

**Declassification and Reclassification of Students with Developmental Delay  
in the Washoe County School District**

March 12, 2018

**Research Questions**

Four questions were asked to describe the patterns of declassification and reclassification of students with developmental delay (DD) in the Washoe County School District (WCSD) after reevaluation of disability at the age of 6. The questions are:

1. What percentage of students classified with DD remain eligible for services after reevaluation at age 6?
2. Does eligibility status after reevaluation differ by student demographic characteristics?
3. What are the disabilities of reclassified students with DD after reevaluation?
4. Does disability type of reclassified students differ by student demographic characteristics?

**Sample**

A retrospective, descriptive analysis of data of a cohort of students was used to respond to the four research questions. The cohort included students enrolled in the 2014-15 school year (SY) under the age of 6 who were identified as having DD as they moved through the 2015-16 and 2016-17 schools years (Table 1). Those students who were age 6 and older in SY 2016-17 were examined to describe the number and percentage of students declassified and reclassified disabilities. In 2014-15, 721 students age 5 and under with DD were enrolled in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in the WCSD:

- Of them, 639 were still enrolled in the WCSD in SY 2016-17, and
- 259 were 6 years of age and older by first day of SY 2016-17 – these students are the focus of this summary.

<i>Grade Level in 2014-15</i>	2014-15 Dev. Delay Under Age 6	Number of 2014-15 Dev. Delay Cohort	
		Enrolled 2015-16: Age 6 and Older	Enrolled 2016-17: Age 6 and Older
Pre-Kindergarten	696	3	240
Kindergarten	25	0	19
Total Students	721	3	259

Note. Students with primary enrollments are included.

*Question 1. What percentage of students classified with DD remain eligible for services after reevaluation at age 6?*

Of the 259 students who were classified as DD in SY 2014-15 *and* had reached age 6 by SY 2016-17, almost one-fifth (19%) were declassified for special education services while 81 percent were reclassified as having other types of disabilities.

*Question 2. Does eligibility status after reevaluation differ by student demographic characteristics?*

Male students are more likely to have been reclassified as having a disability compared to female students (83% and 75%, respectively); however, the relationship between gender and reclassification is not statistically significant (Table 2).

Table 2. 2016-17 Disability Status of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Gender, in Number and Percent.			
Gender	All Students	Disability Status 2016-17	
		No Disability	Disability
Female	73	24.7%	75.3%
Male	186	16.7%	83.3%
All Students	259	18.9%	81.1%

American Indian students were most likely to be reclassified (91%) while Hispanic students had the lowest rate of reclassification (80%). Table 3 describes the percentage of students reclassified across all racial groups.

Table 3. 2016-17 Disability Status of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Race, in Number and Percent.			
Race	All Students	Disability Status 2016-17	
		No Disability	Disability
American Indian	11	9.1%	90.9%
Asian	7	--	--
Hispanic	138	20.3%	79.7%
African American	6	--	--
White	79	17.7%	82.3%
Multiracial	16	18.8%	81.3%
Pacific Islander	2	--	--
All Students	259	18.9%	81.1%

"--" Less than 10 students in this group and is not reported.

A larger percentage of English Learning (EL) students were reclassified as having disabilities after the age of 6 compared to non-EL students (85% and 79%, respectively). Table 4 describes the percentage of students reclassified by EL status.

Table 4. 2016-17 Disability Status of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by English Learner Status, in Number and Percent.			
<i>English Learner Status</i>	All Students	Disability Status 2016-17	
		No Disability	Disability
Not an English Learner	170	21.2%	78.8%
English Learner	89	14.6%	85.4%
All Students	259	18.9%	81.1%

Students who receive free or reduced priced lunch (FRL) were more likely to be reclassified as having a disability than students who did not receive FRL (84% and 71%, respectively). The relationship between FRL status and reclassification is weak ( $\Phi = .150$ ). Table 5 describes the percentage of students reclassified by FRL status.

