

Why Students with Learning Disabilities Need No Child Left Behind

Lack of Educational Benefit ...

- Despite having their disabilities identified earlier (from 7.3 years of age in 1987 to 6.5 years of age in 2001) two-thirds of secondary students with learning disabilities are reading 3 or more grade levels behind. Twenty percent are reading 5 or more grade levels behind.

Source: Youth with Disabilities: A Changing Population and The Achievements of Youth with Disabilities During Secondary School. Reports from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)2003

- Students with disabilities continue to be retained much more often than the general population – more than one-third are retained at grade level at least once, usually in elementary school.

Source: Going to School: Instructional contexts, programs, and participation of secondary school students with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)2003

- Nearly 30 percent of students with learning disabilities drop out of school (compared to 11% of the general student population). Two-thirds of high school graduates with learning disabilities were rated entirely unqualified to enter a four-year college, compared to 37% of non-disabled graduates.

Source: 24th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2002; Students With Disabilities in Postsecondary Education: A Profile of Preparation, Participation, and Outcomes, NCES 1999.

Lack of Qualified Teachers ...

- Roughly 10 percent of special education positions nationally — 39,140 positions — are filled by uncertified personnel who serve approximately 600,000 students with disabilities.

Source: SPeNSE, Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education 2002

- More than 12,000 openings for special education teachers were left vacant or filled by substitutes in 1999-2000.

Source: SPeNSE, Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education 2002

- Most students with learning disabilities spend the majority of their instructional time in general education classes. However, only 60 percent of students with disabilities in general education academic classes have teachers who receive any information about the needs of those students and only about half have teachers who receive any input or consultation from a special educator or other staff about how to meet those needs.

Source: Going to School: Instructional contexts, programs, and participation of secondary school students with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)2003

- Only 57 percent of special education teachers say they are “very” familiar with their state’s academic content for the subjects they teach.

Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week 2004

Lack of Expectations ...

- Only one-fifth of teachers think that “all” or “most” of their special education students can score at the proficient level on state exams.
Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week 2004
- The vast majority, 86 percent, of teachers feel that it is unfair to evaluate special education students on how well they master academic content standards based on test scores. Eighty-nine percent feel it is unfair to teachers to be evaluated on how well IEP students score on state tests.
Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week 2004
- Only seven states require that the IEPs of students with disabilities address state content standards.
Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week 2004

Lack of Accountability ...

- Only 35 states and the District of Columbia require schools or district report cards to include information separately on the test participation rates and performance of students with disabilities. Few states – seven and 15 respectively, require schools or districts to report dropout and graduation rates separately for students in special education.
Source: Quality Counts 2004: Count Me In, Education Week 2004
- In a recent survey of parents of students with disabilities, 69 percent said many children could avoid special education if they were given help earlier.
Source: Public Agenda Survey: When Its Your Own Child, 2002
- Grades given to secondary school students with disabilities have been found to have **no** correlation to real academic functioning, misleading parents about how their child is actually performing.
Source: Youth with Disabilities: The Achievements of Youth with Disabilities During Secondary School. Reports from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) 2003

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NCLD works to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for children and adults with learning disabilities (LD) by providing accurate information to the public, developing and disseminating innovative educational programs, and advocating for more effective policies and legislation to help individuals with LD.
