

# EQUITY in EDUCATION

Research Series:

**Ohio's**  
Students with  
Disabilities



With the title of its five-year strategic plan for education, *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio declares that each child is important and deserves the educational opportunities, experiences and supports needed to achieve his or her potential.

Ohio's students with disabilities are a diverse group of children who look to their families, communities and educators to recognize their strengths, correctly identify their needs, set high expectations and meet them where they are with supports that will help them grow.

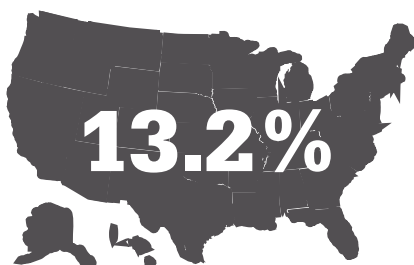
This report provides a snapshot of education for Ohio students with disabilities. It shines light on the work the state is doing to support students with special needs and identifies areas where Ohio will continue to work to meet its unwavering commitment to each child.

## WHO ARE OUR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

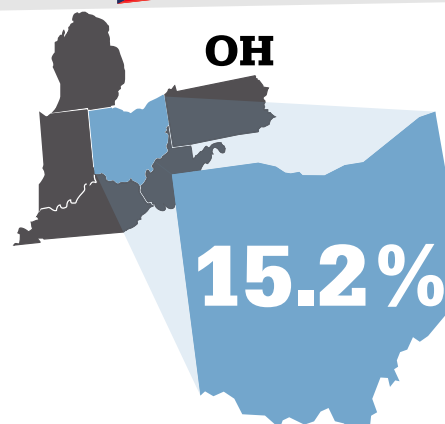
The percentage of students with disabilities in Ohio **is higher than the national average** and has remained steady over time, increasing by less than a percentage point since 2008.



USA

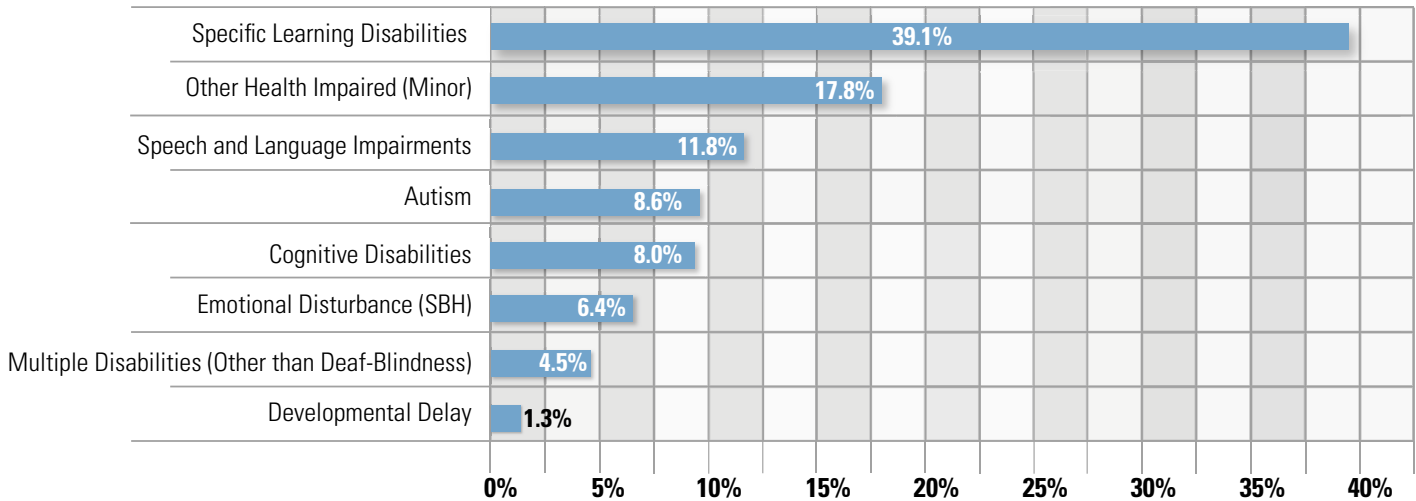


OH



## Makeup of Ohio's Students with Disabilities Subgroup

Ohio's students with disabilities represent a diversity of students' strengths, skills and needs.<sup>ii</sup>



Note: The figure above displays only the disability categories representing more than 1 percent of Ohio's students with disabilities. Other disability categories include Deafness (Hearing Impairments) = 0.8%; Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) = 0.6%; Orthopedic Impairments = 0.5%; Visual Impairments = 0.3%; Other Health Impaired (Major) = 0.2%; and Deaf-Blindness = 0.1%.

## INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

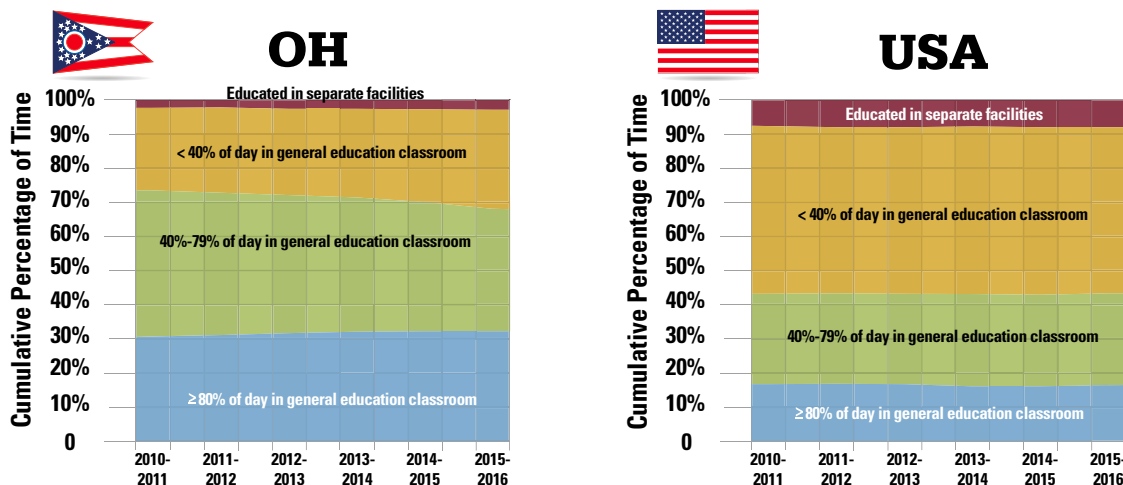
Educating students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible alongside their peers who do not have disabilities is linked to improved academic, social and other non-academic skills.<sup>iii</sup>

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reflects support for inclusivity by encouraging least restrictive environments (LRE). States vary widely the extent to which students with disabilities are educated with non-disabled peers and it appears that progress toward greater inclusivity for students with disabilities has slowed nationally in recent years.<sup>iv</sup>

**For students with *intellectual disabilities*, Ohio is performing better than the national average.** In 2016, 33 percent of Ohio's students with intellectual disabilities spent at least 80 percent of their time in general education classes, compared to 17 percent nationally. Still, like the rest of the country, Ohio's progress toward increased inclusivity for students with disabilities remains a challenging goal that educators continue to work toward.<sup>v</sup>

## Time Students with Intellectual Disabilities Spend in General Education Classrooms

Ohio is well-above the national average data on educating students with intellectual disabilities within general education classrooms.



## SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

In Ohio, students with disabilities are almost twice as likely to receive suspensions as students without disabilities.<sup>v</sup>

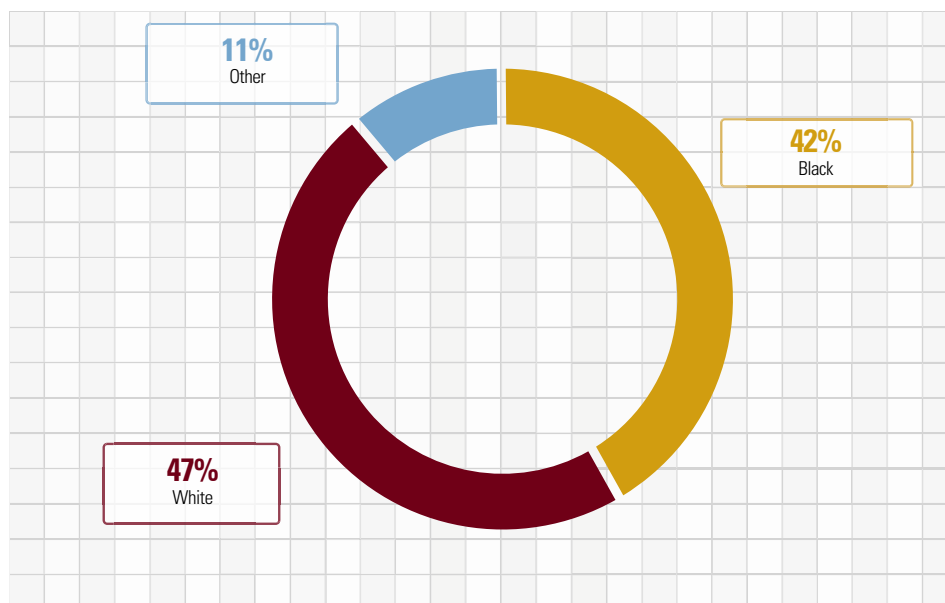
Patterns in Ohio's discipline data reflect national trends; across the country, students with disabilities and students of color are more likely to experience exclusionary discipline practices, such as expulsions and out-of-school suspensions.

- In Ohio, students with disabilities make up a disproportionate percentage of student suspensions.
- Among students with disabilities, Ohio's black students are particularly at risk of disproportionately receiving exclusionary disciplinary.

Students with disabilities represent **14.6%** of **Ohio's** total K-12 enrollment, but **28.4%** of **Ohio's** total suspensions.

### Disciplinary Removals for Students with Disabilities

Black students make up 21 percent of Ohio's students with disabilities, but 42 percent of disciplinary removals for students with disabilities.<sup>v</sup>



Note: "Other" includes Hispanic (4%), Multiracial (6%) and "other" (<1%) race/ethnicities.