Table 5. 2016-17 Disability Status of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Free or Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) Status, in Number and Percent.			
<i>FRL Status</i>	All Students	Disability Status 2016-17	
		No Disability	Disability
Does Not Receive FRL	61	29.5%	70.5%
Receives for FRL	198	15.7%	84.3%
All Students	259	18.9%	81.1%
Chi-square showed a significant difference between FRL groups, $X^2(1 N=259) = 5.833, p < .05, \phi = .150$			

Reclassification differs by homelessness, whereby a larger percentage of students served by Children in Transition (CIT) were reclassified as having a disability (92%) compared to students who were not experiencing homelessness (81%). Table 6 describes the percentage of students reclassified by CIT status.

Table 6. 2016-17 Disability Status of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Children in Transition (CIT) Status, in Number and Percent.			
<i>CIT Status</i>	All Students	Disability Status 2016-17	
		No Disability	Disability
Not CIT	246	19.5%	80.5%
CIT	13	7.7%	92.3%
All Students	259	18.9%	81.1%

***Question 3. What were the disabilities of reclassified students with DD after reevaluation?***

By SY 2016-17 and after turning age 6, the majority of students with DD in SY 2014-15 were reclassified as having:

- specific learning disability (42%),
- speech or language impairment (21%), and
- health impairment (11%).

Table 7 describes the number and percentage of students with DD in 2014-16 by reclassified disabilities in 2016-17.

Disability	Number	Percent
Declassified - No Disability	49	18.9%
Specific Learning Disability	108	41.7%
Speech/Language Impairment	54	20.8%
Health Impairment	28	10.8%
Other Disability	20	7.6%
Total	259	100.0%

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. These include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.

**Question 4. Of those reclassified as having a disability, does disability classification differ by student demographic characteristics?**

Reclassified disability differs by gender:

- Compared to male students, female students were more likely to be declassified (8 p.p. diff.) and more likely to be reclassified with specific learning disability (7 p.p. diff.).
- Male students were more likely to be reclassified with speech and language impairments (8 p.p. diff.) and health impairment (9 p.p. diff.) than female students.

Figure 1 displays the percentage of male and female students by their reclassified disability type in 2016-17 (see Table 8 for frequency distribution).

