

# Understanding Graduation and Dropout Rates

Seattle Public School

Special Education Focus Monitoring

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# Graduation Rates

- On-time graduation rate of SPED students vs rate for all students in the district (03-04 data)

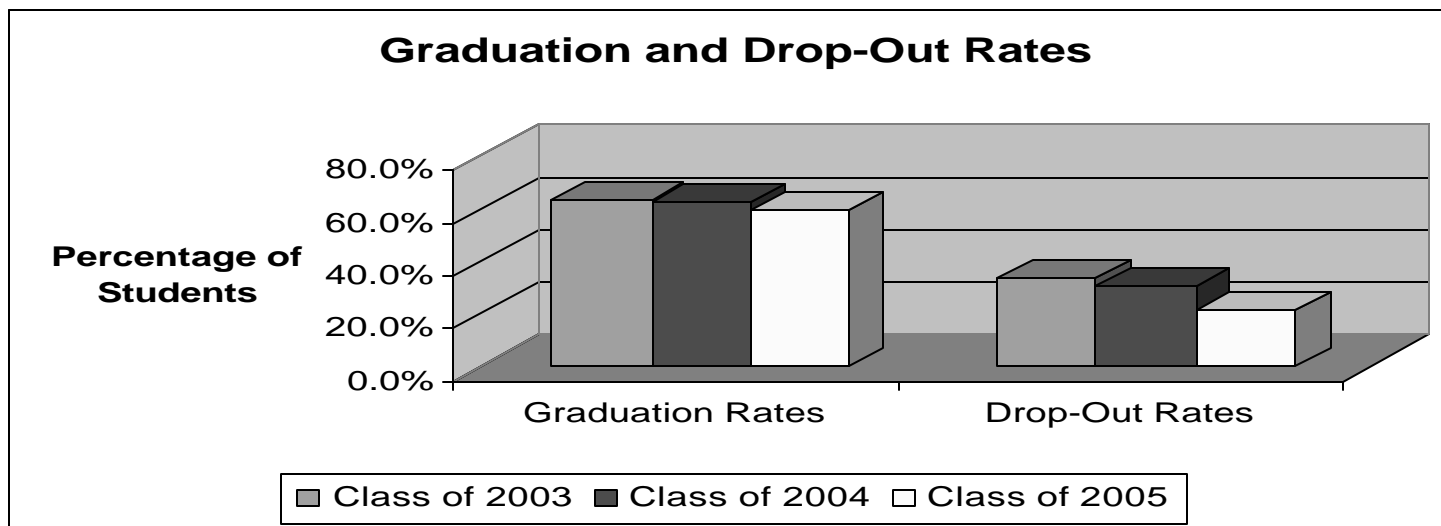
	All	SPED	Difference
SPS	62.6%	10.6%	-46.5%
State	70.1%	53.3%	-16.8%

# Dropout Rates

- Cohort dropout rate of SPED students vs rate for all students in the district (03-04 data)