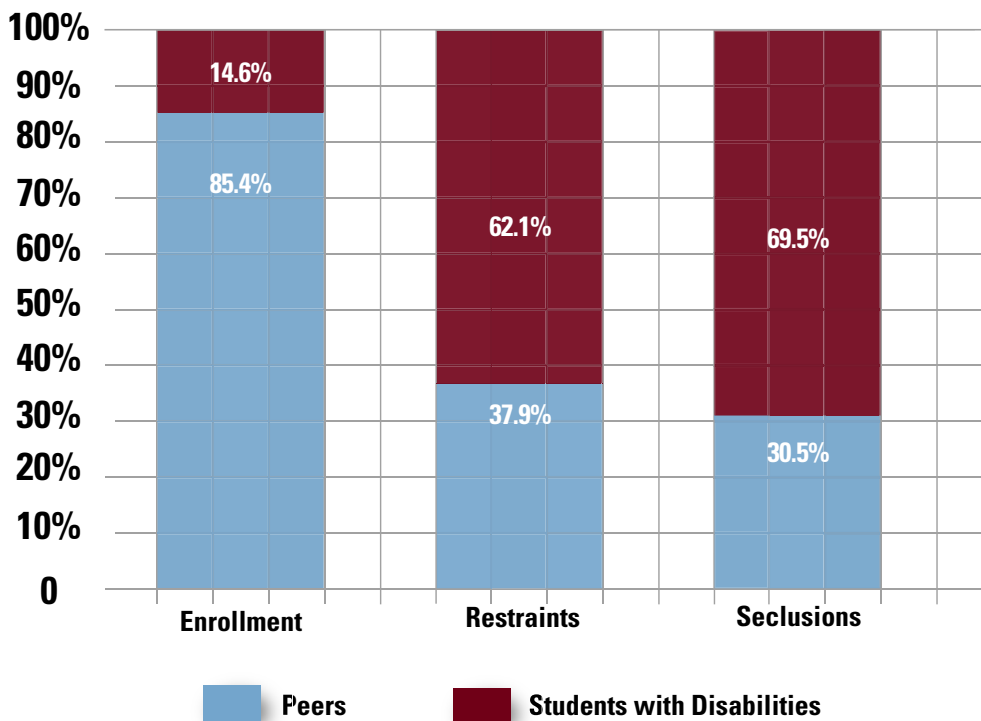
## RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

Advocates for students with disabilities have long had concerns about the practice of restraint and seclusion — for both students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

In 2016-2017, while less than 1 percent of Ohio's K-12 population experienced a restraint or seclusion event, more than 60 percent of students restrained or secluded were students with disabilities. More than 38 percent of students with disabilities who were restrained or secluded experienced multiple incidents.<sup>vi</sup>

## Restraint and Seclusion of Students with Disabilities and Their Peers

Students with disabilities disproportionately experience restraint and seclusion.



## POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS

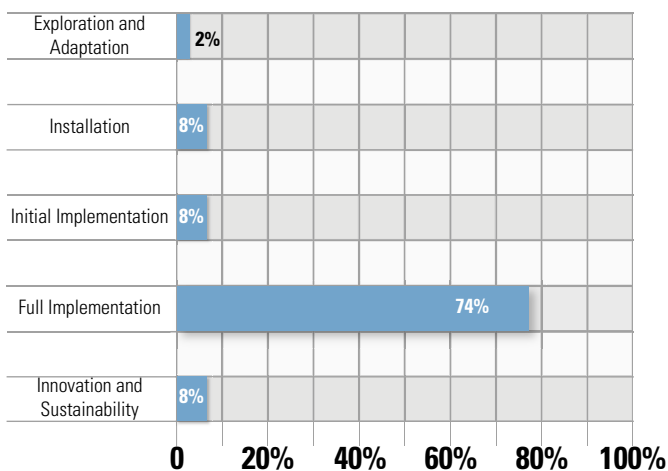
Ohio is working to reduce the number of students who experience exclusionary or harmful discipline practices.

Districts across Ohio are increasingly turning to Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) to help create school environments in which all students feel safe and supported. The PBIS framework aims to reduce disciplinary practices by teaching students how to behave appropriately and training educators how to respond appropriately when behavioral problems do arise.

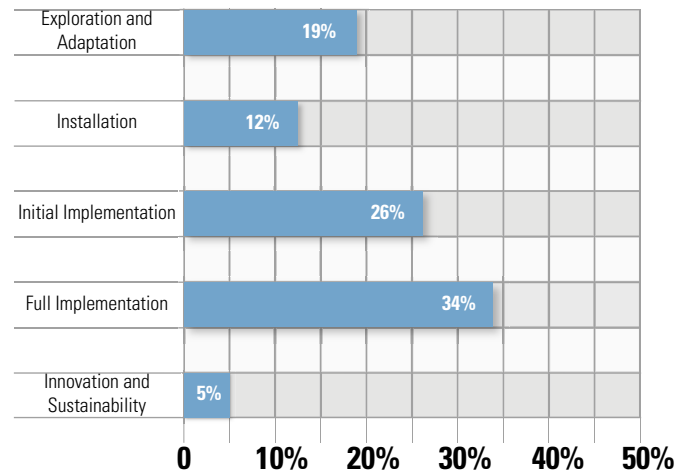
During the 2016-2017 school year, 34 percent of Ohio's districts were in engaged in Phase 4 — or Full Implementation — of PBIS. Another 57 percent reported being in one of the initial three phases leading to full implementation.<sup>vi</sup>