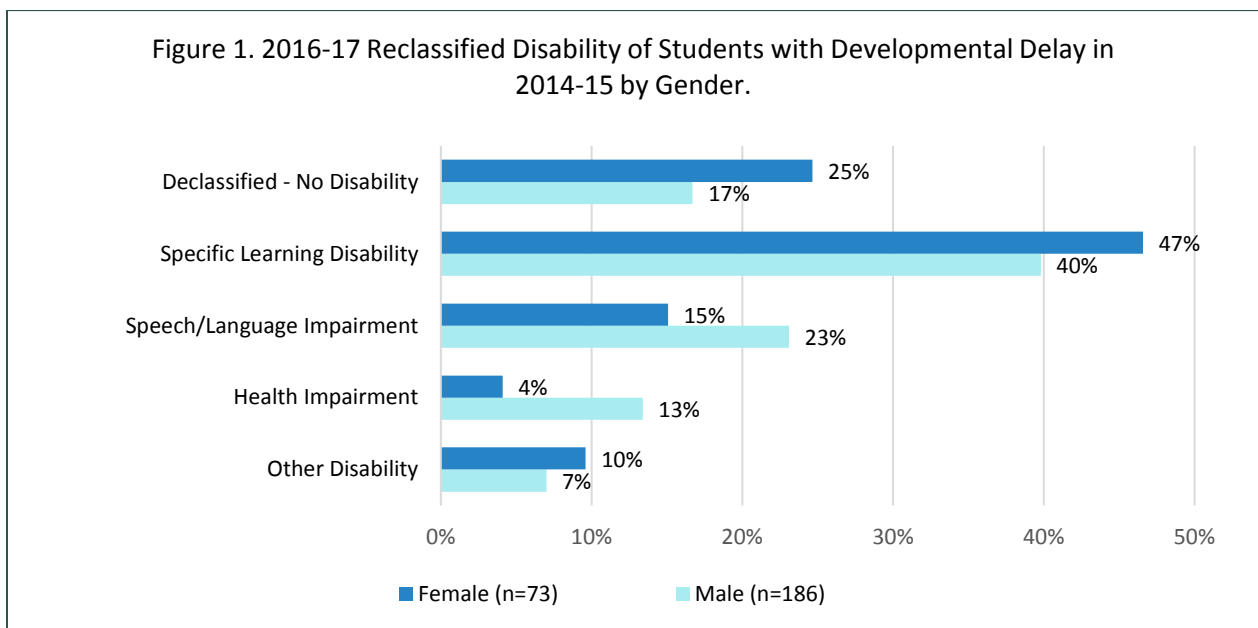


Table 8. 2016-17 Reclassified Disability of Students with Developmental Delay in 2014-15 by Gender.

Disability	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Declassified - No Disability	18	24.7%	31	16.7%
Specific Learning Disability	34	46.6%	74	39.8%
Speech/Language Impairment	11	15.1%	43	23.1%
Health Impairment*	3	4.1%	25	13.4%
Other Disability	7	9.6%	13	7.0%
Total	73	100%	186	100%

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. They are autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.  
\*Significant at .05 level.

Race is related to reclassified disability after reevaluation:

- Hispanic students were more likely to be reclassified with specific learning disability and less likely to be reclassified with health impairments compared to non-Hispanic students.
- White students were less likely to be reclassified with specific learning disability and more likely to be reclassified with a health impairment compared to non-white students.
- Multi-racial students were less likely to be reclassified with specific learning disability compared to students who were not multi-racial.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of students reclassified across disability types in 2016-17 by race (see Table 9 for frequency distribution).

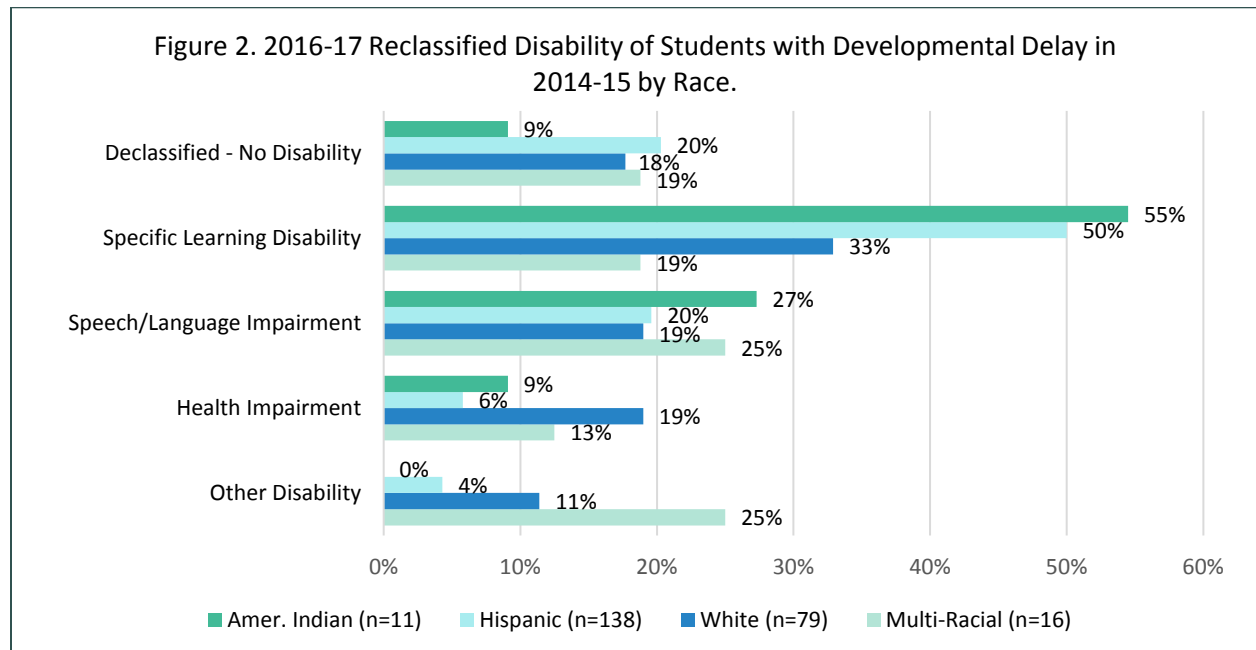


Table 9. 2016-17 Classified Disability of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Race, in Number and Percent.

