Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired

Biennial Report to the Legislature: 2024

As required by Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 125A.63

June 14, 2024

For more information:

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As requested by Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 3.197: This report cost approximately $16,310.55 to prepare, including staff time, printing, and mailing expenses.

Upon request, this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, braille, or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.

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Legislative Charge

Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 125A.63, was amended to include the updated legislative charge:

Subd. 4. Advisory committees. (a) The commissioner shall establish advisory committees for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and for the blind and visually impaired. The advisory committees shall develop recommendations and submit an annual report to the commissioner on the form and in the manner prescribed by the commissioner.

(b) The advisory committees for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and for the blind and visually impaired shall meet periodically at least four times per year. The committees must each review, approve, and submit a biennial report to the commissioner, the education policy and finance committees of the legislature, and the Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard-of-Hearing Minnesotans. The reports must, at least:

(1) identify and report the aggregate, data-based education outcomes for children with the primary disability classification of deaf and hard-of-hearing or of blind and visually impaired, consistent with the commissioner's child count reporting practices, the commissioner's state and local outcome data reporting system by district and region, and the school performance report cards under section 120B.36, subdivision 1; and

(2) describe the implementation of a data-based plan for improving the education outcomes of deaf and hard-of-hearing or blind and visually impaired children that is premised on evidence-based best practices, and provide a cost estimate for ongoing implementation of the plan.

2023–24 Blind or Visually Impaired (BVI) advisory committee members

- John Davis: Director, Minnesota State Academy for the Blind
- Shane DeSantis: State Services for the Blind Representative
- Jay Fehrman: Administrator Representative
- Steve Jacobson: Program Representative, National Federation of the Blind
- Lori Klein: Administrator Representative
- Barb Lhotka: Higher Education Representative, Low Incidence Project, BrightWorks
- Diane Dohnalik: MDE Representative, Specialist for the Blind/Visually Impaired

Executive Summary

This report includes summaries of student demographics, child counts, enrollment counts, graduation rates, and assessment results for the 2022–23 school year. The trend data that is included reflects the achievements, milestones, and areas of concern for students with the primary disability classification of blind or visually impaired (BVI) at the statewide and regional levels. Additionally, it outlines the specific needs, recommendations, and statewide resources specific to BVI.

Recommended solutions proposed by the BVI Advisory Committee to improve educational outcomes for students who are BVI include:

- Increasing access to accessible education materials
- Addressing shortages in educated and licensed teachers of the blind or visually impaired (TBVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS)
- Potentially requiring all school districts to report secondary and tertiary disability labels of students who are BVI
- Providing the time needed to teach the expanded core curriculum (ECC)

It is crucial that students who are BVI in Minnesota receive the education necessary to reach their postsecondary educational, personal, and employment goals. Through a quality education, students will be empowered to become contributing members and future leaders in the state.

Additional information is also included in the appendices. They include information on the ECC (Appendix A); collaborative statewide resources (Appendix B); summary of early childhood outcomes (Appendix C); outcomes for students who are deafblind (Appendix D); and data tables for report figures (Appendix E).

Introduction

This report summarizes the educational outcomes for students with the primary disability classification of the blind or visually impaired (BVI) for the 2022–23 school year. Educational outcomes are based on Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) results by state, region, and district, when possible.

The report also includes summaries of early childhood data, student demographics, child count, enrollment counts, and graduation rates. The outcomes reflect the achievements, milestones, and areas of need for students who are BVI. To address the areas of need and improve outcomes for students who are BVI, the BVI Advisory Committee has reviewed and approved recommendations contained in the report.

Data Sources

MDE collected information from multiple data sources to produce and present the information for this report. The charts and tables describe demographics and academic outcomes using the following sources:

- Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System (MARSS)
- MDE Assessment Data
- Early Childhood Child Outcome Survey Data
- Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS)

Throughout this report, results are reported only on population groups greater than ten to protect individual privacy. While overall student counts for all eleven regions in the state are included on page 16, three regions had ten or more students who were BVI with math and reading assessment results (Region 7, Region 10, and Region 11). Only demographic data and assessment data trends summaries for those three regions are included in the report. Within the three regions, no district-level results are included because there are too few students who are BVI to include.

Data Challenges

It is important to note that the assessment data from this report does not accurately reflect the overall status and scope of services for students who are BVI and served by teachers of the blind or visually impaired (TBVI) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS). Students who are not primarily identified as BVI (which includes students with multiple impairments or low vision) are not included in this data. MDE does not require or have systematic access to data that reflects all services provided by TBVI. TBVI are required to provide services to this uncounted population that are not represented in this report.

Additionally, there are several testing challenges students who are BVI encounter:

- **Accessibility:** Existing adaptive online tests are not accessible to students who are blind. Instead, they receive a hard copy test in braille.
- **Fatigue:** Students who are BVI often spend twice as much time testing as their peers.

- **Assessment validity with tactile graphics:** Issues with the tactile graphics provided in test materials have put into question whether a student is being assessed for their math skills or their tactile graphics skills. The existing tests do not always provide good data regarding learned skills.
- **Test appropriateness:** Many students who are BVI may be given the MTAS in error—data indicates that the appropriateness of the test provided may not be correct.[1]

Updates on Previous Report Recommendations for Improving Student Outcomes

The 2022 report made three recommendations to improve outcomes for students who are BVI. This section describes updates since those recommendations were submitted to the legislature.

Increase access to accessible educational materials.

MDE has provided procurement guidance to Local Education Agencies (LEA). The specific language for inclusion in materials contracts can be found on page 44 in the MDE Assistive Technology Manual Update.

MDE continued to partner with the Minnesota Access Center (MAC) to offer Assistive Tech Tuesdays, a virtual opportunity for Minnesota educators and related service personnel to ask questions regarding specific products and services. Examples of topics covered include roles and responsibilities of teachers and IEP teams, Medicaid in schools, and augmentative and alternative communication.

Address shortages of educated and licensed TBVI and COMS.

In 2021, MDE commissioned the BVI feasibility report to gather data and information for the establishment of a Minnesota Visually Impaired (VI) Graduate Program, aimed at training additional teachers for the blind and visually impaired (TBVI) in the state. The report, along with talking points advocating for the program's establishment, was shared with stakeholders to inform and to foster support in the legislative process. This proposal was submitted as part of the 2023 omnibus bill that ultimately did not pass, leaving the program's establishment pending and unfulfilled.

Additionally, MDE has continued to address the shortage of TBVI and COMS by actively developing and updating a tailored university program list and adding personnel to support teacher recruitment efforts in areas facing shortages. The BVI advisory committee has also developed recruitment materials and actively promoted them to prospective teacher candidates and administrators. Certain districts and regions have also implemented hiring

[1] Ferrell, K. A., S. Bruce, and J. L. Luckner (2014). *Evidence-based practices for students with sensory impairments*. Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website (https://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/IC-4_FINAL_03-30-15.pdf).

incentives and provided financial support for teachers in low-incidence positions, including a statewide low incidence tuition support grant.

Since the 2022 report, MDE has also launched a statewide mentoring program for new TBVI during their first three years of teaching. Though not universally available across all districts, this program aims to nurture and retain talent in the field. In addition, MDE has been offering monthly coaching sessions during the school year to Minnesota students attending out-of-state training programs, aimed at helping them apply their learning to Minnesota school settings.

Between 2022 and 2024, despite ten TBVI retiring and two leaving the state or the field, eighteen newly licensed TBVI began their careers in Minnesota.

Provide time needed to teach the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) in Minnesota.

MDE recognizes the need for Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams to review and assess the strengths of the current ECC and their students' needs, and for local education agencies (LEAs) to organize regular student review sessions to share progress updates, foster communication, and update learning plans. To facilitate this, MDE has developed a guidance document aimed at fostering professional collaboration among teachers serving early childhood students.

MDE has also offered statewide professional development opportunities for teachers in the forms of half-day presentations and half-day regional meetings. Some of the training topics offered between 2022 and 2024 included accessible educational materials, resource library offerings, teaching skills of touch, lighting and glare, self-determination, Part C collaboration, evaluation and program design, understanding optic nerve hypoplasia, and students' sensory and behavioral needs.

Moreover, MDE has created opportunities for students with visual impairment to learn ECC skills through the statewide Summer Transition Program and various other district-level and regional programs. In addition, MDE has also set up opportunities for TBVI to meet and view online ECC content and discuss ways to apply them in their local setting.

Recognizing mental health as an important part of the ECC, the BVI Advisory Committee has also created a mental health resources document to support educators in navigating these essential aspects of education in their work.

Appendix A contains more detailed information on the ECC.

Recommendations for Improving Student Outcomes

Based on the research and results from the BVI Feasibility Report, educational assessment results described in this report, and input from the BVI Advisory Committee members, the advisory committee presents the following recommendations for improving outcomes for students who are BVI. The recommendations are focused on four areas:

Recommendation 1: Increase Access to Accessible Educational Materials

Current curricula and software purchased by LEAs often do not align consistently with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which provides guidance on how to make web content more accessible to people with disabilities and older individuals with changing abilities due to aging. While the Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act[2] requires districts to choose from approved screeners and curricula, those choices do not currently include options that are fully accessible for students who are BVI.

MDE should:

- **Continue using MAC and Assistive Tech Tuesdays** as platforms for open dialogue regarding equitable access and resources. This includes offering recorded professional development sessions and sharing research-based best practices around Universal Design for Learning[3], assistive technology, and accessibility.
- **Provide guidance to publishers regarding accessibility features in software and instructional materials** to ensure full implementation of the READ Act for students who are BVI.
- **Request LEAs to utilize the specific accessible materials language in materials contracts,** as outlined on page 44 in the MDE Assistive Technology Manual Update.

Recommendation 2: Address Shortages in Educated and Licensed TBVI and COMS

Minnesota has not had a university program to train educators for BVI since 2010. While the number of students who are BVI receiving services in Minnesota is steady, the number of TBVI and COMS is decreasing.

To address these shortages, the legislature should:

- **Fund the creation of a university program to prepare more TBVI and COMS**, such as the MN VI Graduate Program described above, to address the need for qualified instructors of students who are BVI.

In addition, MDE should:

- **Continue the statewide mentoring program** for teachers during their first three years as licensed TBVI. New teachers report this mentoring as valuable and describe feeling supported as a result. Since not all

[2] The READ Act, signed into law by Governor Tim Walz on May 24, 2023, aims to ensure every Minnesota child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and to support multilingual learner and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals. It replaces the Read Well by Third Grade (RWBTG) Initiative and has been in effect since July 1, 2023.

[3] Universal Design for Learning is a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn.

districts have mentoring as part of their district process, the availability of statewide mentoring is essential for TBVI to continue in their role.

Recommendation 3: Consider Requesting the Reporting of Secondary and Tertiary Disability Labels of Students

Currently, MDE can collect and report only primary disability data, which inhibits an accurate view of the actual number of students with visual impairment served by TBVI and COMS. The actual number of students with vision loss being served includes students with primary disabilities other than BVI, who are not reflected in the primary disability count. For example, students may list "severely multiply impaired" as their primary disability but are not included in the count of BVI students.

The legislature should:

- **Consider requiring MDE to have all school districts report secondary and tertiary disability labels of students** who are BVI. Doing so would enable more accurate student counts and help MDE anticipate the number of TBVI and COMS needed to effectively serve students with visual impairment.

Recommendation 4: Provide Time Needed to Teach the ECC in Minnesota

ECC is the core of instruction provided by the TBVI for students with visual impairment. IEP teams need sufficient time to observe, review data, and discuss the current ECC strengths and needs of their students. LEAs need to recognize the importance of regular student review sessions with team members to update progress, communication, and learning plans. Families also need to understand the significance of the nine areas of the ECC and its importance to their children's education.

To address these needs, LEAs and IEP teams should:

- **Encourage student participation in ECC activities through continued support of ECC initiatives** and activities and regularly sharing resources with families and IEP team members.
- **Set aside time for meetings with school-based student teams** to update ECC progress, communication, and learning plans of students who are BVI.

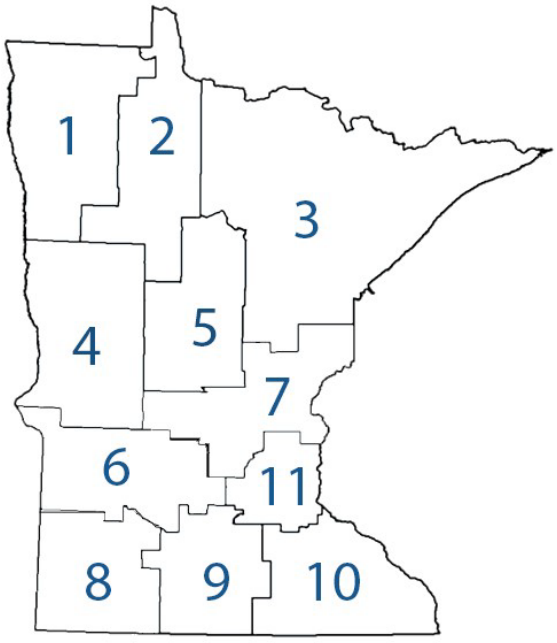
MDE should:

- **Compile ECC resources** to share with families and IEP team members.

Student Enrollment and Demographic Data

The demographic data presented, unless otherwise noted, are based on student data from the 2022–23 school year. The tables and figures include summaries of student enrollment, child count, age, gender, and race and ethnicity.

Figure 1. Map of Minnesota's regional development commissions



The number of students on individual TBVI workloads can vary significantly due to individual student need, school district size, district sparsity, travel distance between schools, and travel times in rural and metropolitan areas (Table 1).

Table 1. Numbers of students who are BVI and staff who are TBVI and COMS by region

Region name	Number of students on 2023 Unduplicated Child Count (ages 0 to 21)	Number of students on 2023 APH Federal Quota Count	Estimated number of students on TBVI caseloads (blind, low vision, deafblind, and multiple needs)	Number of TBVI	Estimated number of students on each TBVI caseload	Number of COMS
Regions 1 and 2	13	34	69	10	7	2
Region 3	30	48	81	4	20	1 (part-time), 2 (contracted)
Region 4	21	43	78	4	20	1
Regions 5 and 7	86	155	329	17	19	4
Regions 6 and 8	27	34	58	3	19	1
Region 9	12	31	45	3	15	0.2

Region name	Number of students on 2023 Unduplicated Child Count (ages 0 to 21)	Number of students on 2023 APH Federal Quota Count	Estimated number of students on TBVI caseloads (blind, low vision, deafblind, and multiple needs)	Number of TBVI	Estimated number of students on each TBVI caseload	Number of COMS
Region 10	65	104	MSAB (46) [4] 258	MSAB (7) 19	14	MSAB (2) 6
Region 11	216	501	986	49	20	17
Statewide total	**470**	**950**	**1,904**	**109**	**18 (average)**	**34**

Enrollment Summary

Table 2 shows how enrollment for students who are BVI compares with other student populations in 2022–23. At the statewide level, students whose primary disability was BVI made up 0.05% of the overall student population and 0.30% of the population of students receiving special education services. The largest number of students who are BVI was located in Region 11, while the largest percentage within a single region was in Region 10. Given the small number of BVI students, MDE advises caution in interpreting percentage fluctuations in this report. A change for a small number of individuals within the group can appear as more noticeable fluctuations from year to year than those for all their peers in special education and all students.

