri. The Division of Special Education prepared an overview of special education to include information about students with disabilities, services, exiting, and the performance goals and indicators. Based on an annual review of special education data, the panel will identify areas for further study.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT DATA

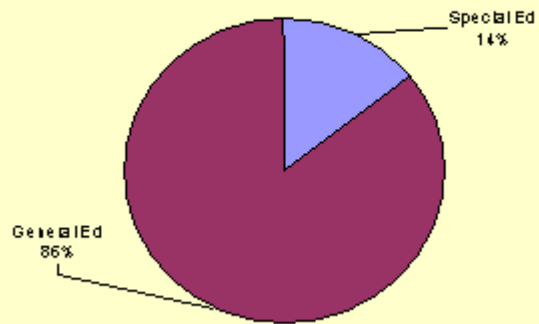
Percentage (Based on Enrollment) of Children Ages 6-17 Served Under IDEA, Part B During the 1999 - 2000 School Year by State



The incident rate of students with disabilities ages 6-17 was compared with the fifty states and found Missouri to be greater than 12%. This percentage is calculated using the total number of children enrolled in public schools

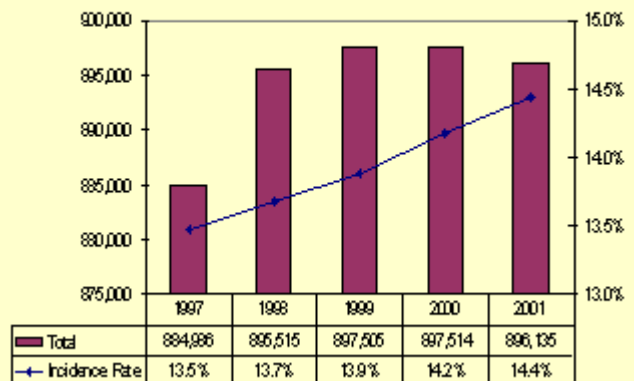
*During the 2000-01 school year, Missouri public schools served 129,347 students with disabilities ages 5-22. This represents approximately 14% of the students enrolled in public schools.*

Special Education Percent of Enrollment 2000-2001 School Year

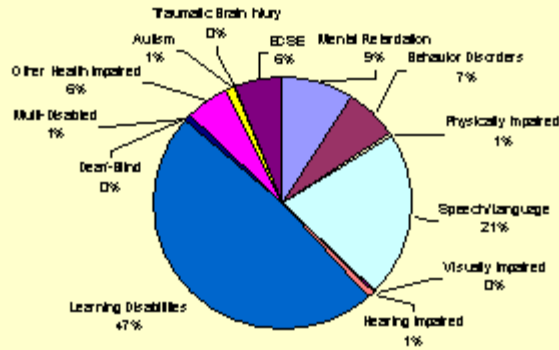


The incident rates of students were then reviewed in comparison to public school enrollments. The incidence of students with disabilities is continuing to increase while the enrollment in Missouri public schools is declining. No data is available on the number of students enrolled in private schools or who are homeschooled.