## Phases of PBIS Implementation

Separate Facilities 2016-2017



Traditional Schools 2016-2017



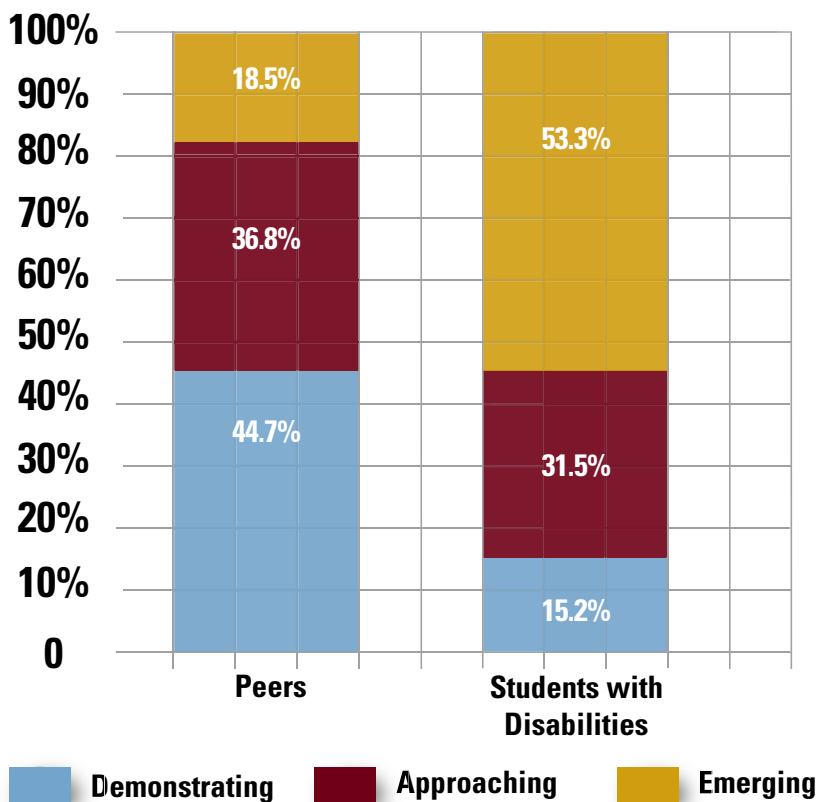
## PERFORMANCE AND PREPARATION

From the time students with disabilities enter kindergarten, performance measures reveal important gaps in how well they are prepared for their K-12 education and beyond.

### KINDERGARTEN READINESS

Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is both an indicator of how well students are prepared to begin their K-12 education and an important predictor of future performance in reading and math. Students with disabilities are almost three times less likely to enter kindergarten demonstrating readiness. Only 15 percent of Ohio's students with disabilities begin kindergarten with the foundational skills and behaviors that prepare them for instruction that is based on Ohio's kindergarten standards. Far more — 53.3 percent — show *emerging readiness*, meaning they start their K-12 education with minimal skills and behaviors needed for kindergarten.<sup>viii</sup>

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment  
by Disability Status, 2017-2018



## Assessment Participation

Ohio's alternate assessment is intended only for students with significant cognitive disabilities; a policy reflected by the federal requirement that the total number of students taking alternate assessments does not exceed 1 percent of the total number of students tested in the state.

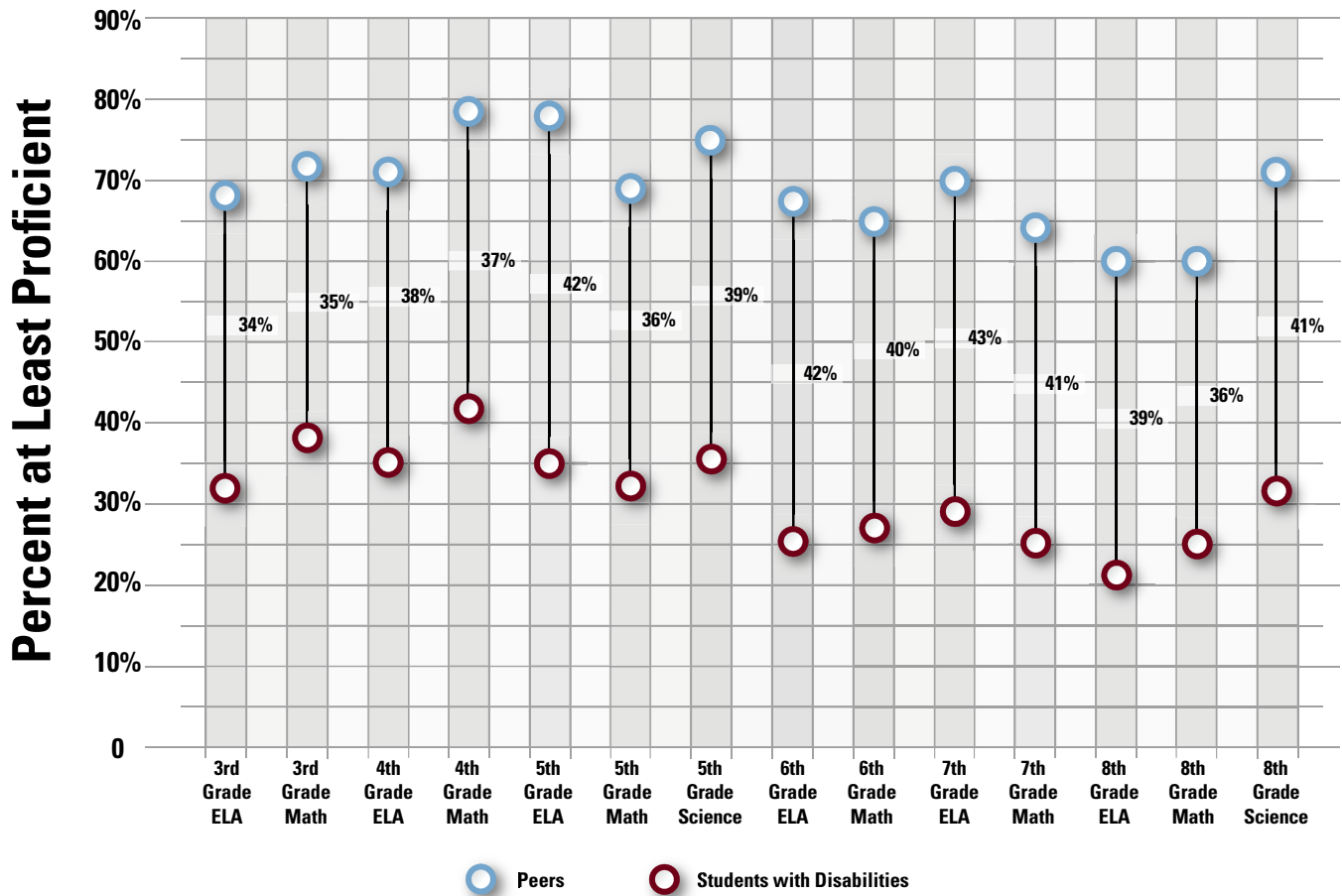
In 2018, 1.7 percent of Ohio's students took the reading alternate assessments and 1.8 percent took the mathematics alternate assessments, well above the 1 percent federal cap.<sup>vii</sup>

