

San Jose Unified Snapshot: Students with Disabilities Extended Methodology

Main Data Sources

- 2015-16 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) English language arts/ literacy (English) and mathematics results (data retrieved on January 13, 2017).
- California Department of Education (CDE) cohort graduation rate data files, class of 2014-15.
- The CDE's Public School Directory database. Data was retrieved on January 13, 2017.
- Student Enrollment in School Year 2015-16 through CDE's website. Data was retrieved on August 16, 2016.
- Student Enrollment Breakdown by Racial/Ethnic Group and Economic Status for School Year 2015-16. This information was obtained through a data request to CDE.
- Number of special education cases held by San Jose Unified School District documented in the Office of Administrative Hearings' (OAH) Special Education Division Fiscal Reports in years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. Data was retrieved on October 22, 2016.
- NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit's collection of OAH's data on the number of special education cases by districts from January 2010 through June 2013. All California districts are included.

District Ranking and School Analysis

Criteria for inclusion - School Districts

All Bay Area school districts included in the analysis and rankings met the following criteria: (1) had at least 30 or more students with disabilities took the CAASPP in 2015-16 (the California state legislature set this subgroup size as the minimum cut off for accountability purposes in 2013 under the Local Control Funding Formula and Local Control and Accountability plans); and (2) are not a county office of education, county benefit charter, state special school or district, State Board of Education local education agency (LEA), are not a directly funded charter school LEA. Seven Bay Area school districts were excluded for having less than 30 students with disabilities take state exams.

Criteria for inclusion - Schools

All Bay Area schools included in the analysis met the following criteria: (1) had students with disabilities that took the CAASPP in 2015-16 (no individual results or individual schools are named in the report if they do not have a 20 or more students with disabilities taking state exams); and (2) are traditional public schools, which excludes alternative schools, state special schools, and any county-run schools.

District and School Analysis

Districts and schools were compared to others in the Bay Area that serve similar communities as measured by income status and/or parent education levels through a measure labeled "socioeconomically disadvantaged." Socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) is defined as (1) neither of the student's parents has received a high school diploma or (2) the student is eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. This measure is created and used by CDE in 2015-16 and used for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Income Quartile Analysis

All districts and schools fall into one of four SED-based quartiles: "Wealthy Districts," "Mixed-Income Districts," "Poor Districts," "High-Poverty Districts." Districts that serve communities with low levels of

socioeconomically disadvantaged families are labeled “wealthy” and “mixed-income,” depending on the number of low SED families in that district. Within each income quartile, districts were ranked based on their CAASPP English and mathematics results in 2015-16 and the cohort graduation rate for the class of 2015-16. Schools were not ranked.

Thresholds for Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED) Income Quartiles for District and School CAASPP Analysis			
Wealthy Districts <i>*n=34</i>	Mixed-Income Districts <i>n=29</i>	Poor Districts <i>n=12</i>	High-Poverty Districts <i>n=9</i>
0 - 25.9% SED	26 - 49.9% SED	50 - 74.9% SED	75% - 100% SED

*“n” indicates the total number of Bay Area school districts in each income quartile.

Cohort Graduation Rate - Criteria for Inclusion and Analysis

All Bay Area school districts included in the analysis and rankings met the following criteria: (1) had at least 30 or more students with disabilities in the 2014-15 cohort graduates file; and (2) are not a county office of education, county benefit charter, state special school or district, State Board of Education local education agency (LEA), or are not a directly funded charter school LEA. Five Bay Area school districts were excluded for having less than 30 students with disabilities in the 2014-15 cohort.

Number of Districts in Cohort Graduation Rate** Analysis by Income Quartiles			
Wealthy Districts <i>*n=14</i>	Mixed-Income Districts <i>n=14</i>	Poor Districts <i>n=8</i>	High-Poverty Districts <i>n=3</i>

*“n” indicates the total number of Bay Area school districts in each income quartile.

**The number of school districts included in the cohort grade analysis is smaller than the number of school districts included in the CAASPP analysis because only high school and unified districts with graduating classes can be included in this analysis.

Number of Special Education Cases and Similarly-Sized District Comparison

The Individual with Disabilities Education Act guarantees that a parent can request a special education evaluation and that a district must respond within a certain time frame. Districts are allowed to reject the request within 15 days, and provide alternative ways to support the student who is struggling prior to evaluating whether the students has a disability. If the district does not deny the request, they have 60 days to complete the evaluation process from the day it was requested/agreed upon that an evaluation is needed.

A big concern many parents of students with disabilities have is that districts are not proactive in identifying students that are struggling, trying early interventions in the general education classroom, properly evaluating students that are not improving based on these interventions, and potentially diagnosing a student of having a disability that requires an individualized education plan.

When this process fails, parents have the right to seek the help of an attorney at their own expense. Or they have the right to have someone with specialized knowledge work with them throughout the due process hearing.¹

The CDE contracts with OAH, who oversees and completes all special education due process hearings. OAH keeps records on the number of cases they see in each school districts. We requested a public records act to receive how many cases San Jose Unified has had since June of 2013. The total number of cases are shown in OAH reports ([link here](#)).

We used OAH reports to determine the number of special education cases held by San Jose Unified from June of 2013 to December of 2015. This data was supplemented by data requested by the NBC Bay Area Investigative Unit in 2013. It includes data for all districts in California from 2010 to 2013. We used this data to compare San Jose Unified to similarly-sized school districts.

Criteria for Comparative Analysis Inclusion - School Districts

We define similarly-sized school districts as districts that have from 21,800 to 42,000 students enrolled (that is within 10,000 students above and below San Jose Unified’s enrollment). We used CDE-provided enrollment numbers for the 2015-16 school year.

Office of Administrative Hearings: Number of Special Education Cases by Similarly-Sized School Districts

January 2010 to June 2013

Districts included range from 21,795 to 41,795 students enrolled

Included in Analysis	Number Included	Average Number of Cases
All similarly-sized school districts included in sample	42	37
School districts larger than San Jose Unified included in sample	12	46
School districts smaller than San Jose Unified included in sample	30	31

OAH Charter School Data Not Available

OAH reports only include charter schools that are designated as their own “Local Education Agency” for special education purposes and those that have been named as a party in a special education due process case. A charter in our region may be its own LEA for special education purposes, but would not be included in OAH reports if a suit was never brought against the LEA.

¹ [OAH Guide for parents.](#)