Total Enrollment and Incidence Rates

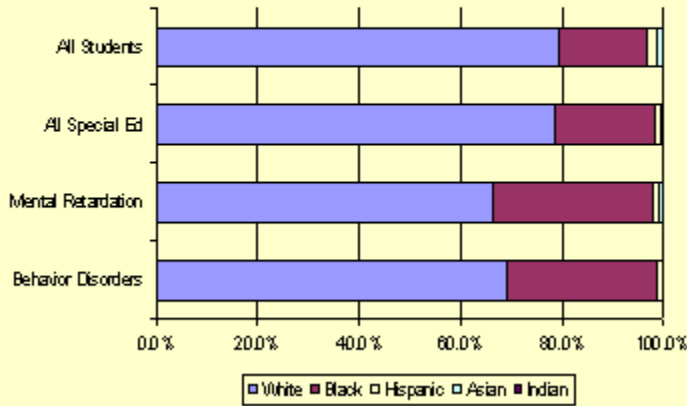


**Disabilities Percent of Total  
2000-2001 School Year**



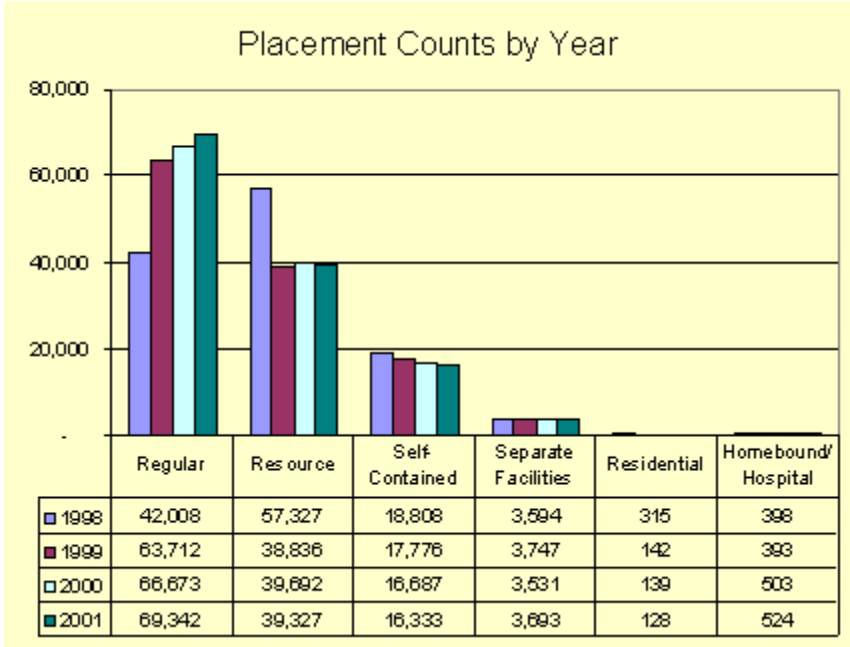
Students with disabilities are diagnosed by Missouri public schools based on the definitions and eligibility criteria included in the Missouri State Plan. There are 13 disability categories with incident rates that range from <1% to 47%.

**Percentage of Disability by Race  
2000-2001 School Year**



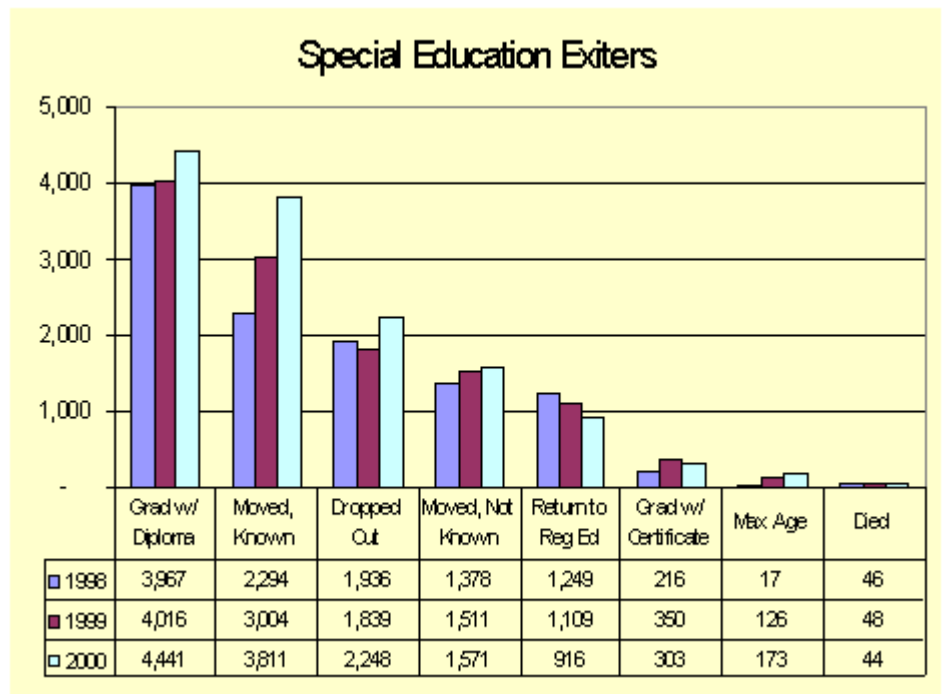
*The Division began the analysis of students with disabilities based on Racial/ethnicity in 2000-2001 school year. The information compared the rates of identification of students with disabilities to the percentages of minority students with in Missouri Public Schools.*