**In 2018, more than 15,000 students took alternate assessments.**

Ongoing patterns of exclusion from regular state assessments are symptomatic of Ohio's challenges to support students with disabilities through access, inclusion, high expectations and the instruction and services necessary to meet them.

## Subgroup Performance of Students with Disabilities and Their Peers

Gaps between students with disabilities and their peers are consistently among the largest gaps in subgroup performance.<sup>ix</sup>



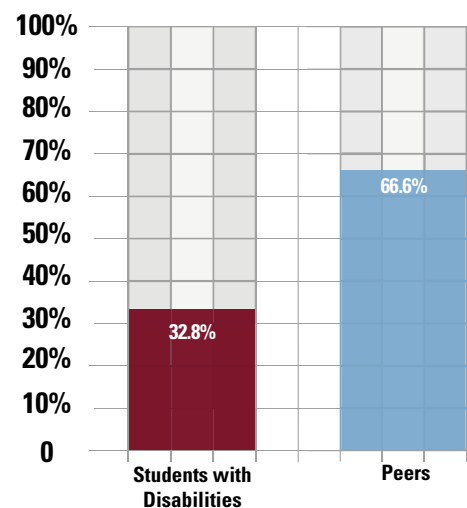
### THIRD GRADE READING

Reading on-grade level in the third grade is an important milestone for students as it is predictive of long-term experiences. Ohio's students with disabilities have lower proficiency rates on the third grade English language arts assessment.

Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee is a program to identify students from kindergarten through grade 3 who are behind in reading. Of those students who are exempt from the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, 70 percent are exempted from the guarantee because of their individualized education programs (IEPs).<sup>x</sup>

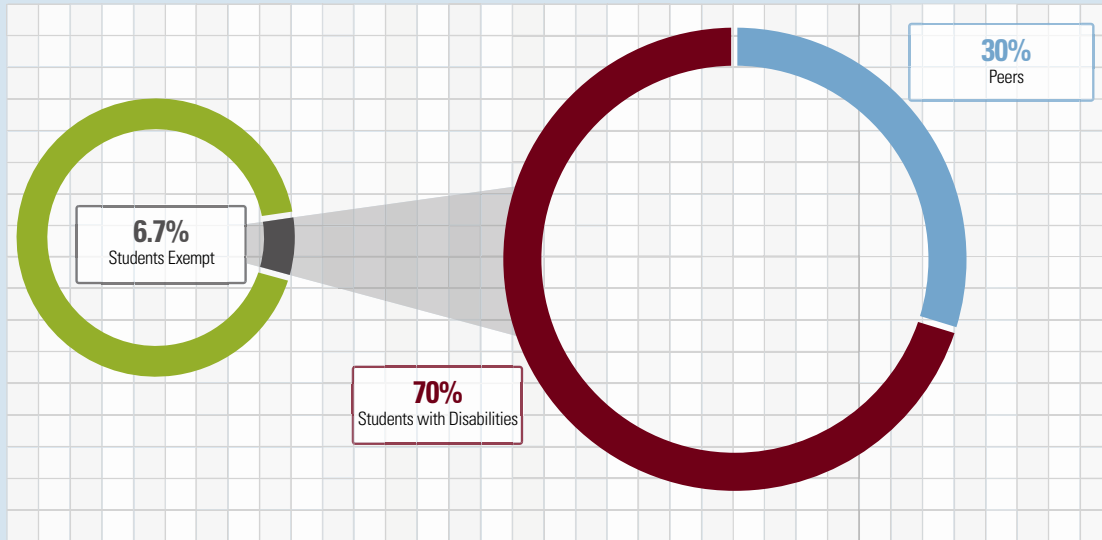
Exemptions for students with disabilities have steadily increased over time; for these exempted students, reading on grade level in grade three is no longer an identified, shared expectation.