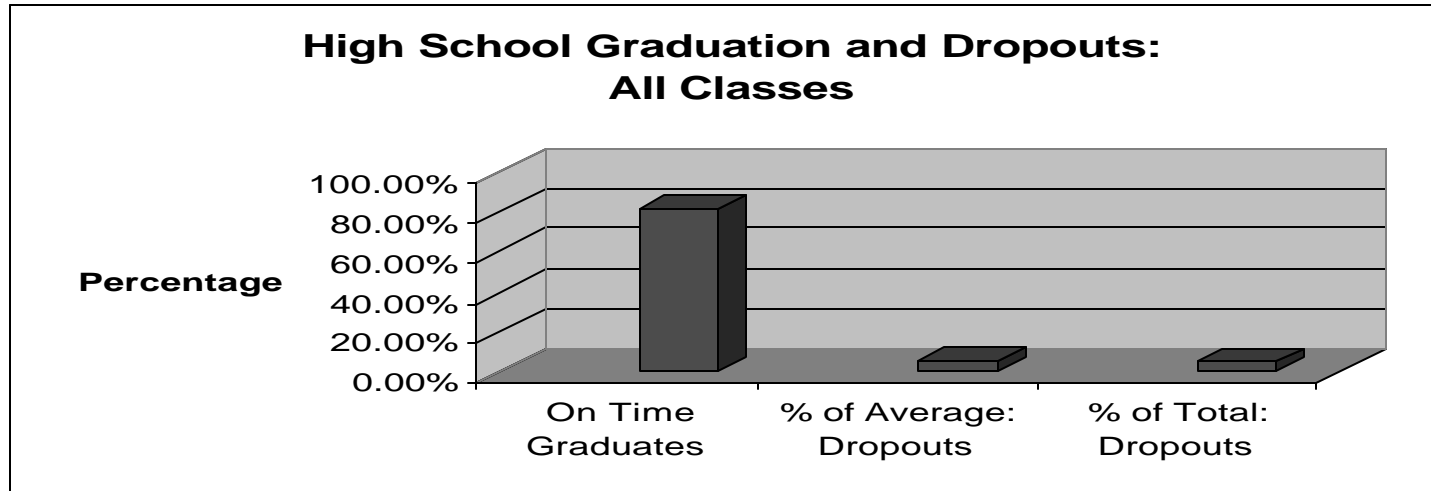
	All	SPED	Difference
SPS	5.4%	10.9%	5.5%
State	5.8%	6.9%	1.1%

# Graduation and Drop-Out Rates



Drop-outs: “...students who are not graduates, are not a confirmed transfer to another school or district, and who are not currently enrolled. Students completing a GED and Special Education students who complete their IEP are now classified as drop-outs” (SPS Data Profile, December 2005, p. 126).

Includes: (a) students leaving the district but not informing the district why or where they are going, (b) students for whom we do not receive a records request from their new school, (c) students for whom the school receives a records request but does NOT update the withdrawal code in the system, (d) students whose status is unknown, and (e) students enrolled in another SPS school but for whom the student database has not been updated from by the previous school.