Table 2. K–12 enrollment of student categories by region 2022–23

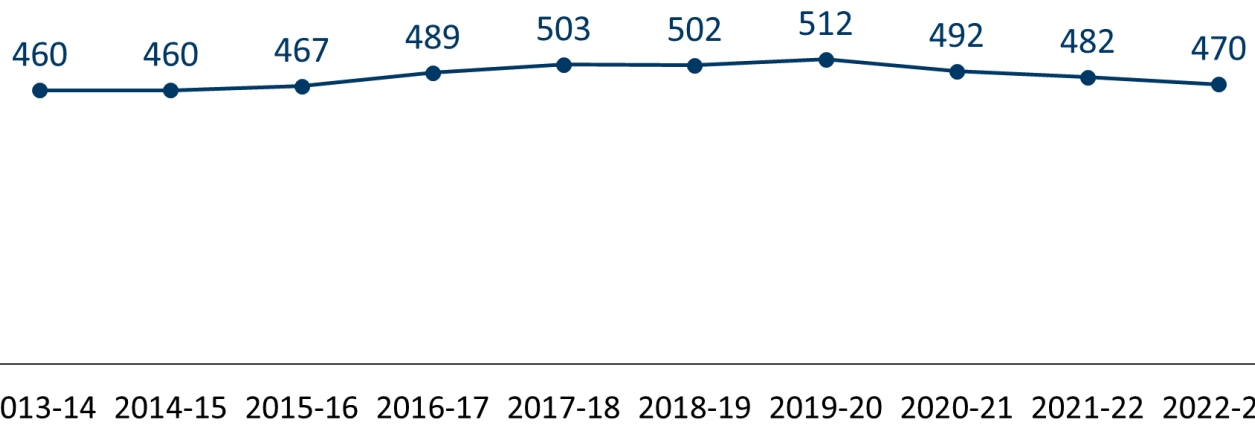
Region name	All students K–12 fall enrollment	BVI K–12	Percent BVI	K–12 special education enrollment	Percent BVI
Regions 1 and 2	26,946	10	0.04%	4,981	0.20%
Region 3	40,558	27	0.07%	7,835	0.34%
Region 4	34,748	17	0.05%	6,033	0.28%
Region 5	25,030	11	0.04%	5,130	0.21%
Regions 6 and 8	42,499	19	0.04%	7,437	0.26%
Region 7	103,373	69	0.07%	17,378	0.40%
Region 9	32,863	10	0.03%	5,648	0.18%
Region 10	74,800	59	0.08%	12,323	0.48%
Region 11	466,049	181	0.04%	69,529	0.26%
Statewide total	**846,866**	**403**	**0.05%**	**136,294**	**0.30%**

[4] MSAB: Minnesota State Academy for the Blind located in Faribault, Minnesota.

Child Count

Enrollment numbers are based on the number of students enrolled in grades K–12 in the fall of each school year. Child count data is broader and includes all students in the school system, ages 0 through 21[5]. Figure 2 below provides an overview of the number of students who are BVI based on child count data from 2013–14 to 2022–23. While the number of students who are BVI increased to the highest count of 512 in 2019–20, it started decreasing for the first time in 2020–21 and continued to decline to 470 in 2022–23.

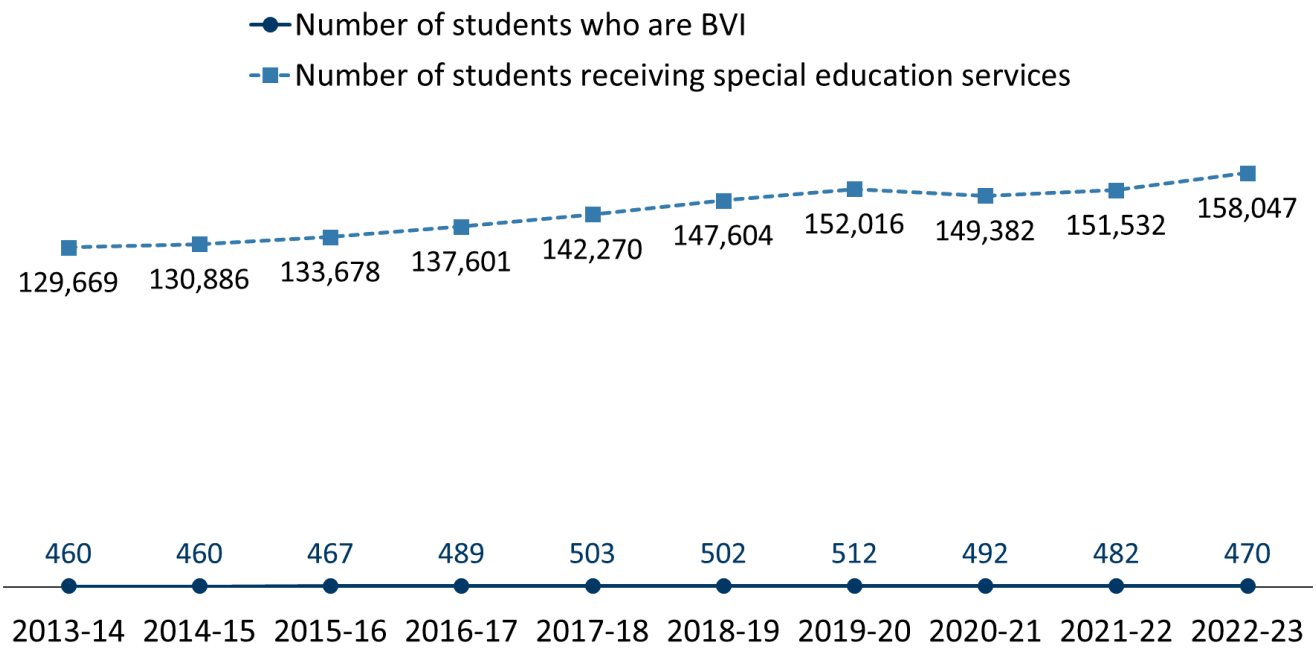
Figure 2. Statewide BVI child counts, 2013–14 to 2022–23



During this same period, the total number of students across Minnesota based on child count receiving special education services increased by over 28,000 students, rising from 129,669 in 2013–14 to over 158,000 in 2022–23 (Figure 3).

[5] In 2023, the Minnesota legislature amended Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 125A.03(b), to extend the provision of special instruction and services for children and youth with disabilities until the day before their 22nd birthday. This legislation went into effect on July 1, 2023.

Figure 3. Statewide special education and BVI counts, ages 0–21, 2013–14 to 2022–23

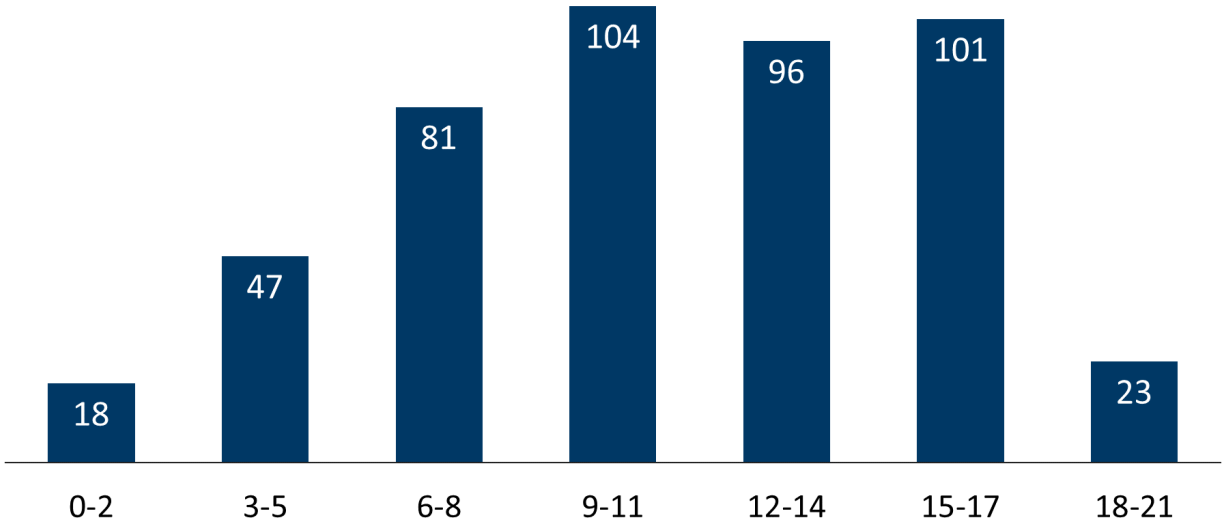


Demographics

The demographic data is presented here to help understand the student populations that make up the group of students who are BVI. The demographic breakdowns are based on child count data from the 2022–23 school year, which includes students ages 0–21 who are enrolled in the school system. A total of 470 students were counted as BVI that school year.

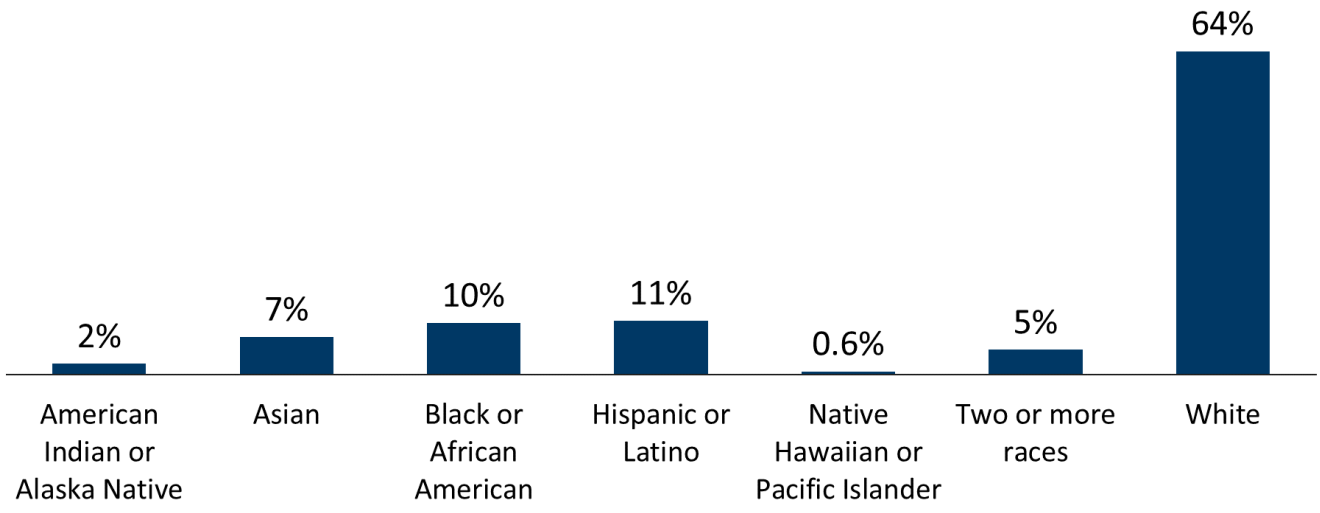
The highest concentrations of students who are BVI are ages 6–17 (Figure 4). The lowest concentrations are in the youngest and oldest age groups.

Figure 4. Child count by age distribution of BVI students, 2022–23 (n=470)



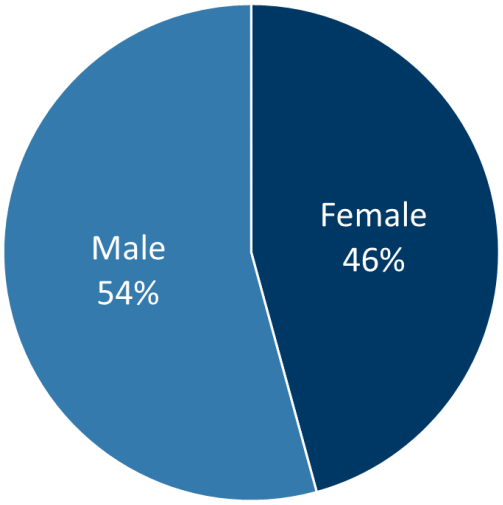
The majority of students (64%) who are BVI are white, distantly followed by Hispanic or Latino (11%), Black (10%), and Asian (7%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Race and ethnicity of students who are BVI, 2022–23 (n=470)



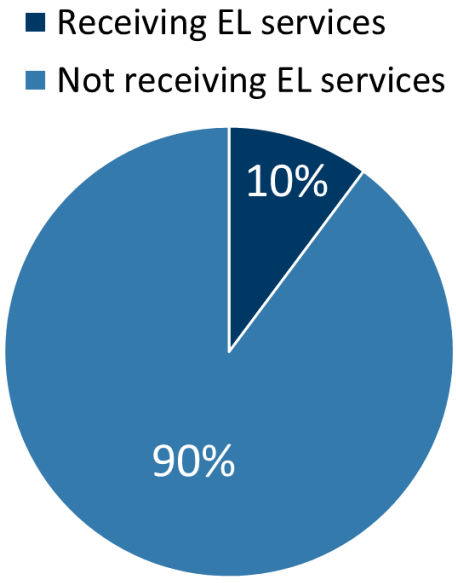
Students who are BVI were slightly more likely to be male (54%) than female (46%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Gender of students who are BVI, 2022–23 (n=470)



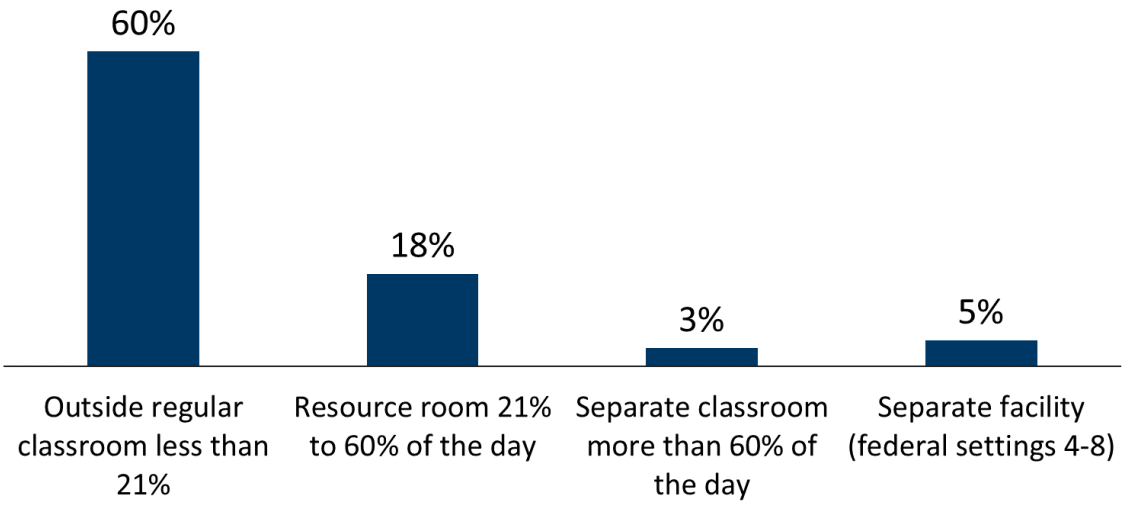
The majority of students who are BVI do not receive English learner (EL) services. In 2022–23, 10% of students who are BVI were receiving EL services (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Percent of students who are BVI who are receiving EL services, 2022–23 (n=470)



Sixty percent of students who are BVI are in the least restrictive federally defined special education setting, spending less than 21% of their school day outside of a regular (i.e., general education) classroom (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Federally defined instructional settings for BVI students, 2022–23 (n=470)



Other Information Sources

Early Childhood Outcomes

Child Outcomes Summary (COS) Overview

School districts and local education providers that operate early childhood special education (ECSE) programs report back ratings to MDE on the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) assessment for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities they serve.