*Missouri students with disabilities receive their special education services in a variety of settings within the public schools. The Division of Special Education collects and reports to OSEP, data on the amount of time that students with disabilities are removed from the general education classroom. This is summarized in 6 placement*



*categories. Since the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997, Missouri has seen a steady increase in the use of Regular Classroom. This indicates that the students are removed less than 21% of the school day from their general education classroom or a little over one hour per day.*

OSEP requires states to report on the exiting of students with disabilities, ages 14-22, from Special Education. Missouri uses the 8 categories required by OSEP. The information is used by the Division to calculate both dropout and graduation rates for students with disabilities. Graduation rates are calculated using the **Graduation with a regular diploma** category. Dropout calculation includes more than just the **drop out** category. It also includes the following exit categories: **Reached Maximum age (21)**, **Moved not known to be continuing**, and **Graduation with a certificate**.



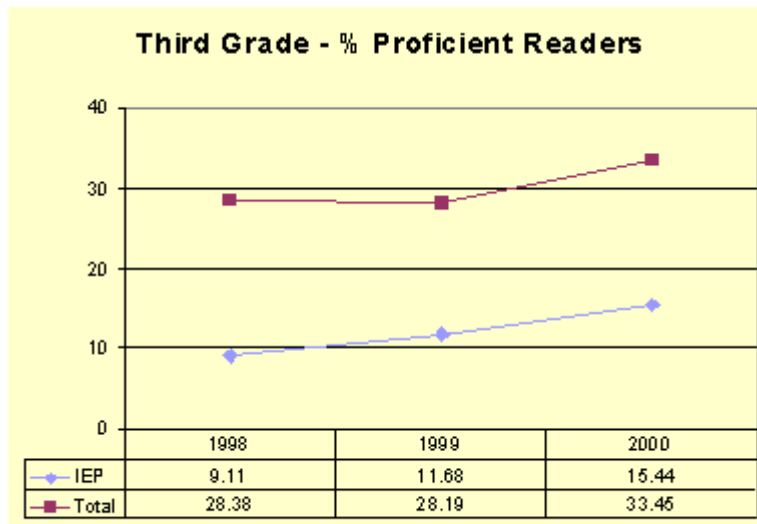
## PERFORMANCE GOALS AND INDICATORS

IDEA 97 required states to establish Performance Goals and Indicators for Students with Disabilities. Missouri established a committee through the Special Education Summit that was held during

1997-98 school year. The committee recommended that the Goals and Indicators match the performance goals for all Missouri students. Following the committee recommendations, eight goals were established. Progress on six of the goals is reported.

**Increase the percentage of proficient readers in grades 3 and 7 and decrease the percentage having the Missouri Assessment Program – Communications Arts (MAP-CA) read to them**

*Reading proficiency is measured through the MAP Communication Arts test. Performance of students with disabilities is compared to performance of all Missouri students. The percentage of proficient Readers is increasing for both groups, however a gap does exist with 15.44% of students with disabilities proficient compared to 33.45% of all third grade students.*



 Increase the percentage scoring at Proficient and Advanced levels and decrease the percentage scoring at Step 1 and Progressing levels for each of the MAP subject area assessments