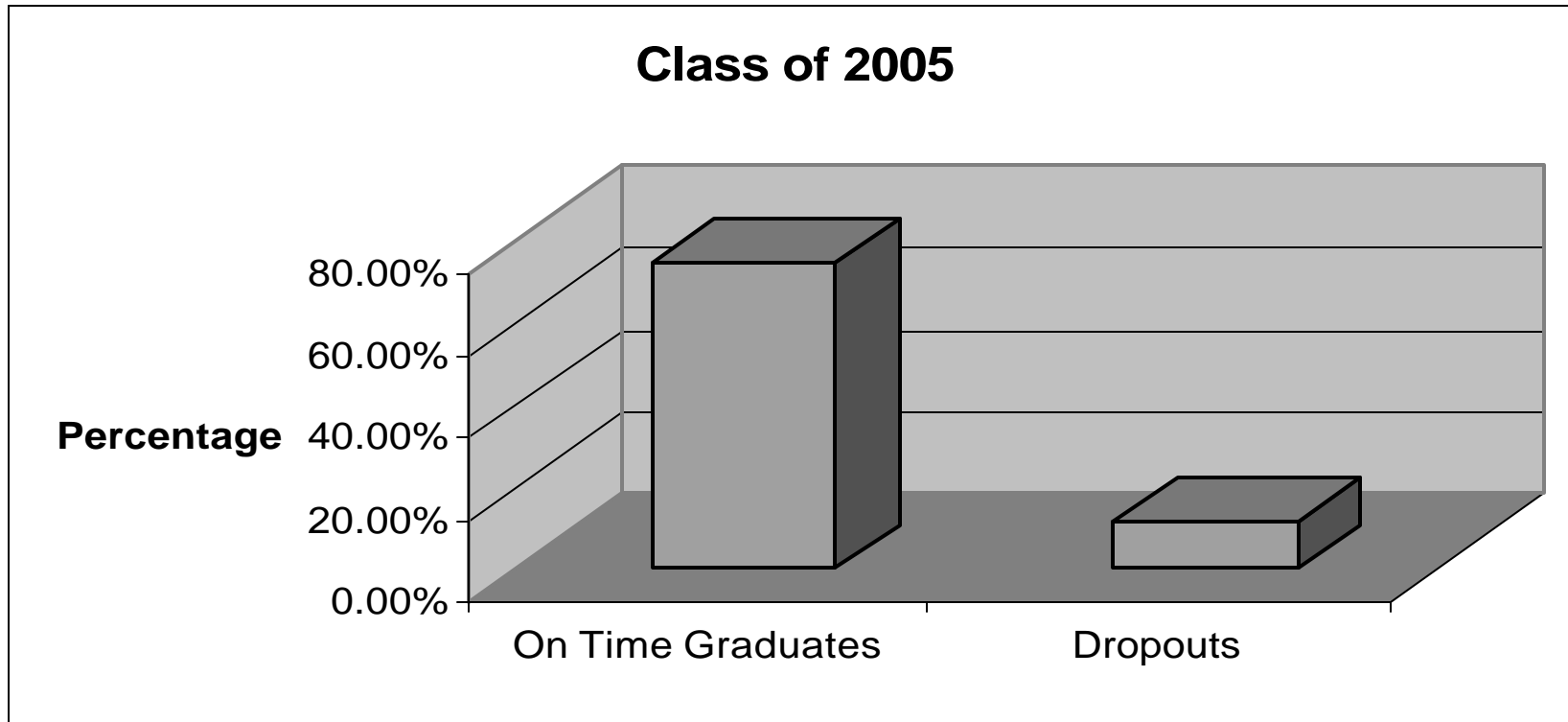


### On-time Graduates

- Assigned to graduate in 2005 and did
- Based on average number of students enrolled in the 2004-2005 class

### Dropouts

- Enrolled October 1, 2004 and NOT enrolled October 1, 2005
- Left school other than for academic completion or as a confirmed transfer to another school district.
- Use of average and total enrollment takes into account migrations in and out of a school during the year and are more accurate in comparison to other data collection practices



## Graduates

- All students who are not dropouts, are not a confirmed transfer to another school or district, and who are not currently enrolled as of the start of the 2005-2006 school year.
- Includes students in class of 2005 who may have graduated before the 2004-2005 school year.

# Difficulties with Graduation Rates: Definition Issues

- Based on on-time graduation and a number of students with IEPs continue in school through age 21 and although they do graduate, they do not graduate on time

Date of Birth	General Age	# General Education	# Special Education
1985	21	326	74
1986	20	1293	174
1987	19	2915	328
1988	18	3072	371
1989	17	3110	423

## Program Service Level for Students with IEPs Based on Year of Birth

Date of Birth	General Age	# Level 1	# Level 2	# Level 3	# Level 4
1985	21	1	27	9	38
1986	20	2	100	34	39
1987	19	2	188	78	64
1988	18	5	190	95	85
1989	17	7	247	82	93

# Matrix of Year of Birth and Disability Category

<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>General Age</b>	<b>ED</b>	<b>HI</b>	<b>LD</b>	<b>MR</b>	<b>D/HH</b>	<b>MD</b>	<b>CD</b>	<b>Aut.</b>
1985	21	10	22	42	17	1	3	13	3
1986	20	13	39	129	12	2	4	53	9
1987	19	36	62	301	24	7	3	114	10
1988	18	50	79	308	14	7	5	140	14
1989	17	44	84	337	12	11	6	156	15

ED: Emotionally Disabled; HI: Health Impaired; LD: Learning Disabled; MR: Mentally Retarded; D/HH: Deaf/Hard of Hearing; MC: Multiply Disabled; CD: Communication Disordered; Aut: Autism

# Difficulties with Graduation and Dropout Rates: Coding for Graduation

- When a student's graduation IEP is submitted, the student's special education status is dropped
- These students are then likely to be excluded from special education graduation rate because they are no longer identified as special education students