COS ratings are a tool used at the state level for assessing early childhood development for children with disabilities. COS was developed by the US Department of Education and summarizes information on a child's functioning in three outcome areas using a seven-point scale. The three outcome areas are:

- Positive social-emotional skills
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs[6]

The seven-point scale in each of the three areas helps compare an individual child's development with the typical development of same-age peers. A score of seven means a child shows functioning expected for their age in all or almost all situations.

The most recently available COS ratings data for children who are BVI is provided in Appendix C.

Many stakeholders are interested in knowing whether special education programs in early childhood are successfully preparing children who are BVI for elementary school. However, MDE early childhood experts caution against using COS data to evaluate that question for reasons described further below. MDE early childhood experts also caution against focusing on whether children are ready for kindergarten, and instead recommend that kindergarten and elementary programs focus on being ready to meet the needs of all children, regardless of disability or how they perform on any particular assessment when exiting early childhood programming.

Limitations of Available Early Childhood Data Reported to MDE

At this time, COS ratings are the only standardized assessment for which early childhood outcomes can be reported by MDE for children with disabilities. While the ratings can provide helpful insights when used appropriately, MDE early childhood experts caution against using aggregated COS data for year-to-year comparisons, as the information cannot reasonably be used to understand the impact of early intervention programs, which are individualized by nature, over time.

Also, because the number of students in ECSE programs who are identified as BVI is so small, variability from year to year, even with a different assessment tool, would make it challenging to interpret the results in a meaningful way.

An additional challenge of interpreting COS results is the variability among districts in how they derive a child's COS rating.

[6] More information on the three childhood outcomes (https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/three-child-outcomes-breadth.pdf)

Use of Data for Decision-Making in Early Childhood

The limitations of using COS ratings for policy decision-making does not mean that early childhood programs are not using data to make decisions regarding supports and instruction for children with disabilities on a day-to-day basis. On the contrary, ECSE programs, as with special education programs in elementary and secondary schools, collect and use data on a regular basis to monitor progress of individual students and adjust supports or accommodations.

Students are comprehensively evaluated by Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, who set goals for an individual child and then use many methods for data collection to monitor the child's progress toward their goals over time. Depending on a child's need, a practitioner may use a variety of methods to track progress, including criterion- or norm-referenced tools, checklists, observations, parent interviews, and reviews of student work. Most evaluations of child progress require both the use of a standardized tool and affirmation of those results from a criterion-referenced tool, observation, interview, or other method.

Outcomes for Students Who Are Deafblind

Deafblindness is defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as "concomitant (simultaneous) hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness." Under Minnesota Administrative Rules 3525.1327, a student is eligible for special education services under the deafblind category if they have medically verified visual loss coupled with medically verified hearing loss that, together, interfere with acquiring information or interacting with the environment.

Although students who are deafblind (DB) are not mentioned in the statute describing this report (Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.63), the staff who serve these students also serve students who are deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) and BVI. Therefore, the recommendations for improving outcomes for students who are BVI could also have positive impacts on students who are DB. However, it is important to note that deafblindness is a separate disability with a multiplicative impact with a high degree of heterogeneity due to the exponential number of possible combinations of hearing and vision loss.

Appendix D contains a full summary of enrollment, demographics, and reading and math outcomes for students who are DB. In the 2022–23 school year, there were 118 children and students from birth to age 21 whose primary disability category was DB in MDE's child count data. Some data on the educational outcomes of students who are DB cannot be reported, as data is suppressed for groups smaller than ten.

Statewide Student Assessment Data Trends

Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.63, subdivision 4(b), requires that this report include aggregated, data-based education outcomes consistent with the commissioner's school performance report cards. Math and reading proficiency, as demonstrated on the math and reading MCA and MTAS, are major elements of MDE

performance report cards. These tests are intended to measure whether students have achieved proficiency on the state standards for their grade level in math and reading.

Consistent with the commissioner's school performance report cards, this section reports on aggregate math and reading assessment data at the state, regional, and district levels. It compares proficiency rates in math and reading for students who were identified as BVI with all students who receive special education services and with all students generally.

Assessment results are reported here as "proficient" and "not proficient." Students are considered proficient if they meet or exceed the state proficiency standards for their grade level, while students are considered not proficient if they only partially meet or do not meet the standards. The MCA and MTAS are only given in grades 3 through 8, and either grade 10 (reading) or grade 11 (math).

The MTAS is an adapted test for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and must be required by a student's IEP; the MTAS assesses proficiency in the same way as the MCA, so the results are presented in this section using similar terminology and visualizations.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Assessment Data Reporting and Results

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rapid shift to remote learning for almost all students in Minnesota for the last several months of the 2019–20 school year, the state received federal government waivers to suspend standardized exam testing. **Therefore, MCA and MTAS testing data is not available for 2020.** That is reflected in this section of the report, where graphs and tables do not have test result data for 2020.

Other Limitations

It should be noted that there are several challenges students who are BVI encounter on the MCA and MTAS assessments, which should be considered when interpreting the results:

- **Accessibility:** Existing adaptive online tests are not accessible to students who are blind. Instead, these students receive a hard copy test in braille.
- **Fatigue:** Students who are BVI often spend twice as much time testing as their peers.
- **Assessment validity with tactile graphics:** Issues with the tactile graphics provided in test materials put into question whether a student is being assessed for their math skills or their tactile graphics skills. The existing tests do not always provide good data regarding learned skills.
- **Test appropriateness:** Many students who are BVI may be given the MTAS in error—data indicates that the appropriateness of the test provided may not be correct.[7]

As noted previously, results are reported only for groups with ten or more students to protect individual privacy. The note "not enough data" or "cell too small to report" means the number of students was too small to report,

[7] Ferrell, Bruce & Luckner (2014)

or that there were fewer than ten students in that group. Three of the eleven regions had ten or more students who were BVI with math and reading assessment results (Region 7, Region 10, and Region 11). Only demographic data and assessment data trends summaries for those three regions are included in the report. Within the three regions, no district-level results are included because there are too few students who are BVI to include.

MCA Math

Rates of proficiency in math, as measured by the MCA assessment, declined for students who are BVI, from 40% in 2018 to 32% by 2023 (Figure 9), although they still had higher rates of proficiency on the MCA math assessment than all students who receive special education services (Figure 10). While higher than students who are BVI and all students who receive special education services, the math proficiency rates for all students also declined during the same period (Figure 11).

Figure 9. Percentage of **students who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

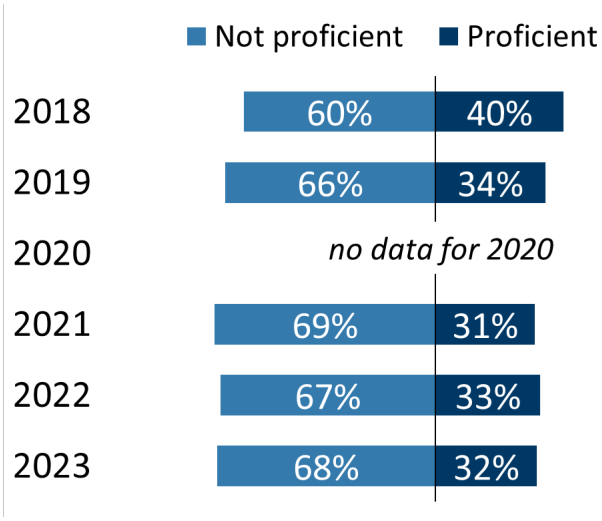


Figure 10. Percentage of **all students who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

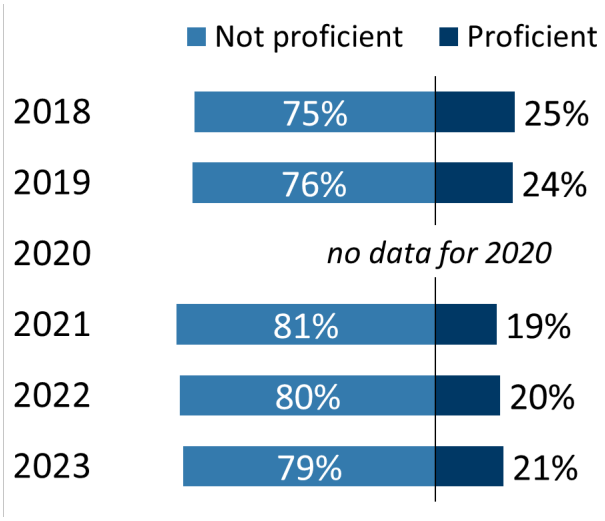
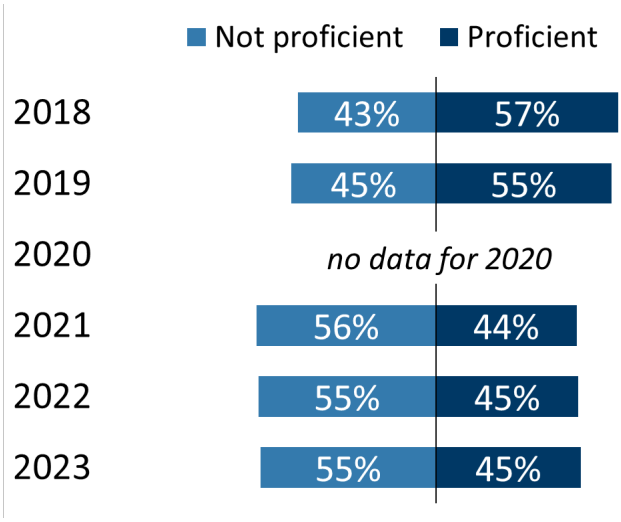


Figure 11. Percentage of **all students in Minnesota** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment



MCA math proficiency from 2021 to 2023 generally was stable or showed improvements of up to 12 percentage points for students who are BVI across all grade levels. Exceptions include 5th grade, with BVI scores increasing by 22 percentage points, and 8th grade and 11th grade, with scores declining by 7 and 27 percentage points, respectively (Figure 12 and Figure 13).

Figure 12. Percentage of students who are BVI who are proficient on the MCA math assessment, grades 3–5

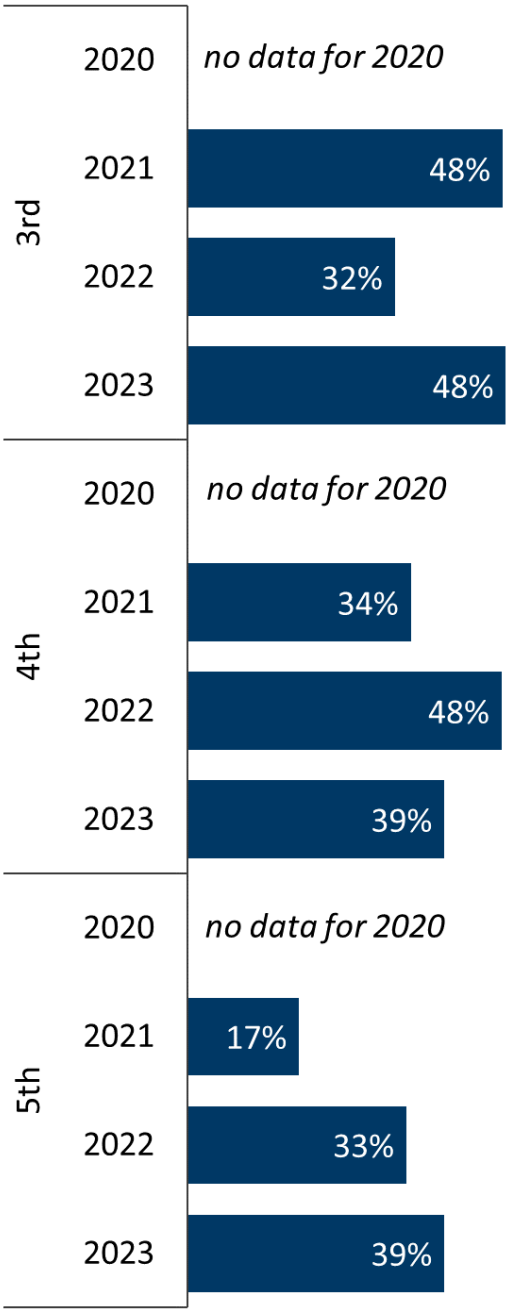
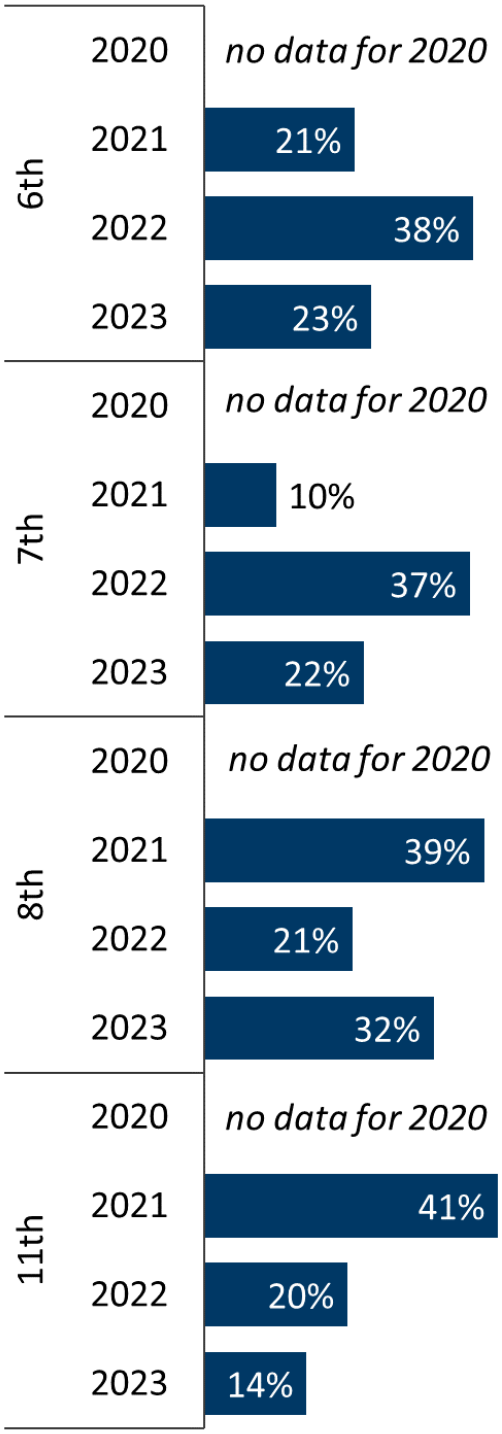


Figure 13. Percentage of students who are BVI who are proficient on the MCA math assessment, grades 6–11



MTAS Math

Only students who receive special education services take the MTAS math assessment, an adapted version of the MCA for students with significant intellectual disabilities. From 2022 to 2023, the percentage of students who are BVI who are proficient on the MTAS math assessment decreased 32 percentage points, from 90% to 58% (Figure 14). Meanwhile, the math proficiency rate on the MTAS for all students who receive special education services decreased slightly, from 62% to 60% (Figure 15).

