



DSTP Results for Students with Disabilities

Wake up and smell the coffee

Dear Pat,

The 2006 DSTP results came out several weeks ago and while the News Journal covered the subject at a high level, the BSNPTA wanted to drill down on the Students with Disabilities subgroup. Looking at the scores, one thing is apparent: it is very unlikely a student with an IEP in the Brandywine School District (BSD) will have grade level proficiency in reading or math by 10th grade. **The scores show that less than 1 in 10 of our students with disabilities are proficient in math and reading by 10th grade.**

These scores should be a wake up call to all of us. "Inclusion" is alive and well in the real world. Students with Disabilities compete head to head with their non-disabled peers after they leave school. Gas stations and mortgage companies don't offer discounts for Special Ed alumni. We need to keep the expectations high for all students because all students will be leaving school and entering an increasingly competitive world.

It is not going to be easy but together we can improve these results - the students are counting on us. Make the most of parent-teacher conferences. Ask questions. Be sure you understand all the test results. Take that next IEP meeting VERY seriously. If parents and teachers give up on these students, they don't have a chance.

Pat Heffernan and Alex Rittberg - Co-Presidents, BSNPTA

Brandywine and State Scores Compared

Our district is below average for special ed

Check out this graph of [Brandywine Compared to State Averages](#). This graph breaks down the scores by those students in "Regular Ed" and "Special Ed" subgroups.

You can run reports off the DSTP public web portal yourself. To pull reports by a subgroup like Students with Disabilities, click on the [Customize a Report](#) menu item.

- [DOE DSTP Page](#)
- [DSTP Reporting Portal](#)

Historical Performance in Brandywine

Special ed scores flat since 2002

This graph of [Brandywine's Students with Disabilities DSTP Scores since 2002](#) shows

things have not improved over time. The line on the graph shows the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) proficiency target for all subgroups. This is the percentage of the population who must score proficient on the DSTP in order to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) target. By 2014, NCLB says all students in all subgroups must be 100% proficient. You can see the expectations (the line) are increasing much faster than the test scores (the bars).

There is some good news. The District's reading scores for 8th grade have been trending up and are the highest ever this year. However, other scores have been up and down - more flat than a real trend one way or the other.

- [DOE's NCLB page](#)
- [Basics of Delaware Accountability](#)
- [NCLB and IDEA - FAQs](#)
- [NCLB Parent Advocacy Brief](#)

Brandywine's DSTP Details

Results by school and grade

NCLB divides test scores into "cells". A cell is a group of students whose scores are broken out (disaggregated) and considered separately. Every student is a member of multiple cells. Cells are based on school, on grade, on race, on Special Ed/Regular Ed, whether or not the student is eligible for free/reduced lunch, etc. The smaller cells can be rolled up into larger ones by school, by grade, by district, etc.

Here's a list of [Brandywine's Special Ed cells by school and grade](#). The rules for reporting say that if there are at least 15 students in a cell, the results are public. Of the 43 Special Ed cells in Brandywine with more than 15 students, only three met the NCLB AYP thresholds (way to go Harlan and Claymont!!) - **all the other cells failed**.

- [DOE School Accountability Page](#)
- [Brandywine's AYP Page](#)

Are Schools Accountable for Students with Disabilities?

Effect of "cell size" on accountability

With the poor scores of Special Ed students overall and the poor performance school-by-school covered in the previous articles, one might think every school would have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the Special Ed students. However, when you look at the [Public School Accountability Summary](#) from DOE, you see only a third (6 out of 17) of the schools in Brandywine have Special Ed cells even included in their accountability calculation. One might assume all the other schools did just fine. However, this is one case where no news is NOT good news.

The actual AYP calculations are quite complex and beyond the scope of this article, but the greatest single reason why more schools don't show failing Special Ed cells is that Delaware requires there to be at least 40 students in a cell for that cell to count in accountability calculations. In Brandywine, between about 9 and 13% of our

Special Ed students in a cell (9% of 440 is 40 and 13% of 307 is 40).

If you look at a [graph of the size of the various grades in Brandywine's schools](#), it is clear that the most of them are too small to contain 40 Special Ed students. This is why only a third (6 out of 17) of the schools in Brandywine have Special Ed cells listed on the [Public School Accountability Summary](#). The other schools didn't pass, they just didn't have enough Special Ed students for the accountability calculation.

- [Delaware Accountability Technical Details](#)
- [Tracking the Achievement Gap in Delaware](#)
- [Cell Sizes in Other States](#)
- [Effect of Cell Size of Special Ed AYP](#)

Upcoming Events

BSNPTA and more

We will continue to have BSNPTA meetings at the Brandywine Town Center. This year, they are on Wednesday evenings. Here's how our Fall BSNPTA schedule is shaping up:

- Sept 27th, **Back to School Success Strategies** - Help our students get back in the groove and find the right way for them to organize and study.
- Oct 25th, **What Does the Future Hold** - Options for young adults after high school.
- Nov 20th, **Tools to Address Behavior Issues** - Best practices in Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Treatment Plans.

Stetson and Associates is offering [inclusion training for parents and support staff](#). Choose only one of these sessions:

- Sept 14th, 6:30-8:30pm Brandywine District office
- Oct 4th, 6:30-8:30pm Location to be determined
- Nov 15th, 8:30am-3:30pm, Mt. Pleasant Elementary
- Nov 16th, 8:30am-3:30pm, Mt. Pleasant Elementary

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BSNPTA - Advocating for our Students and our Teachers who help them.