# Difficulties with Graduation and Dropout Rates: Coding for Graduation

- Data analysis to support this hypothesis:
  - Random sample of 10% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled in May 2005 (Total students = 409; 10% = 40)
    - 25 (63%) of these students graduated by the end of the year
    - 10 (25%) are still in program (still graduates for graduations)
    - 5 (13%) left without a diploma
    - Therefore, generalizing to the entire sample, that would result in a graduation rate of 63%, as compared to the reported rate for SPS of 11%. This is directly aligned with district GE rate of 63%, and surpasses the SPED state rate of 53%

# Difficulties with Graduation and Dropout Rates: Alternative Paths to Graduation

- Students who complete graduation requirements through their IEP are NOT counted as graduates, but ARE counted as dropouts
- Students who complete a G.E.D. are NOT counted as graduates, but ARE counted as dropouts

(Data Profile, December 2005)

# Difficulties with Dropout Rates: Our Data Systems

- Some students leave the district but because of a number of factors (e.g., no record request is received from the student's new district or if received, not recorded in the data system), students ARE counted as dropouts.
- As analysis of data revealed the following:
  - 646 students were coded in the system as dropouts
  - Of those students, we found that we had received file request for 126 of those students, but their codes had not been changed
  - We are going back into the system and correcting their code to indicate that they had transferred out of the system – not dropped out
  - This check indicates that potentially 20% of students with IEPs coded in the system as dropouts may actually be students who have transferred out of the system

# Difficulties with Graduation and Dropout Rates: Curricular Options for Students

- Reduction in the number of Special Education sections for Social Studies and Science at the high schools may make it more difficult for students to pass core classes and earn credits
- Reduction in career counselors at the high schools
- Reduction/changes in the array of vocational courses available to all students, and specifically, to those with IEPs
- Ensuring that vocational/career experiences are credit bearing

# Difficulties with Graduation and Dropout Rates: Building Students' Knowledge Base

- Career counseling on postsecondary options
- Counseling to focus on credits earned to ensure students are on track
- Development of course-of-study to guide students through high school experience
- Preparation of students for concept of “earning credits” when transitioning to high school
- Development of stronger/more meaningful transition plans
- Implementation of transition plans for all students with IEPs

# Pilot Survey

- 6 elementary, 2 middle schools, and 2 high schools
- Respondents:
  - 5 building administrators (N=20 – 25%)
  - 62 general education teachers (N=269 – 23%)
  - 32 special education teachers (N=63 – 51%)
  - 44 support staff (e.g., related service providers, SPED IAs, clerical support, school psychologists)

“What can we, as a district, preK – 12, do to increase the number of special education graduates? Select TOP 5.”

	Number 1	Number 2	Number 3	Number 4	Number 5
<b>Building Administrators</b>	a) Provide mental health services to students in need and b) provide intensive interventions in reading, writing, and math (100% each)		Provide intensive social skills intervention (80%)	Implement intensive and consistent positive behavior supports and progressive discipline practices (60%)	a) Develop family/school/comm unity partnerships and b) provide PD in collaboration (40% each)
<b>General Education Teachers</b>	Provide intensive social skills intervention (77%)	Provide intensive interventions in reading, writing, and math (75%)	Provide mental health services to students in need (56%)	Implement intensive and consistent positive behavior supports and progressive discipline practices (54%)	Develop family/school/comm unity partnerships (52%)
<b>Special Education Teachers</b>	Provide age-and developmentally-appropriate prevocational - vocational opportunities (74%)	Provide intensive interventions in reading, writing, and math (67%)	Develop family/school/commu nity partnerships (61%)	a) Provide mental health services to students in need and b) intensive social skills intervention (58%)	
<b>Support Staff</b>	Provide age-and developmentally-appropriate prevocational - vocational opportunities (65%)	Provide intensive social skills intervention (63%)	Provide intensive interventions in reading, writing, and math and b) prepare GE teachers in accommodating the learning and behavioral needs of students (60% each)		Implement intensive and consistent positive behavior supports and progressive discipline practices (53%)