Race	Total Students	Disability				
		No Disability	Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment	Health Impairment	Other Disability
American Indian	11	9.1%	54.5%	27.3%	9.1%	0.0%
Asian	7	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	138	20.3%	50.0%*	19.6%	5.8%*	4.3%
African American	6	--	--	--	--	--
White	79	17.7%	32.9%**	19.0%	19.0%*	11.4%
Multi-Racial	16	18.8%	18.8%**	25.0%	12.5%	25.0%
Pacific Islander	2	--	--	--	--	--
All Students	259	18.9%	41.7%	20.9%	10.8%	7.7%

“--” Less than 10 students in this group and is not reported.

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. These include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.

EL status is related to reclassification of disability. Compared to non-EL students:

- EL students were almost twice as likely to be reclassified with specific learning disability (60% and 32%, respectively).
- EL students were less likely to be reclassified with speech or language impairments and health impairments.

Figure 3 displays the percentage of students reclassified across disability categories in 2016-17 by EL status (see Table 10 for frequency distribution).

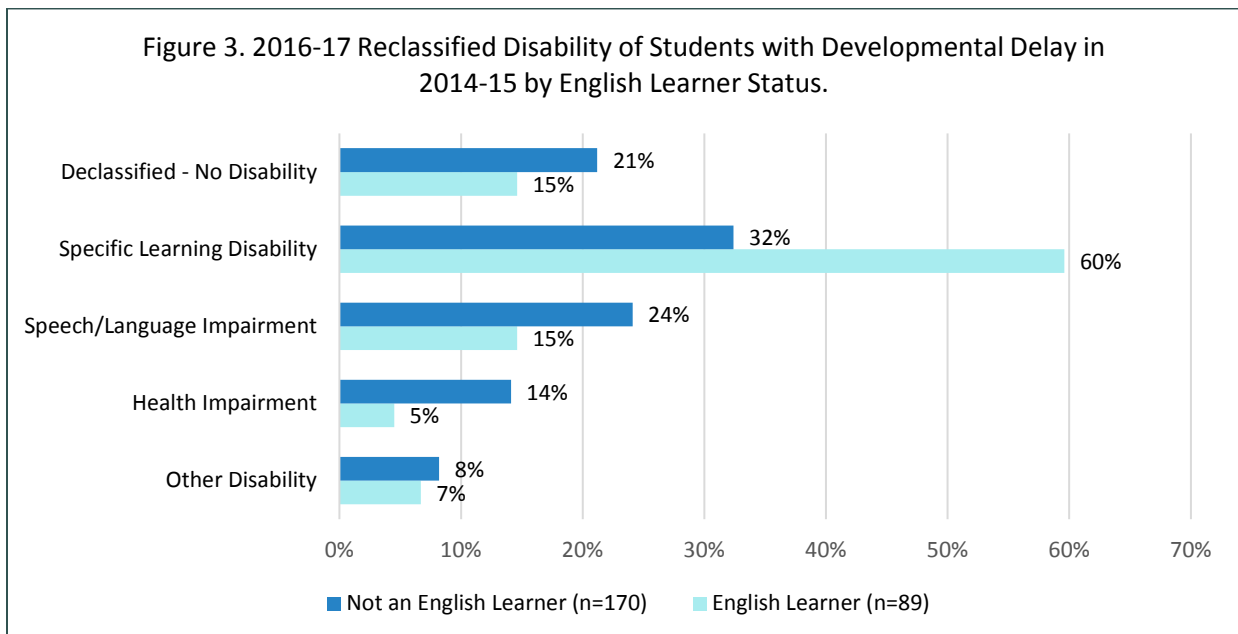


Table 10. 2016-17 Classified Disability of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by English Learner Status, in Number and Percent.

