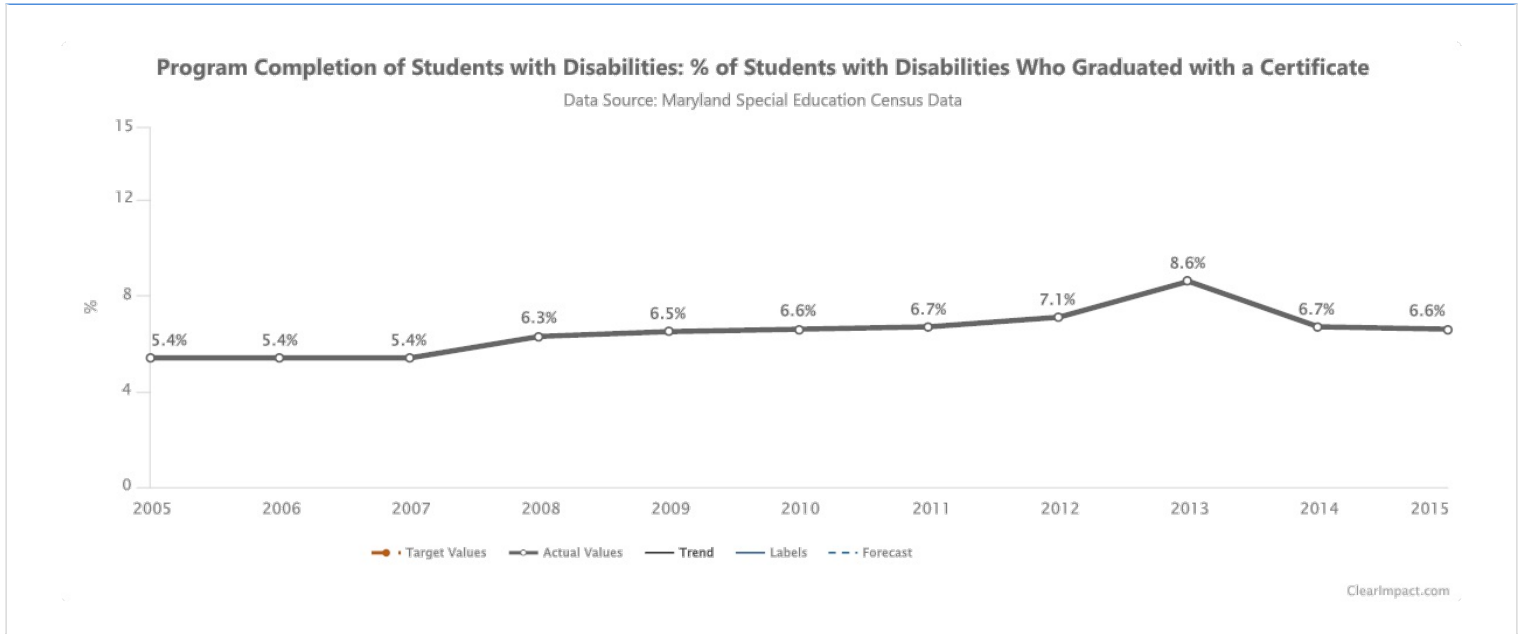


R Youth Will Complete School (Statewide)

I Program Completion of Students with Disabilities: % of Students with Disabilities Who Graduated with a Certificate



Story Behind the Curve

The 2015 Maryland Special Education Census Data continues to show an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities in Maryland who graduated/completed high school. With the exception of 2012, the percentage of students with disabilities who graduated with a diploma increased every academic year. The percentage of students with disabilities who received a diploma increased by one percentage point from 42.1% in 2014 to 43.1% in 2015, and the percentage of students who received a certificate also increased by slightly less than 1 percentage point from 6.7% in 2014 to 7.6% in 2015. The *Maryland Report Card* data for students with disabilities graduating with a diploma in 4 years yielded a 3.9 percentage point increase between 2013 and 2015 as compared to a 1.8 percentage point increase for all students; therefore, narrowing the achievement gap for students with disabilities by 2.1 percentage points. In addition, there was a 5.5 percentage point increase between 2013 and 2015 for those students with disabilities graduating with a diploma after 5 years in high school.

What Works

There are several factors that have directly contributed to the increase in the number of students with disabilities who have received a high school diploma. Maryland continues to build, implement, and sustain special education and related services with evidence-based practices related to self-advocacy, career exploration, paid work experiences, and system linkages. This will yield results in dropout prevention, re-entry, and school completion for these students. The Maryland State Department of Education is sensitive to myriad social, emotional and physical challenges often faced by students with disabilities, which if not addressed, can have an adverse impact on the dropout, truancy and suspension rates among this population. Ultimately, effective instruction is the most compelling predictor to decreasing dropout, truancy, and suspension/expulsion rates.

Maryland is one of 48 states currently engaged in a diverse number of targeted, evidence-based interventions to improve graduation/school completion rates for all students, such as: Universal Design for Learning (UDL), mentoring programs, transition supports, and recovery and re-entry programs.

In 2016, Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS), refined their existing five-year strategic plan through 2020 to enhance the quality of life for students with disabilities and their families. One of the three strategic imperatives (Secondary Transition) aims to show that student-centered transition approaches, beginning at age 14, set the stage for a seamless transition to a life of meaningful participation in the community following school completion.

Maryland's students have benefited greatly from two federal grants that were awarded to the Maryland State Department of Education by the U.S. Department of Education in 2013. The Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) (2013) award and the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) (2013) have allowed the Maryland State Department of Education to create a number of initiatives to facilitate school improvement and reform efforts at the State and local school system level. In recent months, Maryland has been the recipient of two newly-funded federal grants focusing on school completion and employment outcomes. The Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative (MWLC) (2016) and Working Marylanders with Disabilities (2016) are both funded through Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR) with an emphasis on youth with disabilities beginning at age 14 through 21. In addition, the Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services received an Intensive Technical Assistance grant funded through the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) from 2016-2019 to assist in implementing evidence-based and promising practices ensuring students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, graduate prepared for success in postsecondary education and employment.

Local Highlight

The middle Eastern Shore region of Maryland has yielded consistent outcomes and graduation rates consistent with the State average. There has been an increased emphasis on strategic collaboration among five local school systems in the middle Eastern Shore. There are opportunities for local school systems to participate in professional development and technical assistance/training across systems. Additionally, they are able to share resources across partner agencies, such as existing career and technology education, community colleges, and employment training programs.

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Early Intervention Services is committed to providing leadership, support, and accountability for results, as well as resource and fiscal management to our public/nonpublic schools and public/private agencies. The Division continues to engage key stakeholders in developing a seamless, comprehensive system of coordinated services to children and students with disabilities, birth through age 21, and their families.

Data Discussion

The percent of students with disabilities, ages 14 through 21, who graduate or complete school.