Figure 14. Percentage of **students who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS math assessment

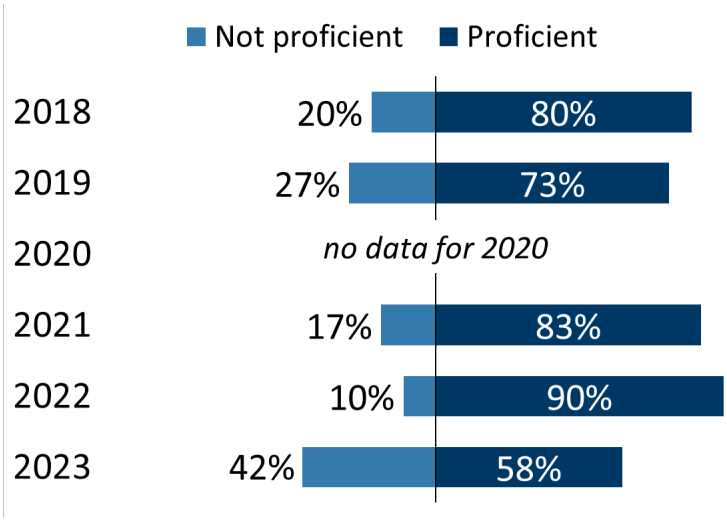
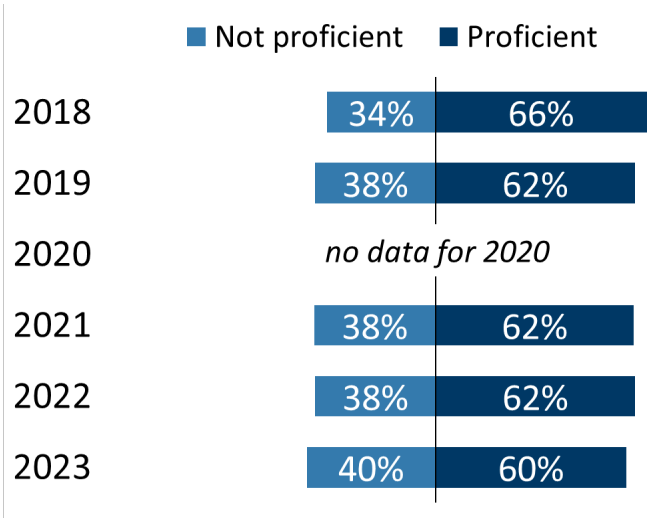


Figure 15. Percentage of **all students who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS math assessment



MCA Reading

MCA reading proficiency rates for students who are BVI remained steady at around 40% between 2018 and 2023, with the exception of 2022, when it dropped to 36% for the first time in four years (Figure 16). Meanwhile, the MCA reading proficiency rates for all students who receive special education services and all students in Minnesota both declined during the same period (Figure 17 and Figure 18).

Figure 16. Percentage of **students who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

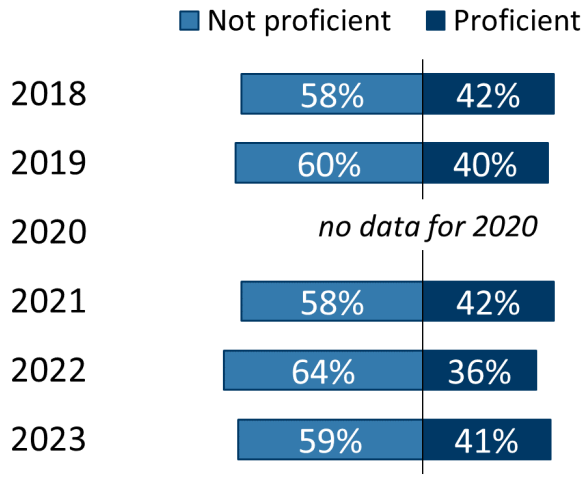


Figure 17. Percentage of **all students who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

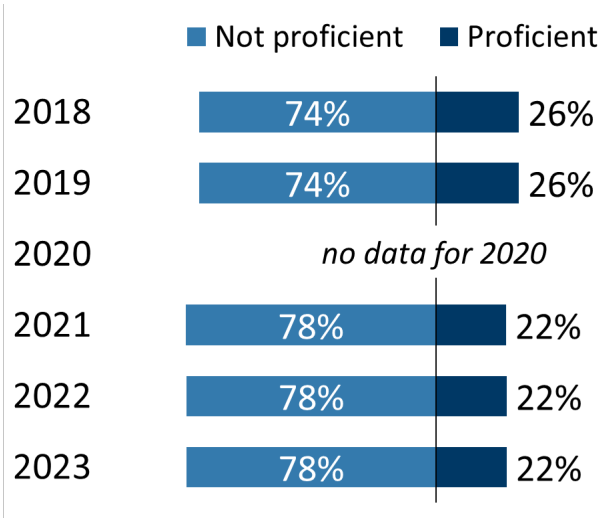
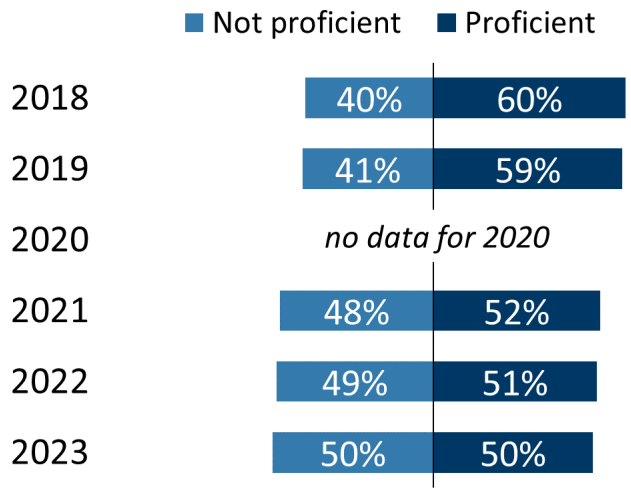


Figure 18. Percentage of **all students in Minnesota** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment



Among students who are BVI, the level and direction of change in MCA reading assessment proficiency from 2021 to 2023 varied considerably by grade level. The largest percentage point changes in MCA reading assessment proficiency were of 15 and 28-percentage-point declines in 4th and 8th grades and 24 and 31-percentage point increases in 7th and 5th grades (Figure 19 and Figure 20).

Figure 19. Percentage of students who are BVI who are proficient on the MCA reading assessment, grades 3–5

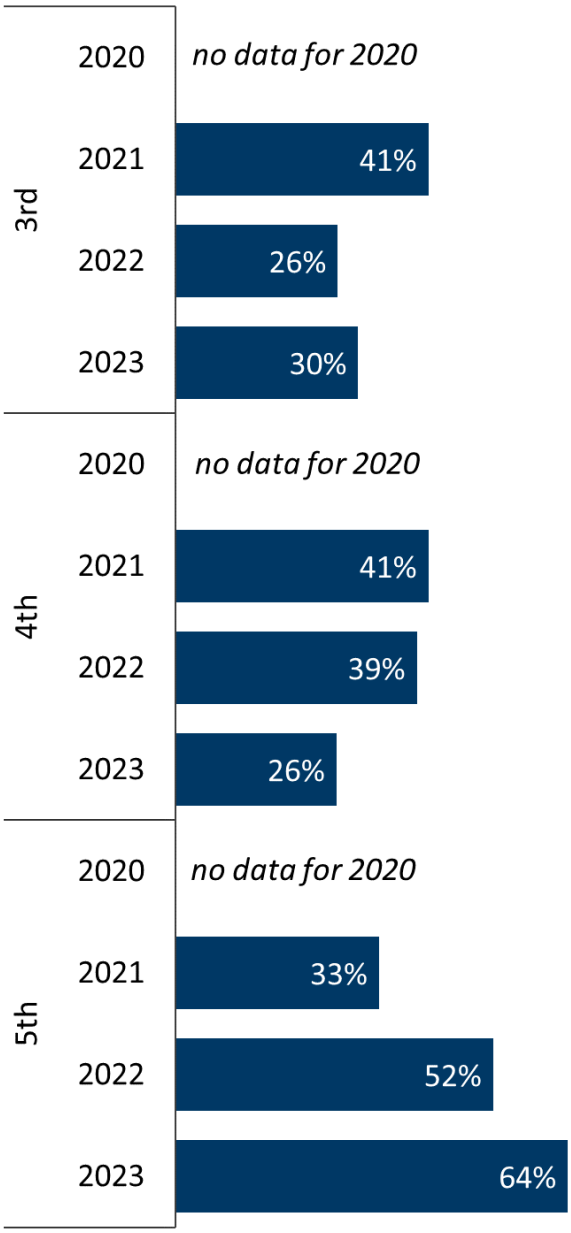
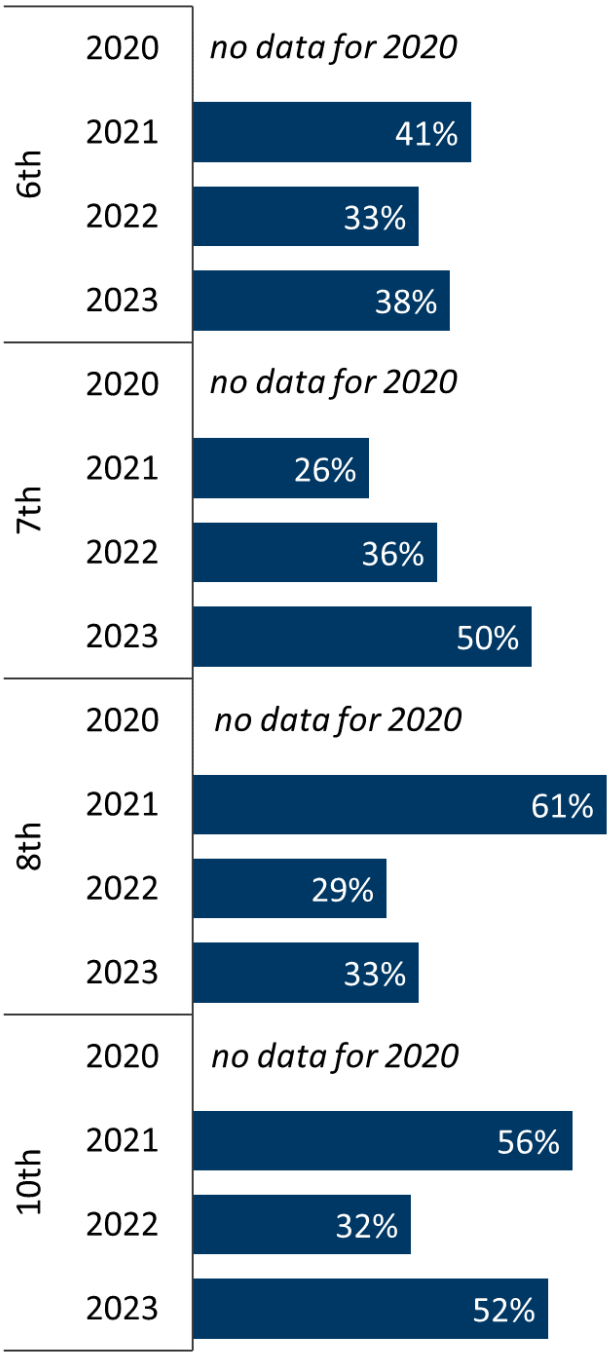


Figure 20. Percentage of students who are BVI who are proficient on the MCA reading assessment, grades 6–10



MTAS Reading

The percentage of students who are BVI who were proficient decreased on the MTAS reading assessment, an adapted version of the MCA for students with significant disabilities, from 77% in 2022 to 71% in 2023 (Figure 21), while the proficiency rate on the MTAS reading assessment for all students who receive special education services remained unchanged (Figure 22).

Figure 21. Percentage of **students who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS reading assessment

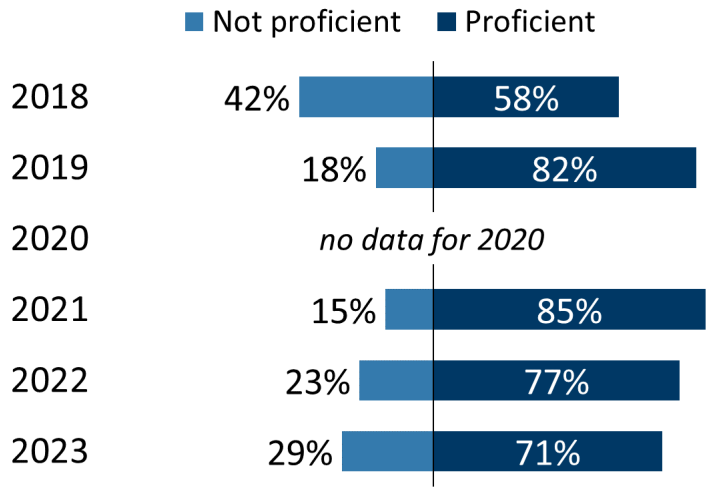
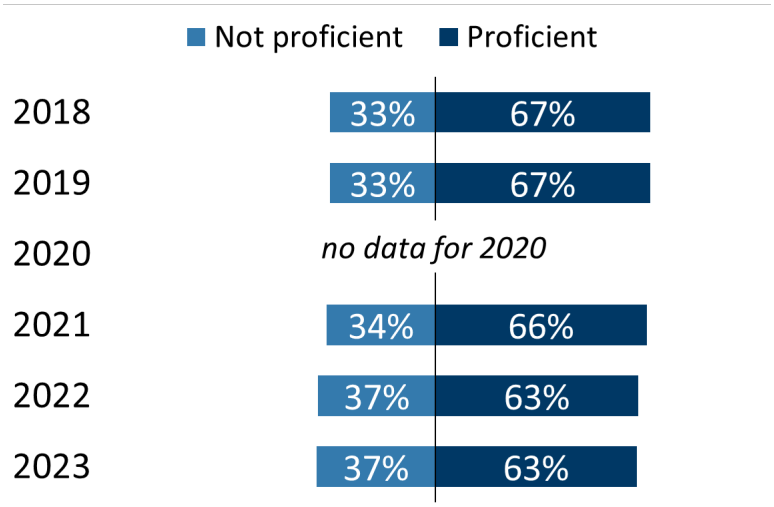


Figure 22. Percentage of **all students who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS reading assessment



Regional Assessment Data Trends

As stated above, to protect individual privacy, results are reported only on population groups greater than ten. Only three regions (Region 7, Region 10, and Region 11) had ten or more students who are BVI with math and reading assessment results. This section provides a summary of demographic and assessment data for these three regions.