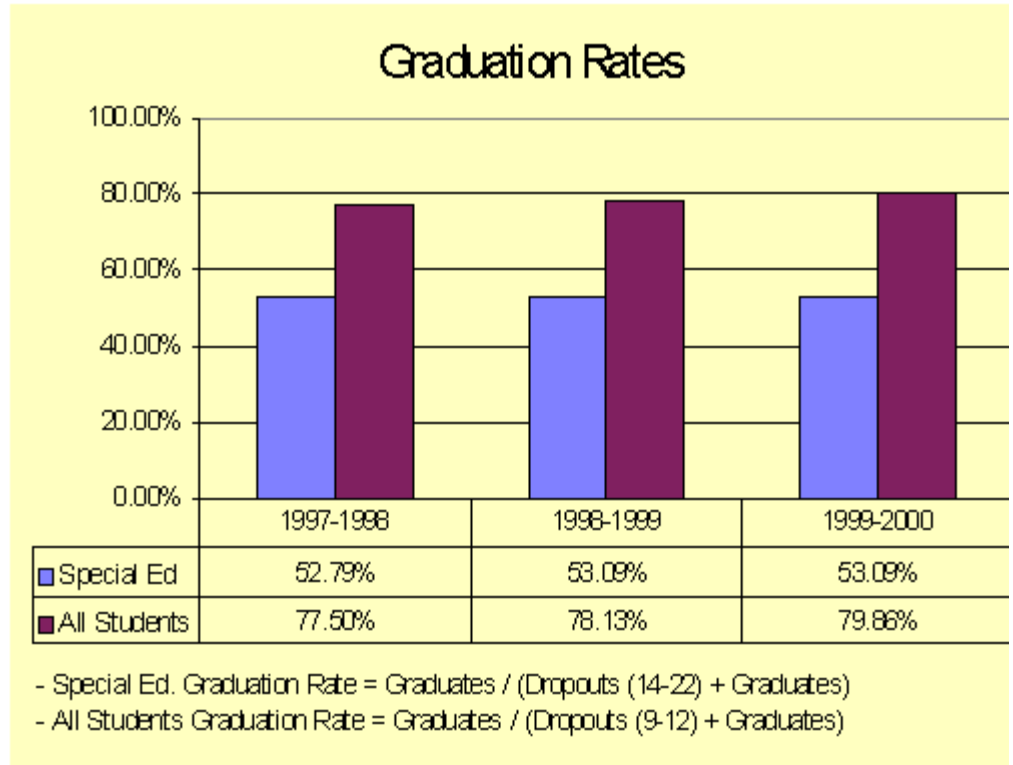
**2000 Map Result (Achievement Levels Summary)**

	Advanced & Proficient % Change from 1999		Step 1 & Progressing % Change from 1999	
	All Students	Students w/ Disabilities	All Students	Students w/ Disabilities
<b>MATH</b>				
4	+1.43%	+2.72%	+0.22%	-3.80%
8	+3.71%	+0.52%	-3.43%	-2.43%
10	+0.63%	+0.04%	-1.83%	-0.98%
<b>SCIENCE</b>				
3	+10.17%	+9.25%	-2.98%	-3.85%
7	+0.78%	+0.98%	-0.64%	-2.23%
10	+1.33%	+0.35%	+3.19%	+0.29%
<b>COMMUNICATION ARTS</b>				
3	+2.89%	+2.90%	-1.87%	-3.93%
7	+1.81%	+1.53%	-1.23%	-4.41%
11	-0.60%	-0.26%	+0.14%	-1.12%
<b>SOCIAL STUDIES*</b>				
4	+11.71%	+6.71%	-5.39%	-5.17%
8	+5.90%	+1.93%	-3.30%	-3.38%
11	+2.66%	+0.32%	-0.90%	-1.88%

*Summarized data regarding all grade levels in the 4 content areas is provided to compare the performance of students with disabilities with the performance of all students in Missouri public schools. The percentage of change for students with disabilities from 1999 to 2000, in the top 2 and bottom 2 achievement levels was found to be consistent with all Missouri students. Increases in the percentage of students with disabilities in the top 2 achievement levels and decreases in the bottom 2 achievement level did occur in all of the shaded areas of the table. Increases in the first two columns and decreases in the last two columns are positive changes.*