# Building Administrator Sample Responses: “TOP 3 contributing factors for students with IEPs dropping out of school and/or not graduating?”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inability to do the work</li> <li>•Lack of family support</li> <li>•Socio-economic factors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of adequate support/resources</li> <li>•Burned out teachers overburdened by compliance issues</li> <li>•Family and environmental issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic difficulty</li> <li>•WASL</li> <li>•Family dysfunction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inclusion</li> </ul>

## GE Teacher Sample Responses: “TOP 3 contributing factors for students with IEPs dropping out of school and/or not graduating?”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of parent involvement</li> <li>•Frustration towards learning</li> <li>•Lack of appropriate programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of success</li> <li>•Feeling disconnected with the general population</li> <li>•School becomes too difficult and they give up due to lack of support at home or at school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Behavioral/emotional problems</li> <li>•Vocational training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•There is considerable pressure for every child to meet the same standard (WASL) with little regard as to where the child started.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Boredom</li> <li>•Isolation</li> <li>•Insecurity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not enough attention to 1:1 academics</li> <li>•Not enough social skills intervention</li> <li>•Not enough role modeling in lower schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Constant sense of failure due to inadequate intervention</li> <li>•Emotional problems stemming from failure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of vocational programs and link between school and employment</li> <li>•Lack of academic expectations and support in secondary school</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Limited options for those students not on track for college</li> <li>•Staff’s low expectations for SPED students’ success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not enough support (academically and socially) from the general ed population including teachers and students.</li> <li>•Lack of mental health/social skills training.</li> <li>•Lack of training and compassion on all levels.</li> </ul>

## SPED Teacher Sample Responses: “TOP 3 contributing factors for students with IEPs dropping out of school and/or not graduating?”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Student’s lack of interest or motivation to stay in school</li> <li>•Appropriate services for students with different needs and learning styles</li> <li>•The need for appropriate instructional staff for students of different abilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not having enough time/teachers to give them as much academic support as they needs</li> <li>•Over-emphasis on every student going to college</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School is a toxic environment for them</li> <li>•Life outside of school is better than life inside school</li> <li>•Time to get into life in a way where you’re not a loser all the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not providing enough vocational classes</li> <li>•Not providing enough interesting instructional materials</li> <li>•Lack of administrative support</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of education and experience of SPED teachers</li> <li>•Inappropriate placements made based on needs of school or district instead of on needs of student</li> <li>•Accommodations implemented poorly because of lack of collaboration of SPED and GE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Frustration with credit chase</li> <li>•They feel too far behind other students</li> <li>•Widening gap in academic performance with peers</li> <li>•Not planning on going to college makes upper high school irrelevant</li> <li>•Inappropriate implementation of the IEP by GE and SPED staff</li> </ul>

## Support Staff Teacher Sample Responses: “TOP 3 contributing factors for students with IEPs dropping out of school and/or not graduating?”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ineffective teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Experiencing repeated failure</li> <li>•Viewing school as a negative place</li> <li>•Lack of hope</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Failure in earning credits at the high school level leading to discouragement and absenteeism</li> <li>•Not enough emphasis on hands-on skill development instead of book learning and writing for demonstration of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Too much emphasis on test scores as opposed to building on student’s strengths</li> <li>•Student self-esteem negatively impacted by idea that all students can learn – students know how they compare to peers and that they are “not smart”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•We need much better alternative programs such as real vocational training and art and technical programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Not being able to discipline with support from central office and parent</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Academic requirements developmentally inappropriate</li> <li>•Lack of prevocational-vocational opportunities for students who will not attend college</li> <li>•Academic classes not relevant to their vocations after graduation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Focus on academics which promotes feelings of failure</li> <li>•Not getting started on vocational track early enough</li> <li>•Not providing positive role models of adults with disabilities in work environment</li> </ul>