### Percent Proficient on Third Grade Reading, 2017-2018





**Of the 6.7% of students exempt from the Third Grade Reading Guarantee, 70% are students with disabilities.**



## POSTSECONDARY PREPARATION AND OUTCOMES

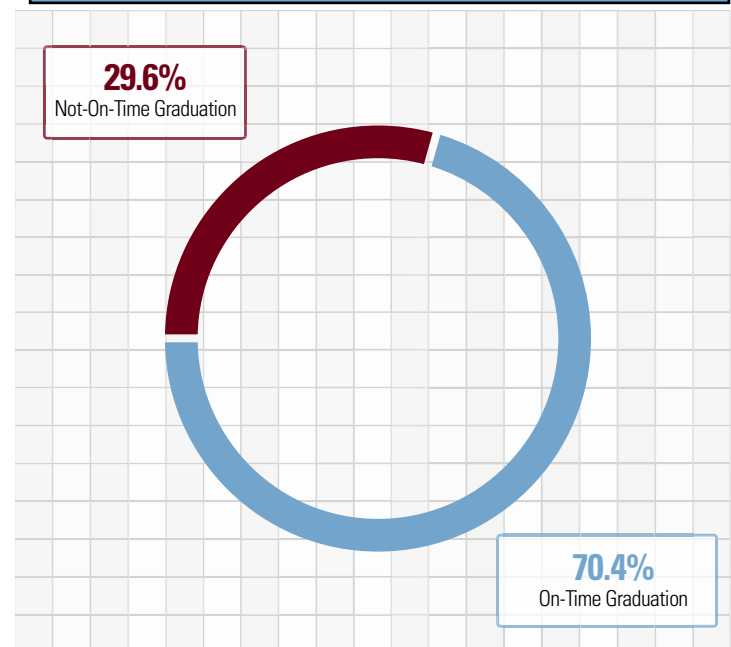
Ohio's 4-year on-time graduation rate for the class of 2017 was 84.1 percent. In comparison, the 4-year on-time graduation rate for students with disabilities for that same class was 70.4 percent.<sup>xi</sup>

Among those students with disabilities graduating on time, 78.8 percent met their IEP goals but were excused from some of Ohio's graduation rate requirements.<sup>xii</sup>

The U.S. Department of Education annually ranks and rates states based on the percentage of students with disabilities who receive a high school diploma by meeting the same requirements as their non-disabled peers.

Ohio's challenges to prepare students with disabilities for successful postsecondary outcomes are compounded by the number of students with disabilities who do not even achieve high school completion each year. At least 20 percent of Ohio's students with disabilities have dropped out of high school each year for three consecutive years, representing nearly 4,500 students statewide.

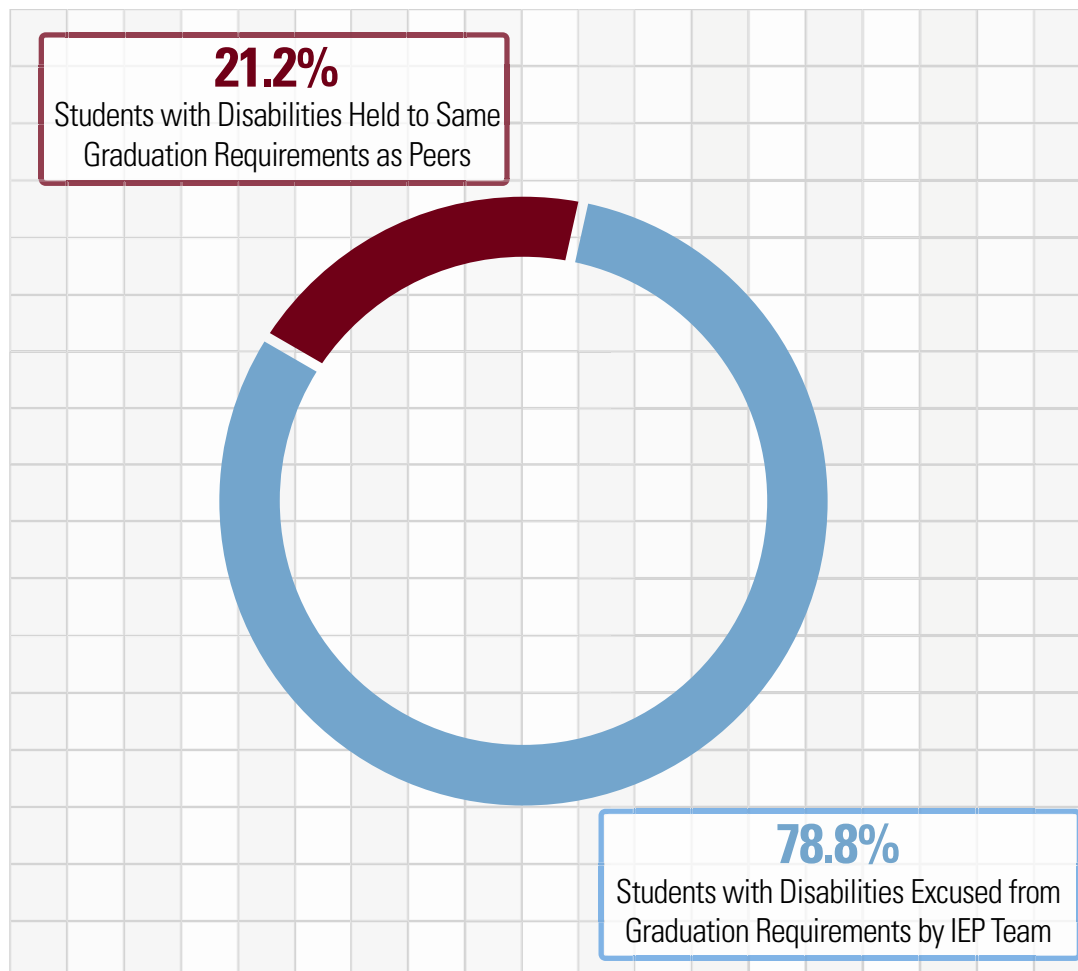
### Students with Disabilities Graduating On Time, Class of 2017



**1 in 5 students with disabilities drop out of high school each year.**

## Students with Disabilities Exempt from Graduation Requirements

A majority of students with disabilities are excused from graduation requirements by their IEP teams.