Region 7

Figure 23. Shaded map of Region 7

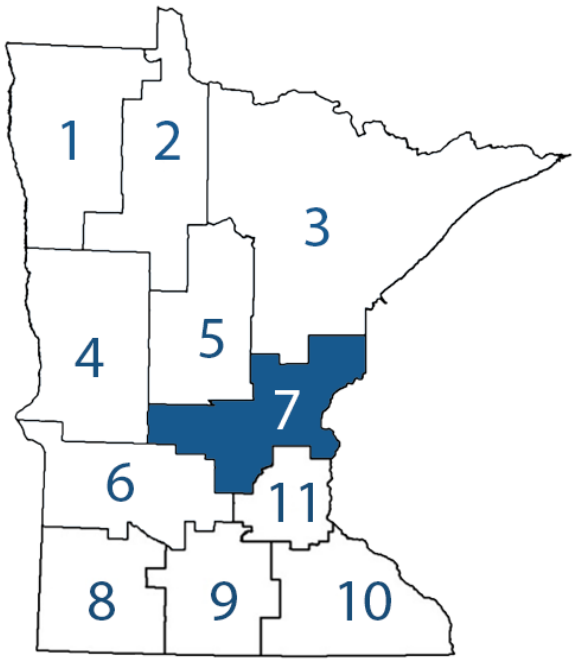


Table 3 includes the number of K–12 students enrolled in Region 7 from 2019–20 to 2022–23. Enrollment increased each year during the period.

Table 3. Number of BVI students enrolled in Region 7 by year, 2019–20 to 2022–23

Year	BVI enrolled
2019–20	61
2020–21	62
2021–22	64
2022–23	69

MCA Math

Students in Region 7 who are BVI increased their math proficiency rate on the MCA from 2022 to 2023, from 40% in 2021 to 46% in 2023 (Figure 24). The MCA math proficiency rates for students in Region 7 who are BVI are higher than those for all students who receive special education services (Figure 25). Math proficiency rates for students who are BVI were only 2 percentage points lower than proficiency rates for all students in the region, indicating a narrowing gap between the two groups (Figure 26).

Figure 24. Percentage of **students in Region 7 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

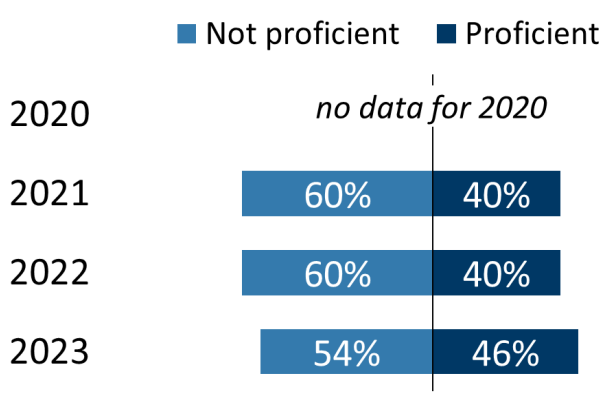


Figure 25. Percentage of **all students in Region 7 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

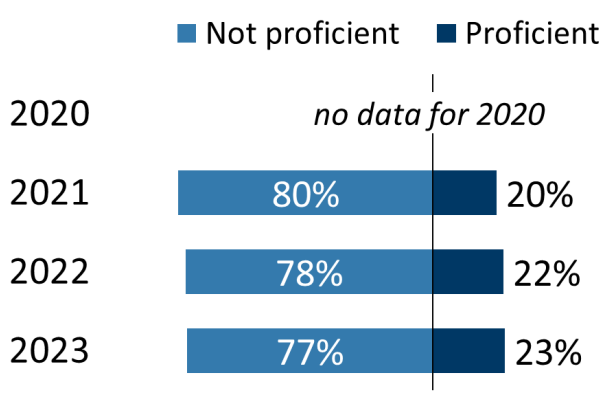
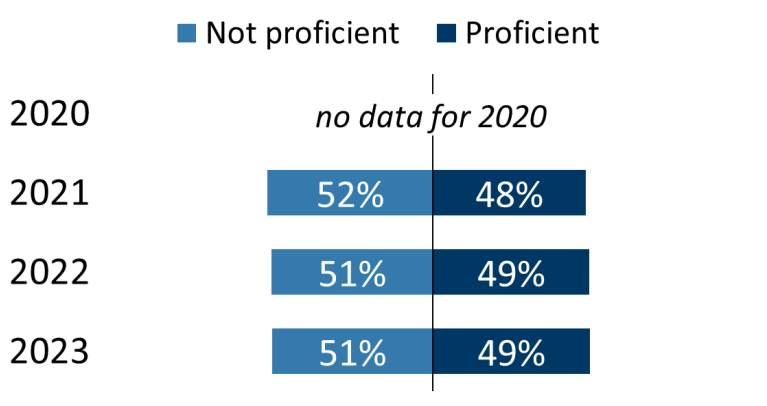


Figure 26. Percentage of **all students in Region 7** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment



MCA Reading

In contrast to the MCA math assessment, reading proficiency, as measured by the MCA reading assessment, decreased for students in Region 7 who are BVI, from 50% in 2022 to 36% in 2023 (Figure 27). Proficiency rates on the MCA reading assessment for all students in Region 7 (Figure 29) and all students in Region 7 who receive special education services also declined, by 1 and 2 percentage points, respectively (Figure 28).

Figure 27. Percentage of **students in Region 7 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

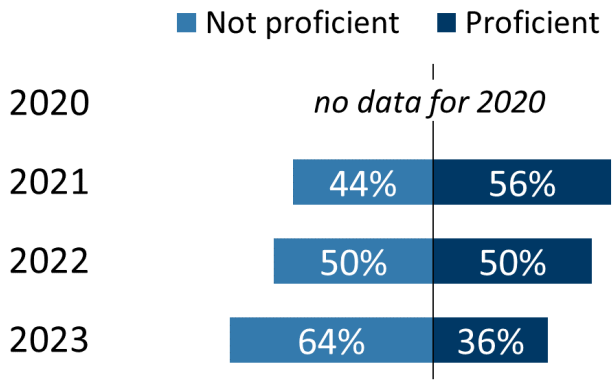


Figure 28. Percentage of **all students in Region 7 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

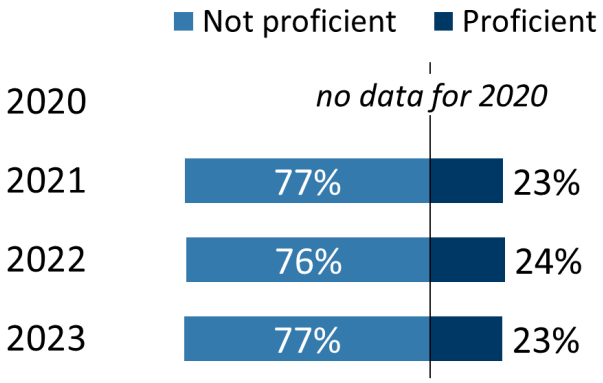
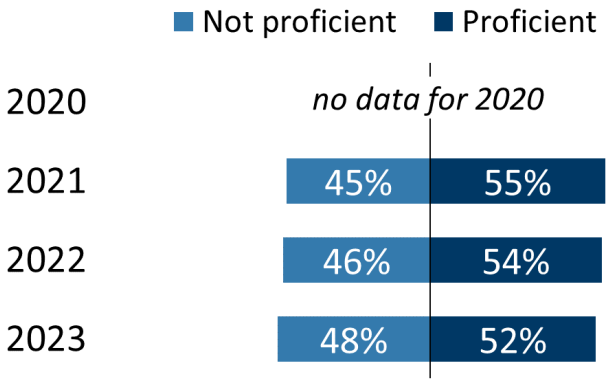


Figure 29. Percentage of **all students in Region 7** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment



Region 10

Figure 30. Shaded map of Region 10

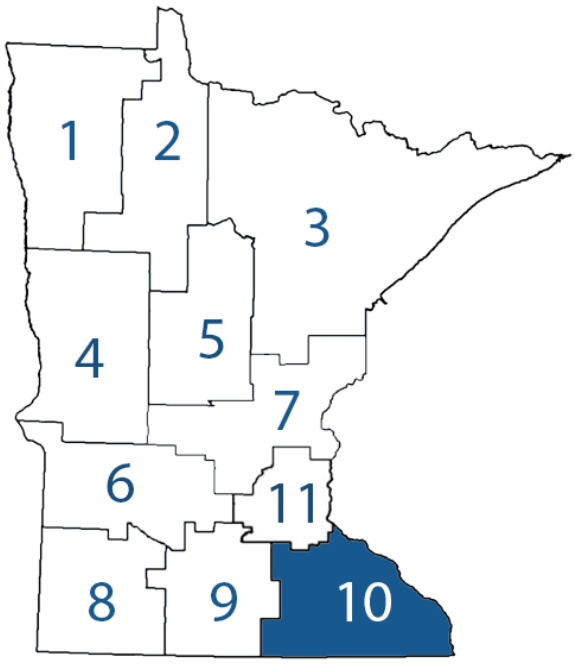


Table 4 includes the number of K–12 students enrolled in Region 10 from 2014–15 to 2022–23. Following a generally consistent increase between 2014–15 and 2020–21, the number of students who are BVI in Region 10 declined to its lowest number in the nine-year period.

Table 4. Number of BVI students enrolled in Region 10 by year, 2014–15 to 2022–23

Year	BVI enrolled
2014–15	60
2015–16	65
2016–17	71
2017–18	72
2018–19	66
2019–20	70
2020–21	77
2021–22	69
2022–23	59

MCA Math

MCA math proficiency rates for students in Region 10 who are BVI increased between 2021 and 2023 (Figure 31). Fourteen percent of students who are BVI were proficient on the math MCA in 2021, and this increased to 29% in both 2022 and 2023. Students who are BVI had generally higher proficiency rates than all students who receive special education services (Figure 32), but lower than all students in Region 10 (Figure 33).

Figure 31. Percentage of **students in Region 10 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

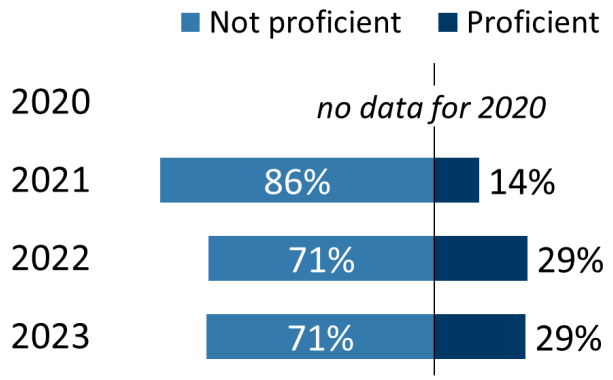


Figure 32. Percentage of **all students in Region 10 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

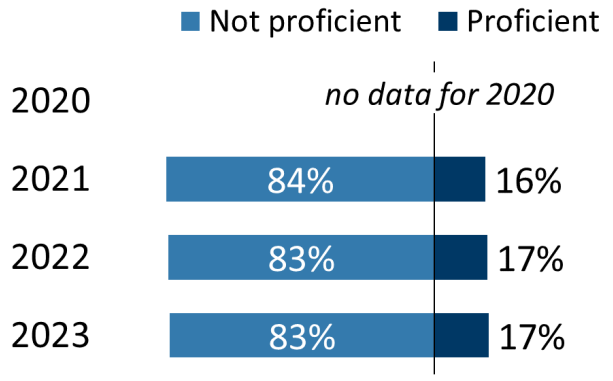
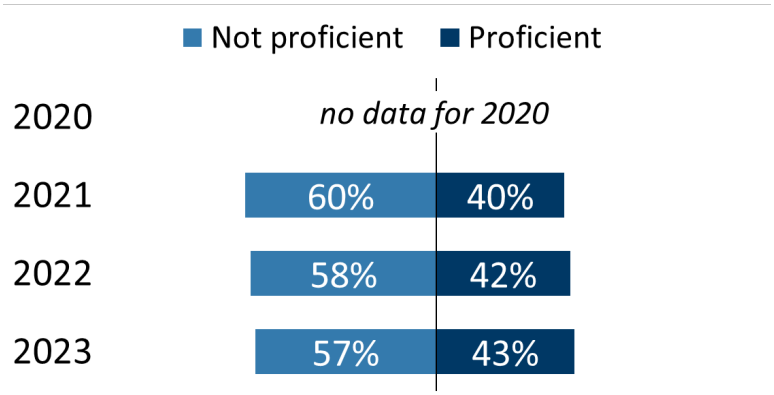


Figure 33. Percentage of **all students in Region 10 who are proficient and not proficient** on the MCA math assessment



MCA Reading

In spite of a drop in 2022, the MCA reading proficiency rate for students in Region 10 who are BVI increased from 38% in 2021 to 50% in 2023 (Figure 34). Meanwhile, the MCA reading proficiency rate for all students who receive special education services remained flat at 19%, while the proficiency rate for all students in Region 10 slightly declined, now falling below that of students who are BVI (Figure 35 and Figure 36).

Figure 34. Percentage of **students in Region 10 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

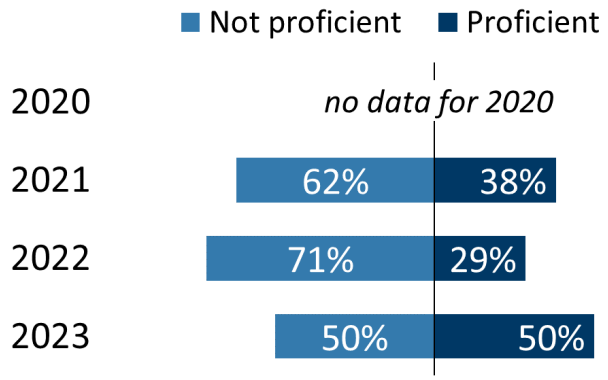


Figure 35. Percentage of **all students in Region 10 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

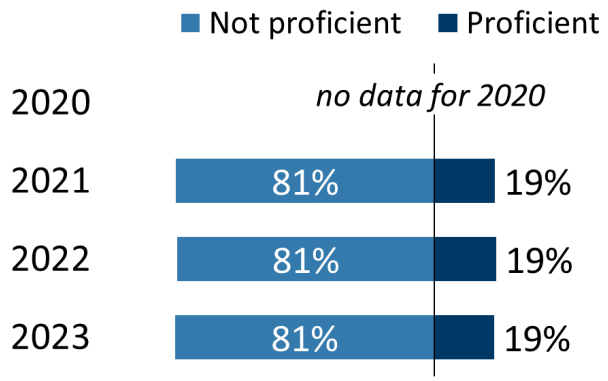
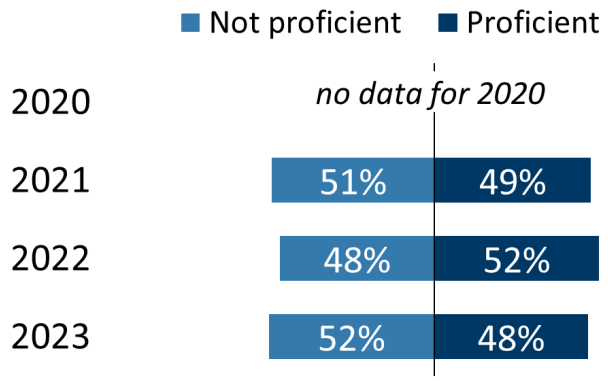


Figure 36. Percentage of **all students in Region 10** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment



Region 11

Figure 37. Shaded map of Region 11

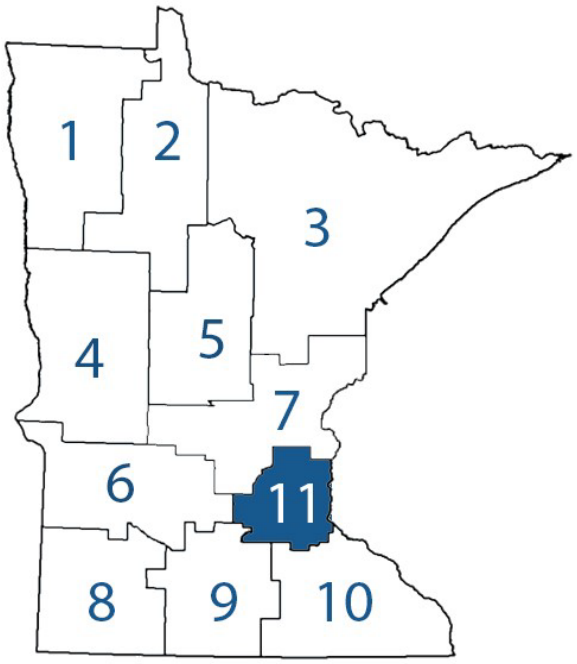


Table 5 includes the number of K–12 students enrolled in Region 11 from 2014–15 to 2022–23. Over this period, the number of students who are BVI in Region 11 saw a stable increase until 2021–22, followed by a decline in 2022–23.