EL Status	Total Students	Disability				
		No Disability	Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment	Health Impairment	Other Disability
English Learner	89	14.6%	59.6%*	14.6%**	4.5%*	6.7%
Not English Learner	170	21.2%	32.4%	24.1%	14.1%	8.2%
All Students	259	18.9%	41.7%	20.9%	10.8%	7.7%

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. These include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.  
\*Significant at .01 level, \*\*Significant at .05 level.

FRL status is related to reclassified disability:

- Students who received FRL were more likely to be reclassified with a specific learning disability and less likely to be reclassified with health impairment compared to those who did not receive FRL.
- Students who did not receive FRL were 1.9 times likely to be declassified compared to students who received FRL.

Figure 4 displays the percentage of students reclassified across disability categories in 2016-17 by FRL status (see Table 11 for frequency distribution).

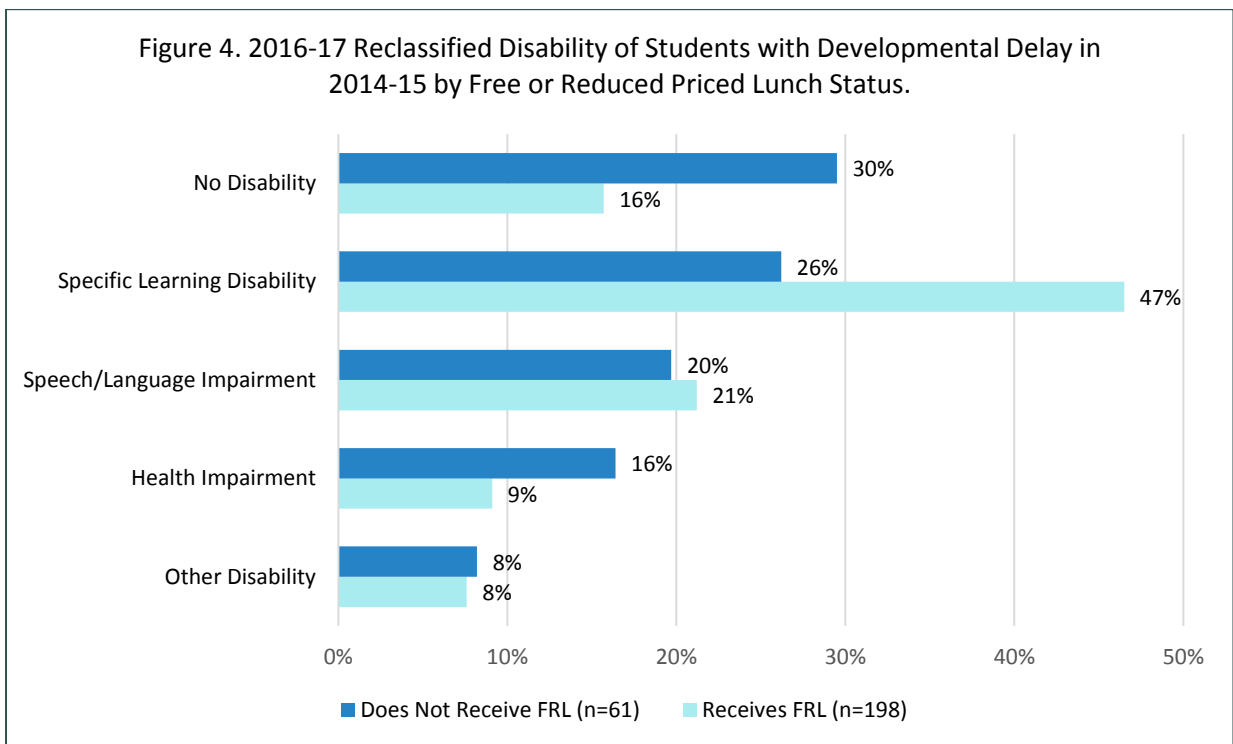


Table 11. 2016-17 Classified Disability of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6, by Free or Reduced Priced Lunch (FRL) Status, in Number and Percent.

FRL Status	Total Students	Disability				
		No Disability	Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment	Health Impairment	Other Disability
FRL	198	15.7%	46.5%*	21.2%	9.1%	7.6%
Not FRL	61	29.5%	26.2%	19.7%	16.4%	8.2%
All Students	259	18.9%	41.7%	20.9%	10.8%	7.7%

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. These include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.  
\*Significant at .05 level.