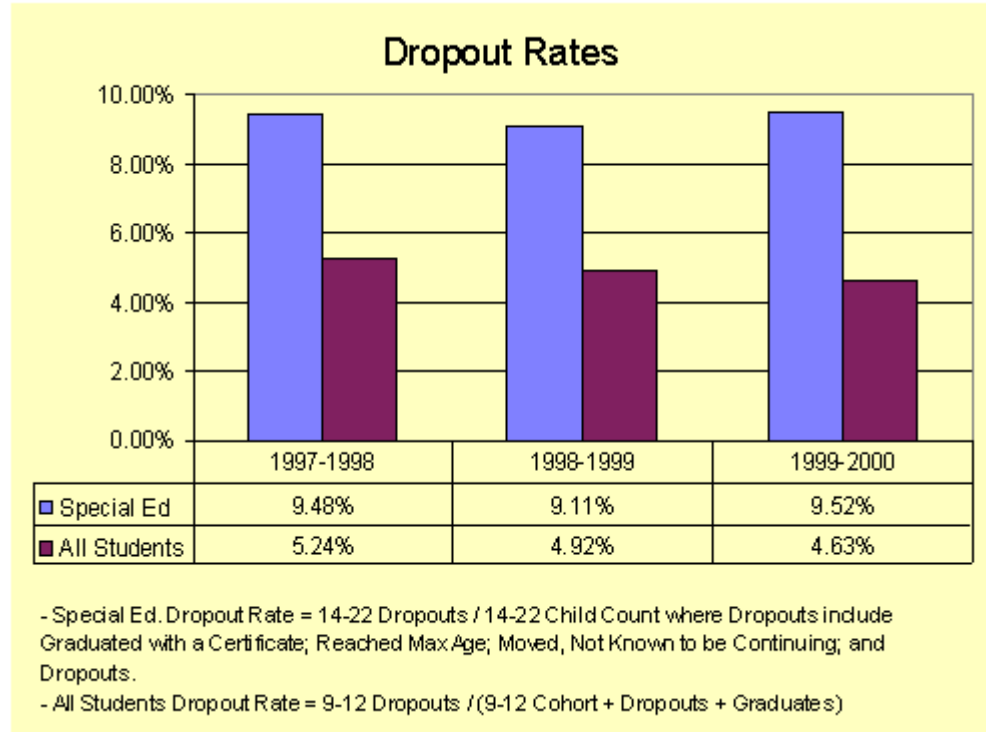
 **Increase the percentage graduating with a regular diploma**

*Graduation rates are calculated for all districts in Missouri for students in grades 9-12. The Division of Special Education is using a similar method based on the exiting information that is collected for students with disabilities ages 14 – 22. While there are slight differences in the manner that these calculations are made, this is currently the best means to compare the graduation rates for all students with the graduation rates for students with disabilities.*



**Decrease the percentage that drop out of school**

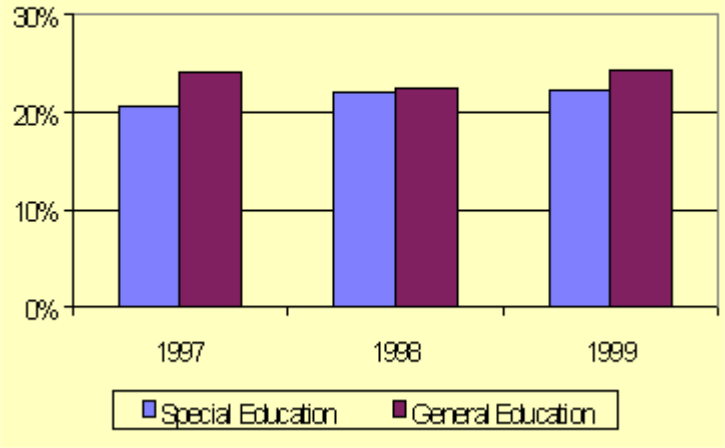
*Dropout rates are calculated for all districts in Missouri for students in grades 9-12. The Division of Special Education is using a similar method based on the exiting information that is collected for students with disabilities ages 14 –22. While there are slight differences in the manner that these calculations are made, this is currently the best means to compare the dropout rates for all students with the dropout rates for students with disabilities.*



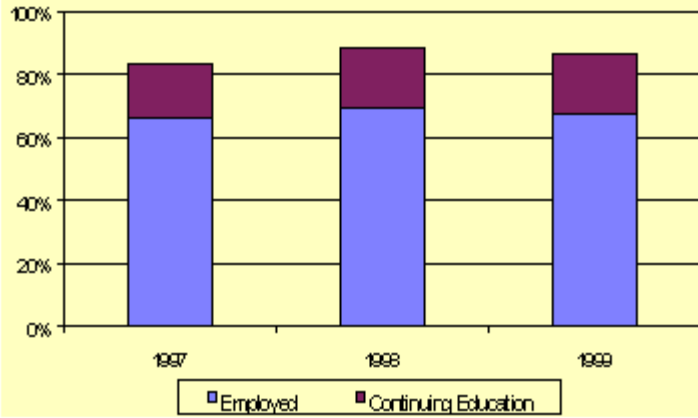
- Maintain a vocational program participation percentage consistent with that of the general population**
- Increase or maintain at a high level the percentage employed or enrolled in continuing education six months post vocational training**