In 2017, Ohio ranked 54th out of 56 states and territories on this measure.

The majority of students covered under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act do not have a disability that would indicate a need for less challenging coursework. Excusal from graduation requirements at such a high rate contributes to a lack of preparedness for postsecondary education and employment for students with disabilities, which in turn limits post-graduation opportunities.

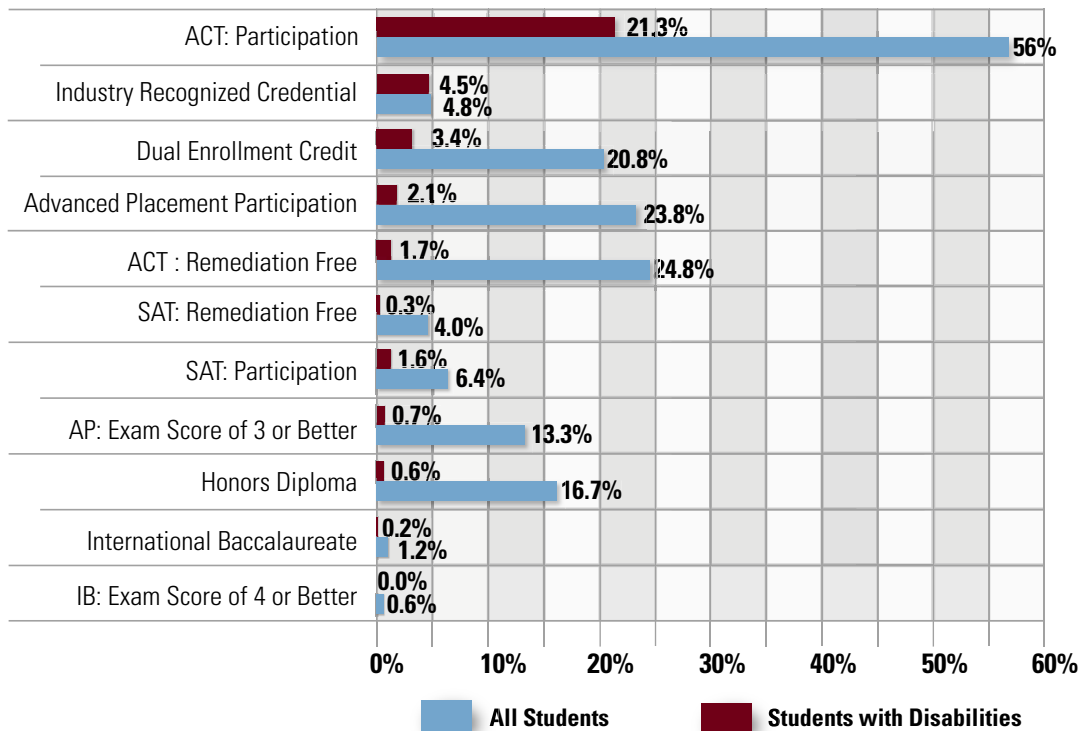
### How well are students with disabilities prepared to leave high school?

Measured in the Prepared for Success component of the Ohio School Report Cards, graduation rates and postsecondary outcomes show how well students with disabilities are prepared to leave high school. Looking at students' actual post-high school outcomes, many students with disabilities who leave Ohio's K-12 education system go on to pursue additional education, training and employment.



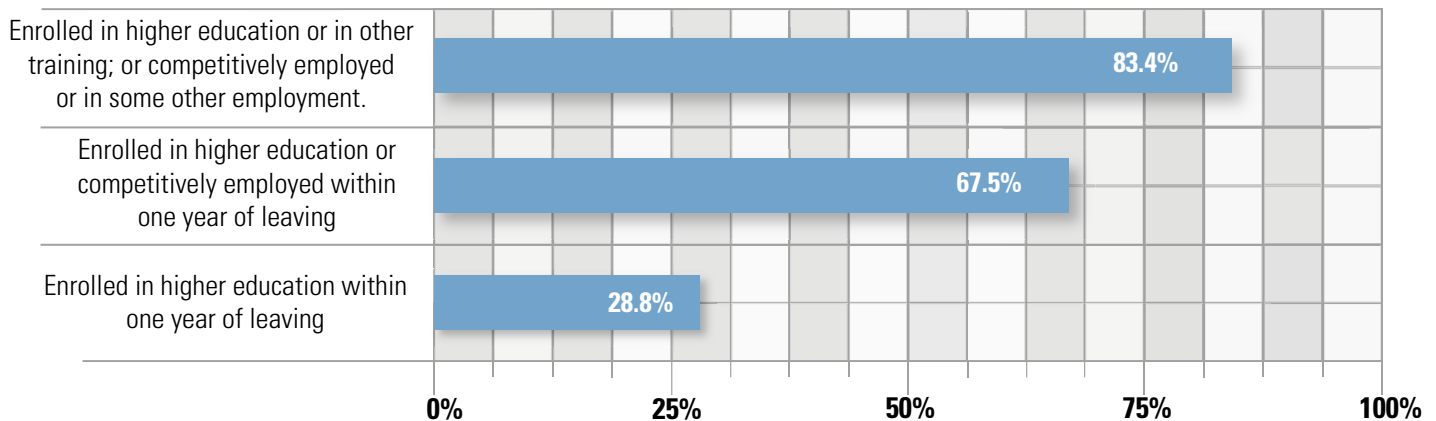
## Students with Disabilities, Classes of 2016 and 2017