Table 5. Number of BVI students enrolled in Region 11 by year, 2014–15 to 2022–23

Year	BVI enrolled
2014–15	173
2015–16	176
2016–17	182
2017–18	186
2018–19	194
2019–20	202
2020–21	195
2021–22	203
2022–23	181

MCA Math

The MCA math proficiency rate for students in Region 11 who are BVI increased from 31% in 2021 to 33% in 2023 (Figure 38). The math proficiency rate similarly increased for all students who receive special education services and remained flat for all students in Region 11 (Figure 39 and Figure 40). Compared with all students who receive special education services, students in Region 11 who are BVI have had higher rates of proficiency on the math MCA. However, their proficiency rates are lower than those for all students.

Figure 38. Percentage of **students in Region 11 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

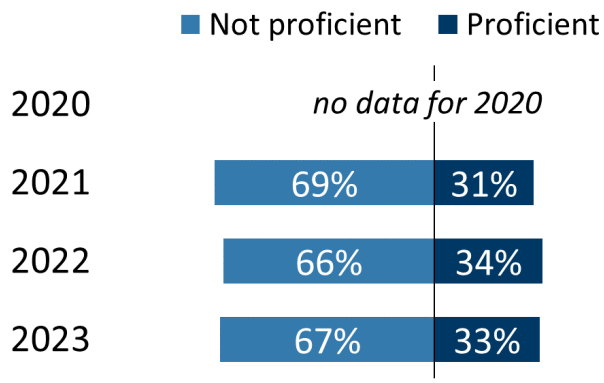


Figure 39. Percentage of **all students in Region 11 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment

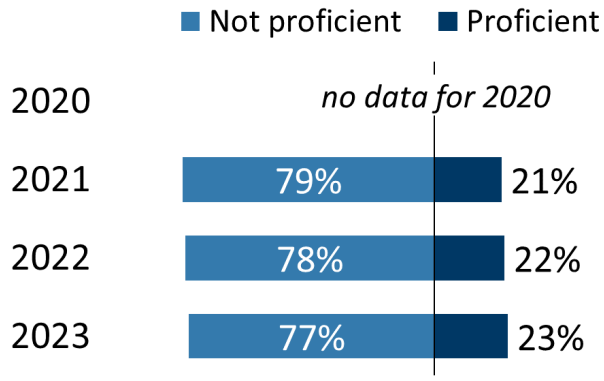
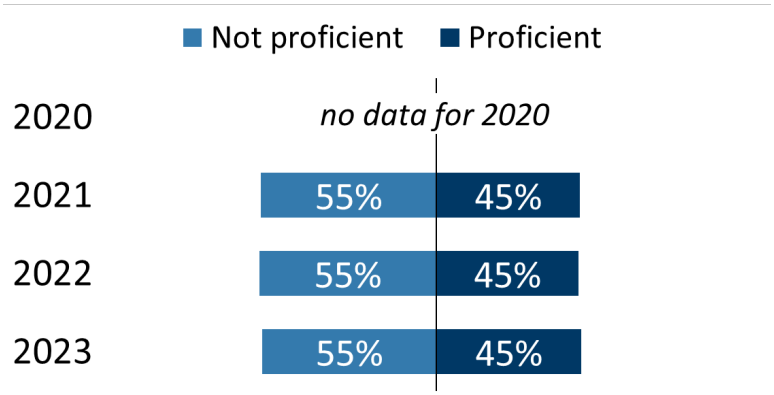


Figure 40. Percentage of **all students in Region 11** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment



MCA Reading

Similar to the MCA math assessment, proficiency rates on the MCA reading assessment increased slightly from 2021 to 2023 for students who are BVI (Figure 41). The MCA reading proficiency rate for students in the region receiving special education services (Figure 42) remained consistent; rates for all students in the region decreased by 4 percentage points (Figure 43). As with math proficiency, all students who receive special education services in Region 11 have lower reading proficiency rates on the MCA than those who are BVI. Also, reading proficiency rates for students who are BVI are lower than those for all students.

Figure 41. Percentage of **students in Region 11 who are BVI** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

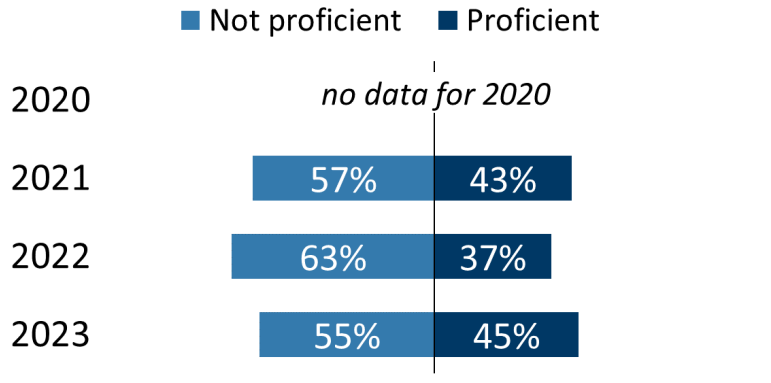


Figure 42. Percentage of **all students in Region 11 who receive special education services** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment

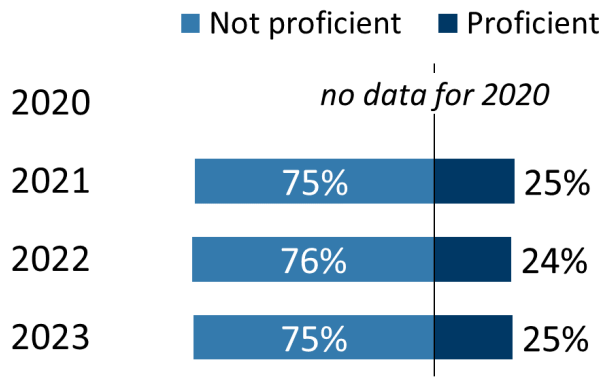
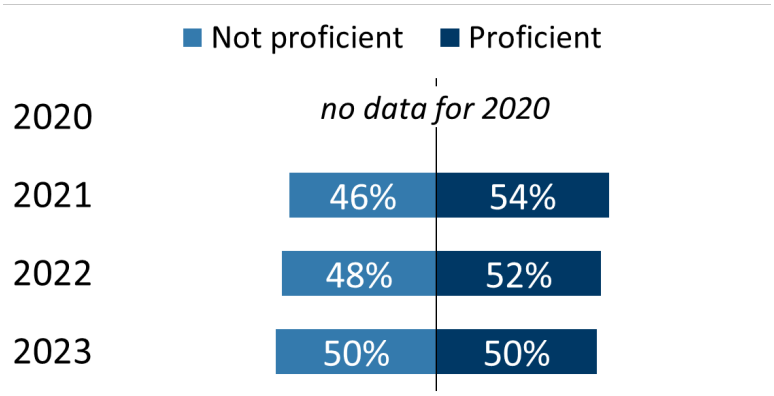


Figure 43. Percentage of **all students in Region 11** who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment



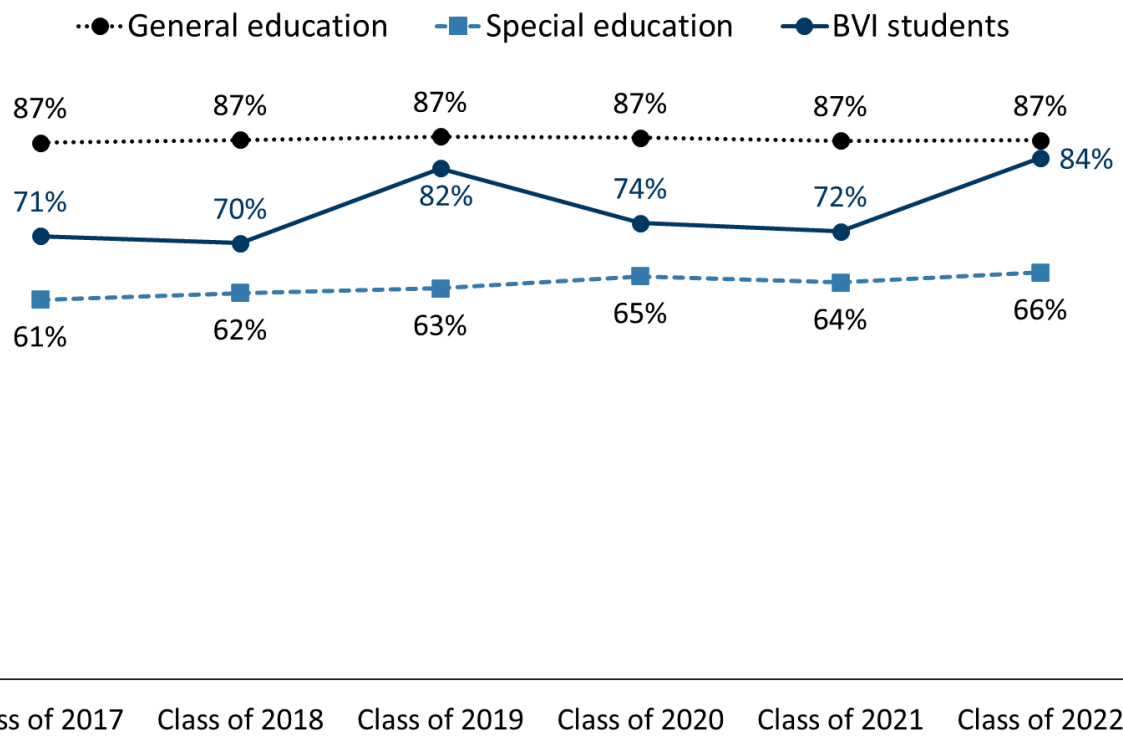
Graduation Rates

The most recent graduation rate data available at the time of writing this report is from 2022, which includes four-year graduation rate data for the class of 2022 and seven-year graduation rate data for the class of 2019. Students are counted in the graduation rate as BVI only if their primary disability category was BVI in their last known enrollment record found by MDE.

Approximately forty students who are BVI are included in any statewide four-year graduation rate calculation. Since the size of the group is so small, it is important to note that just a few students' outcomes can change the graduation rate significantly from year to year. Therefore, the graduation rate trends over time for BVI students may fluctuate.

The four-year graduation rate[8] for students who are BVI rose by 12 percentage points from the class of 2021 to the class of 2022 (Figure 44). Students who are BVI are a smaller group within the group of all students who receive special education services, but students who are BVI have consistently higher four-year graduation rates than all students in special education. While generally lower than those of general education students, the four-year graduation rate for students who are BVI nearly caught up with that of the former in 2022.

Figure 44. Four-year graduation rate comparison, class of 2017 to class of 2022



[8] From the MDE Report Card description of how graduation rates are calculated: "Starting in 2012, Minnesota began using the federally required 'adjusted cohort graduation rate' model. This model follows students in a group, or a 'cohort,' throughout high school and determines if they graduate within four, five, six, or seven years. The four-year graduation rate shows the number of students graduating from high school within four years after entering grade nine. To determine this rate, we identify all students who entered ninth grade four years ago. The next step is to add in any students who moved into the school and subtract out any students who moved away. This adjusted number represents the total number of students who are eligible to graduate. The actual graduation rate is determined by dividing the total number of students who actually graduated by the number of those eligible to graduate."

There are four possible outcomes for a student with a graduation cohort:

- **Graduate**—the student received a diploma.
- **Continue**—the student is found to be enrolled in public education in Minnesota the next school year; if a student enrolls in a transition program, or has a second senior year, they are counted as "continuing."
- **Drop out**—the student's last confirmed code indicating why they unenrolled from school is a "drop out" code; this includes students who are automatically counted, by law, as dropouts if they do not attend school for at least fifteen consecutive days.
- **Unknown**—the student's last enrollment or unenrollment code cannot be verified by MDE; for example, a school may report to MDE that a student transferred, but if MDE cannot find an enrollment record anywhere else in the state, then that student is counted as "unknown."

Some students remain enrolled in school until they are 21 years old, as allowed by law, including students who are eligible to receive special education services and who enroll in transition programs. As noted above, these students are in the "continue" category.