*The Division of Special Education works with the Division of Vocational and Adult to obtain data regarding the participation of students with disabilities in vocational programs. Data regarding post school activities is reported for both students that leave vocational programs and for students that leave Missouri Public schools. The follow up information for students with disabilities is provided.*

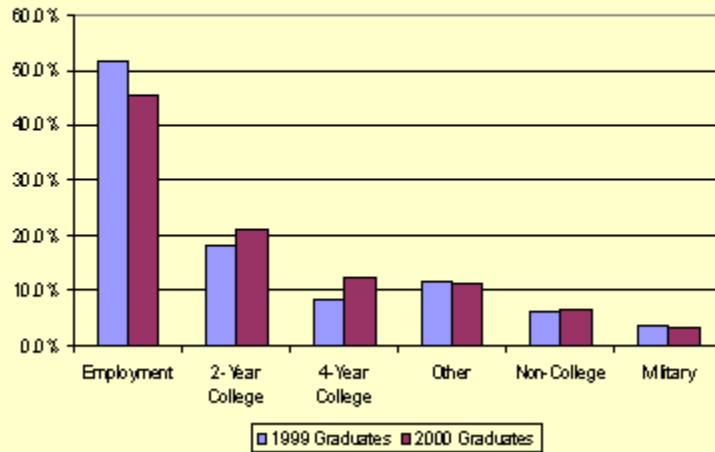
Participation In Vocational Programs



Students with Disabilities  
Placement After Vocational Training

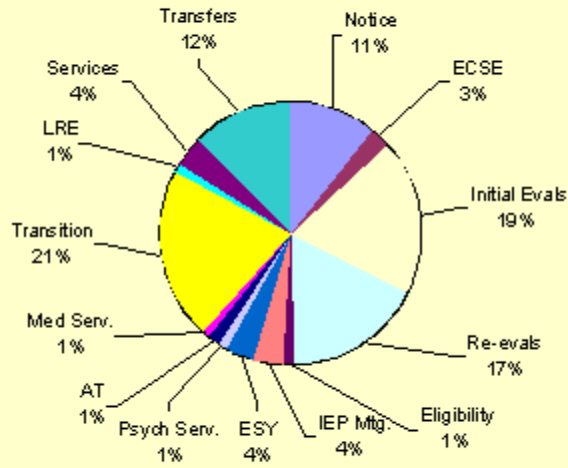


Followup on Previous Year's  
Graduates with Disabilities



**ADDITIONAL SPECIAL EDUCATION DATA**

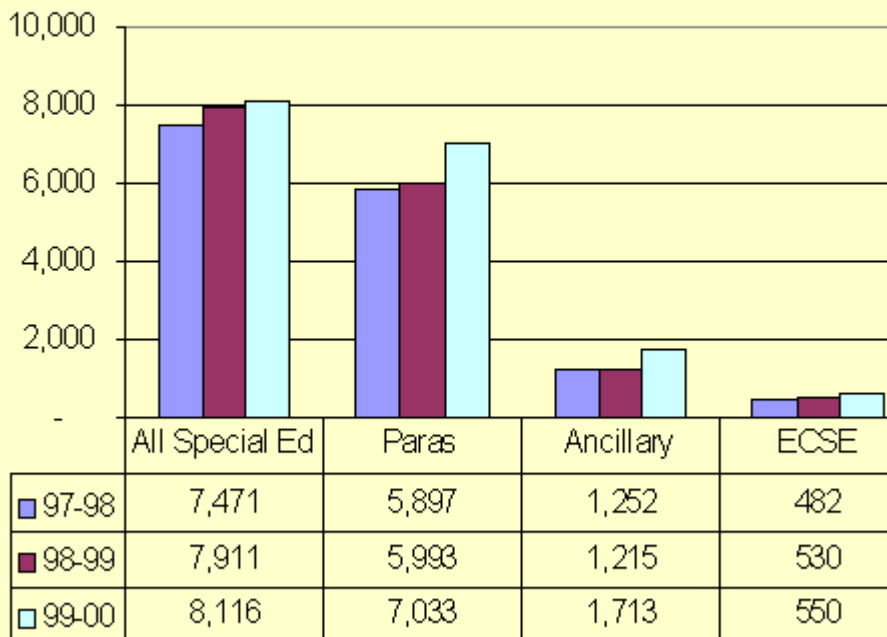
### Process Standards 1999-2000: Compliance/Monitoring Concerns