How prepared were students with disabilities in the 2016 and 2017 graduating classes?<sup>xiii</sup>



## Post-high School Outcomes

Outcomes for students who had IEPs upon leaving high school, 2016.



For more than 10 years, Ohio has collected data on outcomes for students with disabilities one year after leaving high school. While the rate of such students enrolled in higher education one year after exit has remained relatively unchanged over that time (under 30 percent), more than 80 percent of students with disabilities surveyed report some level of post-school engagement, including higher education, employment or training programs.<sup>xiv</sup>

Over the course of this longitudinal study, two clear predictors of postschool engagement for students with disabilities have emerged: participation in the general education classroom for more than 80 percent of the day and access to career-technical education.<sup>xv</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As they do nationally, students with disabilities in Ohio face disparities in their educational experiences and outcomes. Educators across the state are committed to improving the supports and services provided for every one of these students. We recognize their strengths and their right to an equitable, high-quality education and will continue working to enable every child to achieve his or her full potential.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> IDEA, State Performance Plans/Annual Performance Reports (SPP/APR). Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan> and <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/spp-apr/>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts in Ohio's Education Management Information System. National data based on National Center for Education Statistics Condition of Education Report. Retrieved Jan. 24, 2019, from [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator\\_cgg.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp).

<sup>ii</sup> Data reported for school year 2017-2018 by districts in Ohio Education Management Information System.

<sup>iii</sup> Carter, E. W., Asmus, J., Moss, C. K., Amirault, K. A., Biggs, E. E., ... Weir, K. (2016). Randomized evaluation of peer support arrangements to support the inclusion of high school students with severe disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 82, 209–233.; Coyne, P., Pisha, B., Dalton, B., Zeph, L. A., & Smith, N. C. (2012). Literacy by design: A universal design for learning approach for students with significant intellectual disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, 33, 162–172.; Jackson, L. B., Ryndak, D. L., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2008/2009). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 33/34, 175–195; McDonnell, J., Thorson, N., Disher, S., MathotBuckner, C., Mendel, J., & Ray, L. (2003). The achievement of students with developmental disabilities and their peers without disabilities in inclusive settings: An exploratory study. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 26, 224–36; Taub, D. A., McCord, J. A., & Ryndak, D. L. (2017). Opportunities to learn for students with extensive support needs: A context of research supported practices for all in general education classes. *The Journal of Special Education*, 51(3), 127-137.

<sup>iv</sup> Brock, M. E. (2018, July). Trends in the educational placement of students with intellectual disability in the United States over the past 40 years. *American Journal on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 123(4) 305-314. Retrieved from <http://www.aaidjournals.org/doi/10.1352/1944-7558-123.4.305>.

<sup>v</sup> IDEA, State Performance Plans/Annual Performance Reports (SPP/APR). Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan> and <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/spp-apr/>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>vi</sup> Ohio Department of Education (2018, September). Positive behavior interventions and support and restraint and seclusion 2016-2017. Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Other-Resources/School-Safety/Building-Better-Learning-Environments/Policy-Positive-Behavior-Interventions-and-Support>.

<sup>vii</sup> Ohio Department of Education. <http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/Ohio-English-Language-Proficiency-Assessment-OELPA/Ohios-Alternate-Assessment-for-Students-with-Sign/AASCD-Participation-Webinar-Final-10-29-2018-1.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US>.

<sup>viii</sup> Ohio Department of Education 2017-2018 Report Card Download Files, State Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Data\_2017-2018. Retrieved from <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/download>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>ix</sup> Ohio Department of Education 2017-2018 Report Card Advanced Reports, Proficiency Levels with Student & Test Disagg (State) 2017-2018. Retrieved from <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/advanced>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>x</sup> Ohio Department of Education, internal analyses, 2017-2018. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>xi</sup> Ohio Department of Education 2017-2018 Report Card Download Files, Title I 2017-2018 Data. Retrieved from <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/download>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>xii</sup> IDEA, State Performance Plans/Annual Performance Reports (SPP/APR). Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan> and <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/spp-apr/>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>xiii</sup> Ohio Department of Education 2017-2018 Report Card Download Files, State Prepared for Success 2017=2018. Retrieved from <https://reportcard.education.ohio.gov/download>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>xiv</sup> IDEA, State Performance Plans/Annual Performance Reports (SPP/APR). Retrieved from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Special-Education/State-Performance-Plan> and <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/spp-apr/>. Ohio data based on data reported by districts through the Education Management Information System.

<sup>xv</sup> Kent State University. The Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study 2017. Retrieved Jan. 24, 2018, from <https://www.kent.edu/sites/default/files/file/2017%20OLTS%20Final%20Report.pdf>.