Figure 45. Four-year graduation outcomes for students who are BVI, class of 2018 to class of 2022

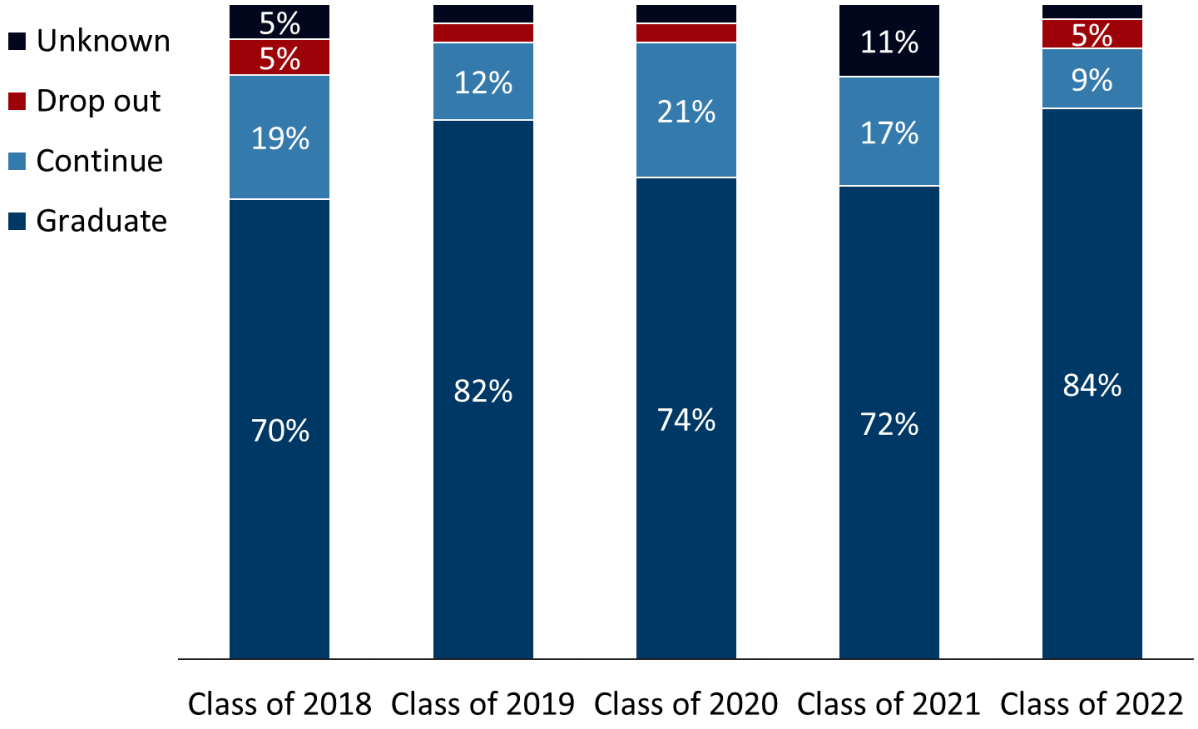
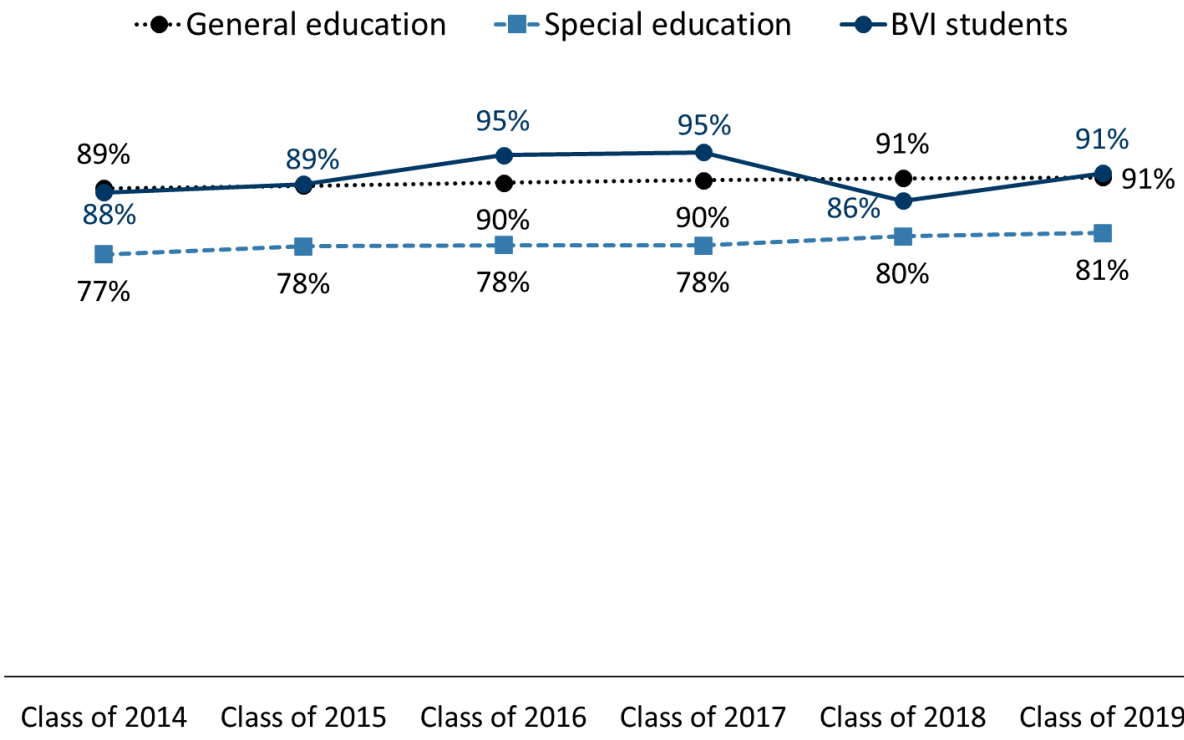


Figure 45 above provides a breakdown of the four outcomes within the four-year graduation rate for students who are BVI. The unknown and dropout rates are relatively low and have not changed significantly in the last few years. Differences in the graduation rate from year to year can instead be attributed to larger or smaller percentages of students who are BVI continuing in school beyond four years.

As noted above, students who continue their education after four years of high school are not captured in the four-year graduation rate, even if they technically have enough credits to graduate in four years.[9] They are more likely to be captured in the seven-year graduation rate.[10]

Figure 46. Seven-year graduation rate comparison, class of 2014 to class of 2019



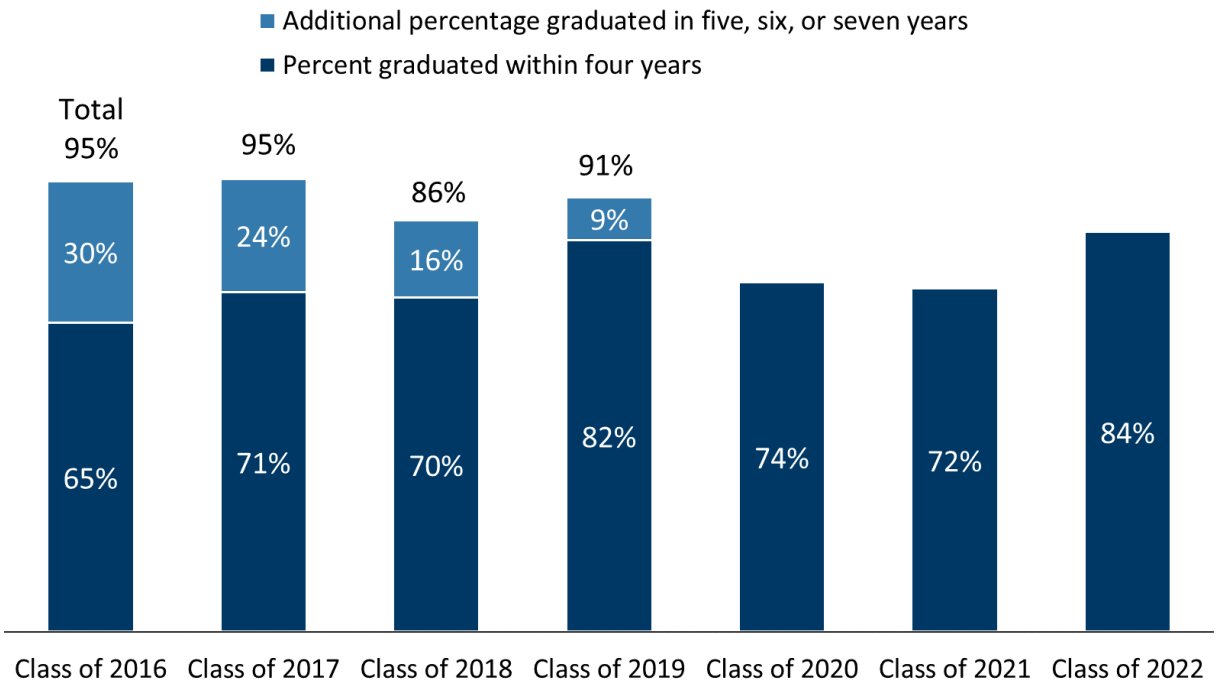
[9] Schools cannot receive funding for the education of a student if that student has already graduated. So, if a student who has enough credits, or who met their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals for graduation, received a diploma from their high school at the end of four years, they would not be eligible to enroll in a transition program.

[10] Some students, depending on how old they are when they start high school, may be in high school or a transition program for more than seven years. For example, if a student in the class of 2024 is seventeen years old at the end of four years of high school and enrolls in a transition program until they turn twenty-one, they may stay in school until 2028 and would not be counted as graduating in the seven-year graduation rate of the class of 2024, since they are continuing in school beyond seven years.

As illustrated in Figure 46 above, the seven-year graduation rate[11] for students who are BVI rose to 95% for the classes of 2016 and 2017 but dropped slightly to 91% for the class of 2019. The seven-year rate for students who are BVI has been consistently higher than the seven-year rate for all students who receive special education services and was consistently as high or higher than the rate for general education students.

Figure 47 combines the four-year and seven-year graduation rates for students who are BVI, from the class of 2016 through the class of 2022. Seven-year graduation rates are not yet available for the class of 2020 through the class of 2022. Even in years when the four-year graduation rate was lower, the additional percentage who graduated within five, six, or seven years has kept the seven-year graduation rate for students who are BVI almost at or above 90% for the last several years.

Figure 47. Four-year and seven-year graduation rates for students who are BVI, class of 2016 to class of 2022



[11] From the MDE Report Card description of how graduation rates are calculated: "The five-, six- and seven-year graduation rates show the number of students who graduated in four years added to the number of students who took additional time to earn sufficient credits or meet other graduation requirements and to receive a high school diploma from their district. These three extended year graduation rates are calculated in the same way as the four-year rate but instead determine the percentage of students graduating in five, six and seven years."

Postsecondary Outcomes

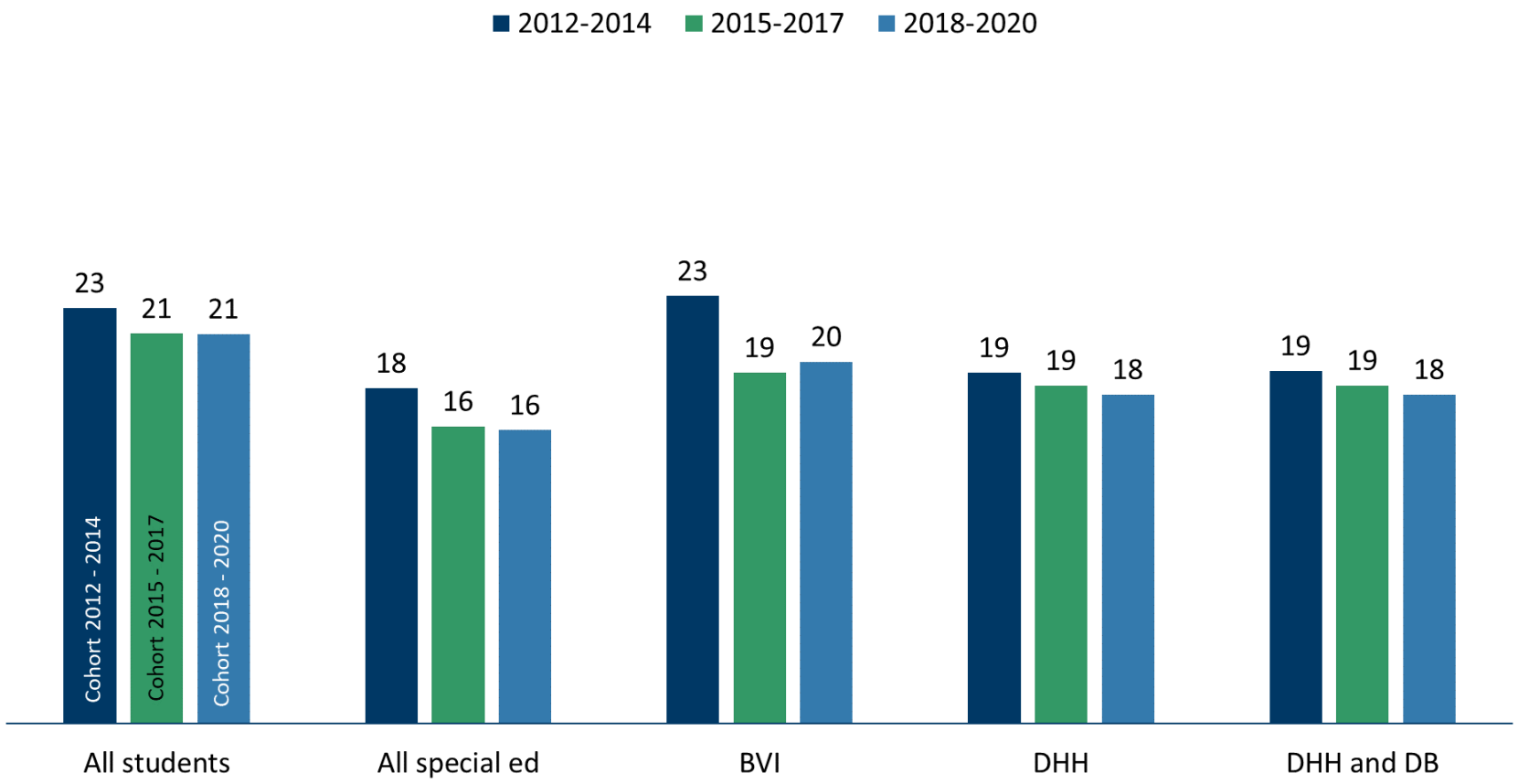
In 2022, MDE established a data sharing agreement (DSA) with the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) to access de-identified, individual-level Minnesota Statewide Longitudinal Education Data System (SLEDS) data, in order to analyze the post-secondary outcomes for DHH and BVI students between 2006 and 2020.

As part of the analysis, five cohorts (or groupings) were created to increase the number of students included for comparison over time. In additional figures, BVI students were used as a comparison group. Relevant information for BVI students from data analysis is included in this section.

ACT Performance

Figure 48 shows the average ACT composite scores for students in Minnesota by primary disability category for each of the cohorts. The highest possible composite score on the ACT is a 36. As illustrated, while there was a slight decline in average ACT composite scores over the years, the scores of all Minnesota students continued to consistently be at least 4 percentage points higher than those of students receiving special education services, and at least two points higher than composite scores for DHH students, including when DHH and DB are combined. The average composite score for BVI students matched that for all students in the 2012–2014 cohort but fell slightly behind in the following two cohorts. For context, the fall 2022 class of students admitted to the University of Minnesota Twin Cities had ACT composite scores between 27 and 32.

Figure 48. Average ACT composite scores for students in Minnesota by primary disability



Post-Secondary Enrollment

The rates of post-secondary enrollment within one year after high school graduation was remarkably lower for students who receive special education services than for all students. However, enrollment rates are higher for BVI and DHH students than for all students in the special education population.

Figure 49 compares percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in a post-secondary institution within one year after high school. The rates of post-secondary enrollment within one year after high school graduation was remarkably lower for students who receive special

education services than for all students. However, enrollment rates are higher for BVI and DHH students than for all students in the special education population.