Reclassification of disability varies by homelessness, as indicated by participation in Children in Transition (CIT):

- Over half (54%) of students in CIT were reclassified with a specific learning disability after reevaluation.
- Smaller percentage of students in CIT were reclassified with speech or language impairment (8%) compared to students not served by CIT (22%).
- Students who did not experience homelessness were 2.5 times more likely to be declassified compared to students in CIT (20% and 8%, respectively).

Figure 5 displays the percentage of students reclassified across disability categories in 2016-17 by CIT status (see Table 12 for count distribution).

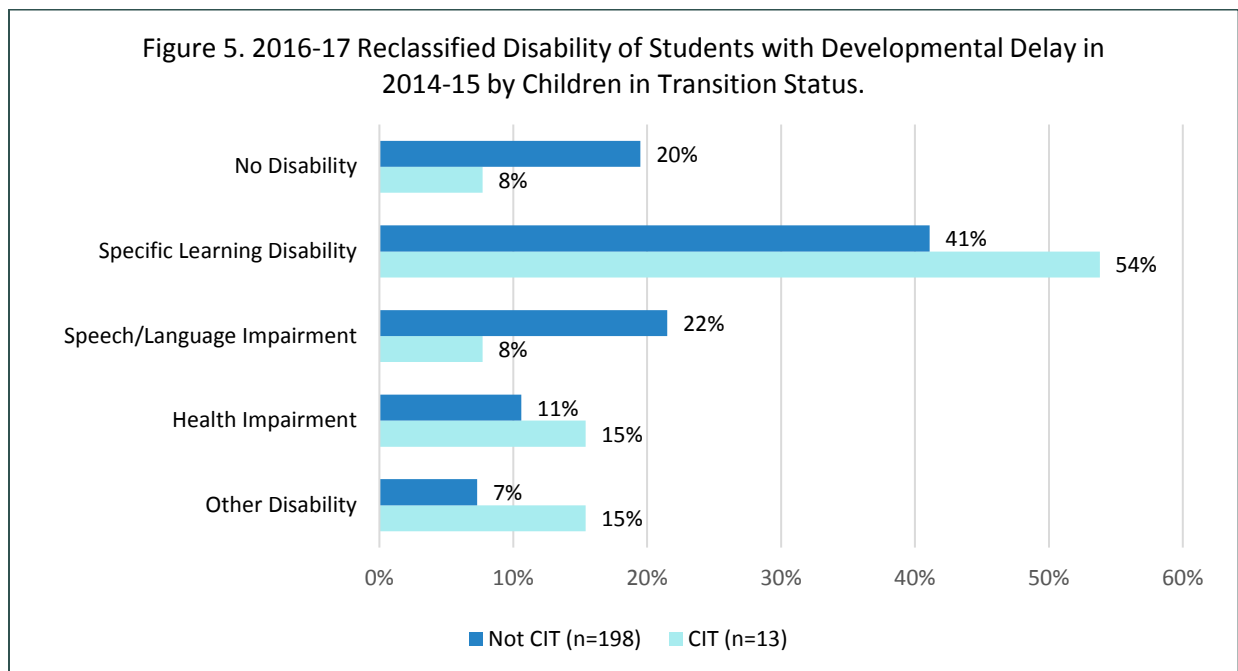




Table 12. 2016-17 Classified Disability of Students with Developmental Delay Before Age of 6 by Children in Transition Status, in Number and Percent.

<i>CIT Status</i>	Total Students	Disability				
		No Disability	Specific Learning Disability	Speech or Language Impairment	Health Impairment	Other Disability
CIT	13	7.7%	53.8%	7.7%	15.4%	15.4%
Not CIT	198	19.5%	41.1%	21.5%	10.6%	7.3%
All Students	259	18.9%	41.7%	20.9%	10.8%	7.7%

Note. Other disability includes disability categories that had fewer than 10 students reclassified into those categories. These include autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deaf, and visual impairment/blind.