Note: Data reflects the number of concerns, not all districts were monitored on all areas

*Compliance/Monitoring Concerns were reported for the 1999-2000. There were 113 districts monitored. Due to Component Focused monitoring activities, not all districts were monitored on all areas. A summary of the number of concerns is provided.*

### Special Education Personnel



*Special Education personnel serving students with disabilities were presented in 4 broad categories; **Special Education Teachers** includes all categorical areas that serve school age students 5k -22; **Paraprofessionals** serving students ages 3-22; **Ancillary Personnel** serving students ages 3-22 and **Early childhood Special Education Teachers** serving*

## **FUTURE FOCUS & DIRECTION**

Although there will be on-going involvement in the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) for OSEP, the Panel hopes to begin a “priority focus” program. This will entail determining priority areas of concern as determined by DESE data and other resources. The purpose of this focus will be to emphasize involvement in areas of greatest need and establishing an on-going process of monitoring DESE’s success in addressing these issues over a sustained period. It is hoped that this focus will assist DESE in identifying areas of concern and in finding solutions to on-going problems.

While the Panel will determine priorities over time, it is assumed that the topics below will be scrutinized as potential areas of priority:

- Graduation (exit) rates for students in special education
- Secondary transition
- The impact of MAP testing on special education students
  
- Communication/dissemination of information between DESE and classroom instructors
  
- Speech therapy (local district emphasis, adequate personnel)
  
- Mediation and Due Process
  
- District/parent collaboration
  
- Other issues as identified

The Panel will consider the development of a formal process for making recommendations to DESE. This process will include provisions for follow-up action and periodic updates on progress in addressing the recommendations. This process will allow the Panel to gain more in-depth knowledge in the areas of focus and, hopefully, present opportunities to be of assistance to the Division.

## **ADVISORY PANEL DUTIES**

The Advisory Panel is authorized under Public Law 94-142 (IDEA). The purpose of the Panel is to provide policy guidance on special education and related services and to carry out those specific and general functions set forth in the above referenced statutes. The Panel shall: (1) Advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) of unmet needs within the State in the education of children with disabilities, (2) Comment publicly on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding the education of children with disabilities, (3) Advise DESE in developing evaluations and reporting on data to the U.S. Office of Education under Section 618 of the Act, (4) Advise DESE in developing corrective action plans to address

findings identified in Federal monitoring reports under Part B of the Act, and (5) Advise DESE in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services for children with disabilities.

## **MEMBERSHIP ROSTER FOR 2000-01**

*Stephen Barr, Jefferson City*  
Dan Colgan, St. Joseph  
*Jane Doelling, Springfield*  
Jim Dougherty, Kansas City  
Jeff Dunn, Lebanon  
*Dennis Gragg, Jefferson City*  
*Pam Grindstaff, Sedgewickville*  
Michael Hanrahan, Cameron  
*Patricia Henley, Kansas City*  
*Eileen Huth, Ballwin*  
*Patricia Jackson, Raytown*  
*Janet Jacoby, Kansas City*  
*Gay Jones, Independence*  
*Hugh Kinney, St. Ann*  
*Kent Kolaga, Jefferson City*  
*Steve McDannold, Moberly*  
*Tara Morrow, Florissant*  
*Linda Murrell, Florissant*  
*Deana O'Brien, California*  
*Eric Remelius, Columbia*  
*Lynda Roberts, Jefferson City*  
Robin Rust, Jefferson City  
Barbara Scheidegger, Jefferson City  
*Marianne Toombs, Springfield*  
*Dennis Von Allmen, West Plains*  
*Dee Wyckoff, Kansas City*  
Joan Zavitsky, Eureka

## **TERMS**

AT – Assistive Technology

CIMP – Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process

DESE – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DOC – Department of Corrections

DYS – Division of Family Services

ECSE – Early Childhood Special Education

EPA – Exceptional Pupil Aid

ESY – Extended School Year

FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education

FERPA – Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEP – Individualized Education Program

LIG – Local Improvement Grant

LRE – Least Restrictive Environment

MAP – Missouri Assessment Program

MSB – Missouri School for the Blind

MSD – Missouri School for the Deaf

OSEP – Office of Special Education Programs

Para – Paraprofessional

SIG – State Improvement Grant

SSSH – State Schools for Severely Handicapped