Figure 49. Percentage of high school graduates in Minnesota that enrolled in a post-secondary institution within one year of graduation by primary disability

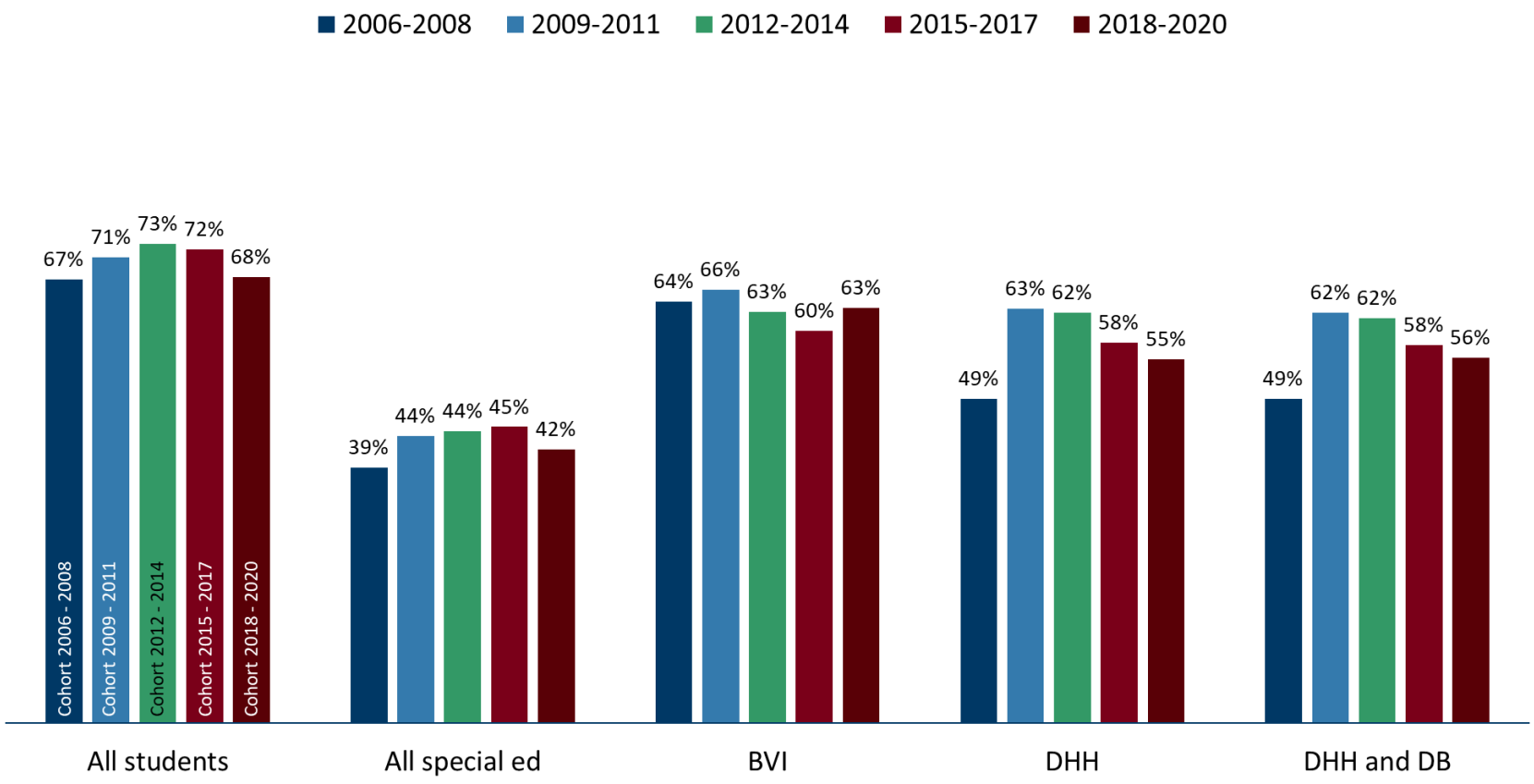
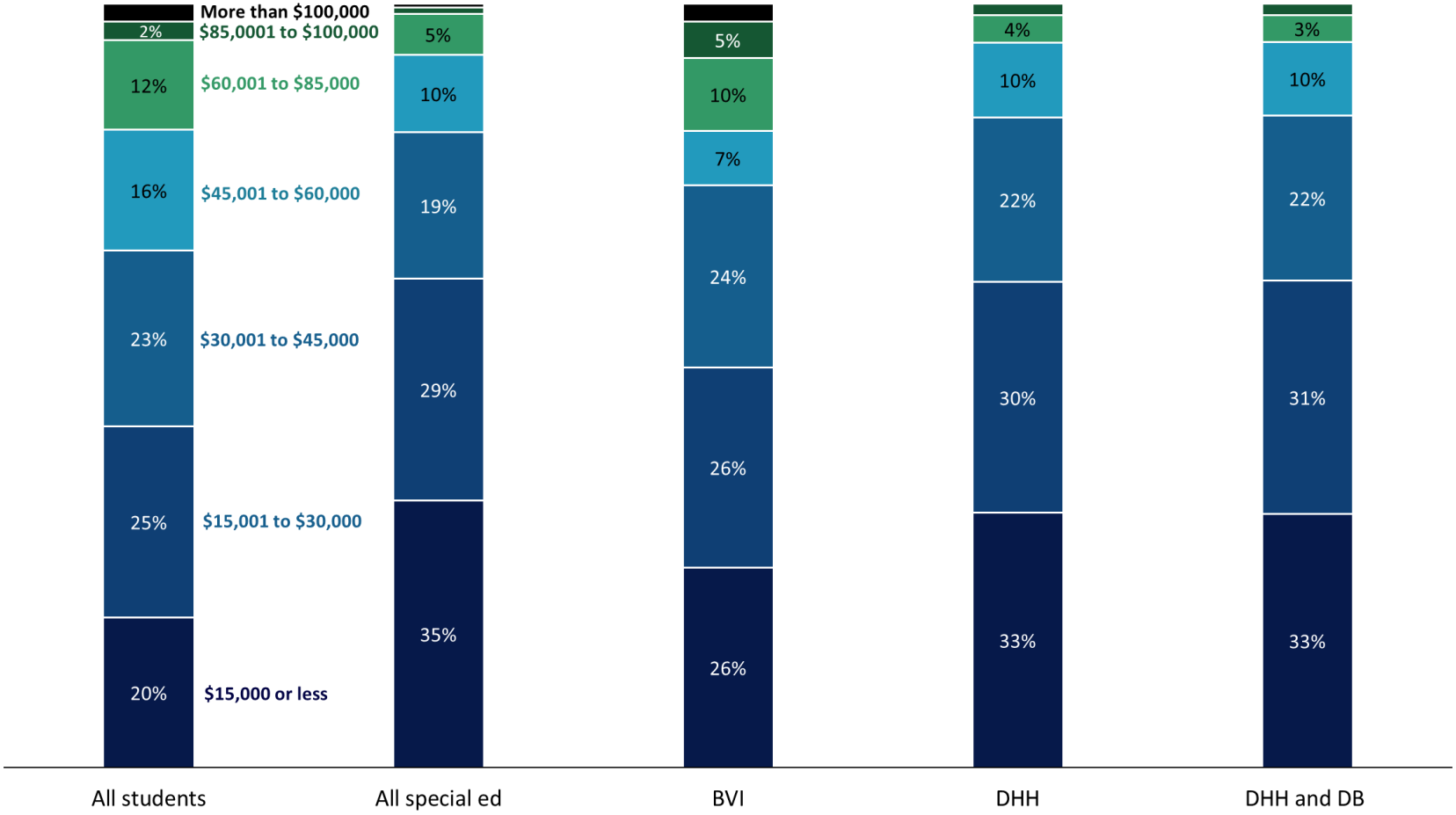


Figure 50 compares the average income of students in Minnesota by ten years after exiting high school. As depicted, a higher percentage of students who received special education services, including BVI, DHH, and DHH plus DB, are in the lowest income brackets, compared with all students. While 32% of all high school graduates were making more than $45,000 a year ten years after graduation from 2016 to 2020, this percentage was 24% for BVI students, compared with 15% for DHH students and when DHH and DB groups are combined.

Figure 50. Percent of high school graduates in each annual wage category ten years after graduation, 2016 to 2020 combined



Conclusion

Based on the data available, students who were BVI and were assessed by MCA and MTAS testing for math or reading scored higher than their peers in special education but below their peers in general education. The BVI Advisory Committee believes the most effective ways to effectively and safely support BVI students, improve their proficiency levels in reading and math, and increase their graduation rates are to:

- **Increase access to accessible educational materials.**
    - Continue using MAC and Assistive Tech Tuesdays as platforms for open dialogue regarding equitable access and resources. This includes offering recorded professional development sessions and sharing research-based best practices around Universal Design for Learning, assistive technology, and accessibility.
    - Provide guidance to publishers regarding accessibility features in software and instructional materials to ensure full implementation of the READ Act for students who are BVI.
    - Request LEAs to utilize specific accessible materials language in materials contracts, as outlined in the MDE Assistive Technology Manual Update.
- **Address shortages in educated and licensed TBVI and COMS.**
    - Fund the creation of a university program to prepare more TBVI and COMS to address the need for qualified instructors of students who are BVI.
    - Continue the statewide mentoring program for teachers during their first three years as licensed TBVI.
- **Consider requesting the reporting of secondary and tertiary disability labels of students.**
    - Consider requiring all school districts to report secondary and tertiary disabilities of students who are BVI to provide accurate student counts and help anticipate the number of TBVI and COMS needed to effectively serve students with visual impairment.
- **Provide time needed to teach the ECC in Minnesota.**
    - Encourage student participation in ECC activities through continued support of ECC initiatives and activities and regularly sharing resources with families and IEP team members.
    - Set aside time for meetings with school-based student teams to update ECC progress, communication, and learning plans of students who are BVI.
    - Compile ECC resources to share with families and IEP team members.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this report. Please feel free to contact Diane Dohnalik (Diane.Dohnalik@state.mn.us) with questions.

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Appendix A: Expanded Core Curriculum

What is the Expanded Core Curriculum?

The term "Expanded Core Curriculum" (ECC) defines concepts and skills that require specialized instruction for students who are blind or visually impaired (BVI). Instruction of the ECC is necessary in order to compensate for the decreased opportunities to learn incidentally by visually observing others. The ECC provides students who are BVI with improved access to the general education core curriculum (arts, science, language arts, social studies, mathematics, physical education, health, career, and technical education and world languages). Students with visual impairments, starting at birth, need instruction in the ECC in order to participate fully in general education. The ECC areas include "(A) needs that result from the visual impairment that enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and (B) other educational needs that result from the child's disability as required by IDEA (34 CFR 300.320 (a)(2)(A)(B))." The presence of a visual impairment requires that teachers with specialized expertise thoroughly evaluate and systematically teach the skills listed below. Without specialized instruction, children with vision loss may not be aware of the activities of their peers or acquire other critical information about their surroundings (NASDSE, 1999, p. 70).

ECC Areas:

A. Assistive Technology, Including Optical Devices
B. Career Education and Planning
C. Compensatory Skills
D. Independent Living Skills
E. Orientation and Mobility (O&M)
F. Recreation and Leisure Skills
G. Self-Determination
H. Sensory Efficiency, Including Visual, Tactual, and Auditory Skills
I. Social Interaction Skills

A. Assistive Technology, Including Optical Devices:

"Assistive technology" (AT) is an umbrella term that includes assistive and adaptive tools as well as instructional services that permits students with visual impairments to access the general curriculum, increase literacy options and enhance communication. There are a variety of high- and low-tech assistive technology tools designed specifically for students with visual impairments that require specialized instruction from a TBVI or COMS. These tools and devices include, but are not limited to, electronic braille note takers, video magnifiers, screen reader software, screen enlarging software, hand-held optical devices, slate and stylus, abacus, colored line guides and overlays, white canes, wayfinding, and Global Positioning System (GPS) applications and devices.

B. Career Education and Planning:

Students with visual impairments need to be taught about the variety of work and career options available, as they cannot casually observe people in different job roles. They need opportunities to explore their strengths

and interests in a systematic, well-planned manner. This includes the acquisition of specialized skills and equipment to compete in the job market. Students must be prepared for a wide range of vocational choices and the adaptations, including technological devices, that make them attainable. It is important to have opportunities to job shadow with concrete experiences of different career choices and to learn about other persons with visual impairments who have successful vocational outcomes. Through job experiences, students learn work-related skills such as assuming responsibility, punctuality and staying on task. Career education provides opportunities for students to explore and discover their strengths and interests, and plan for transition to adult life.

C. Compensatory Skills:

Compensatory skills include skills necessary for accessing the core curriculum including concept development; communication modes; organization and study skills; access to print materials; and the use of braille/Nemeth, tactile graphics, object and/or tactile symbols, sign language and audio materials. For students who are BVI, an increased reliance upon tactual skills is essential to learning. Tactile skills should be considered in the development of the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP). It takes detailed “hands-on” interaction and repetition to understand a concept tactually, such as relative size, which may be visually captured with a glance.

D. Independent Living Skills:

Independent living skills include the tasks and functions people perform in daily life to increase their independence and contribute to the family structure. These include personal hygiene, eating skills, food preparation, time and money management, clothing care, household tasks and organizational skills, which are critical for successful transition from school to independent living. People with vision typically learn such daily routines through observation, whereas individuals with visual impairments often need systematic instruction and frequent practice in these daily tasks.

E. Orientation and Mobility (O&M):

O&M instruction enables students of all ages and motor abilities to be oriented to their surroundings and to move as independently and safely as possible. Safe and efficient travel through the environment is a critical component in the education of students with visual impairments. O&M evaluation and instruction should begin in infancy with basic spatial concepts, purposeful and exploratory movement and progress through more independent age-appropriate motor and travel skills in increasingly complex environments. Vision provides the primary motivation for infants to begin to move their bodies: to raise their heads to see people, to reach toward objects, to move through the environment and to begin to play. Significant delays and differences in meeting motor milestones can affect overall development. A child who is blind needs to know how classrooms or other environments are arranged in order to independently move with confidence. Systematic orientation to a space may be needed before the placement and function of furniture and objects are understood. As the student gets older, they need more advanced age-appropriate travel skills such as street crossings, bus travel, and community experiences. Students with multiple impairments benefit from O&M instruction that facilitates purposeful movement and increases independence to the greatest degree possible.

F. Recreation and Leisure Skills:

Students who are BVI need to be exposed to and taught recreation and leisure activities they can enjoy as children and throughout their lives. Recreation skills requiring physical activity enable students to learn about and practice a healthier lifestyle. They are often not aware of the options or the possible adaptations that would allow them to participate in these activities. Such skills include both individual and organized group activities for students at all ages and levels that should focus on the development of lifelong skills.

G. Self-Determination:

Self-determination includes personal decision-making, self-advocacy, problem solving and goal setting. Students with visual impairments often have fewer opportunities to develop and practice the specific skills that lead to self-determination. Students who know and value who they are and who have self-determination skills become effective advocates for themselves and therefore have more control over their lives. Students can then meaningfully participate in their educational and transition planning and make positive adult lifestyle, job, and other life choices.

H. Sensory Efficiency (Includes Visual, Tactual, and Auditory Skills):

Sensory efficiency includes instruction in the use of vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. Students who are BVI need systematic instruction to learn efficient use of their senses. Instruction in visual efficiency must be individually designed and may include using visual gaze to make choices, tracking car movements when crossing the street, responding to visual cues in the environment, and using optical devices such as magnifiers and telescopes. Sensory efficiency also addresses the development of the proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and vestibular systems. Learning to use their senses efficiently, including the use of optical devices, will enable students with visual impairments to access and participate in activities in school, home, and community environments.

I. Social Interaction Skills:

Social interaction skills include awareness of body language, gestures, facial expressions, and personal space. Instruction also includes learning about interpersonal relationships, self-control, and human sexuality. Visual impairments can socially isolate students, impede typical social interactions, or limit social skill development. Students with visual impairments may not be able to see facial expressions and subtle body language in order to fully participate in conversations and activities. Almost all social skills are learned by visually observing other people. Instruction in social interaction skills in school, work and recreational settings is crucial. Having appropriate social skills can often mean the difference between social isolation and a fulfilling life as an adult.

Appendix B: Collaborative Statewide Resources

The following table and listed information show which collaborative agency supports and MDE initiatives align with ECC learning opportunities across Minnesota. This is not an exhaustive list of resources and supports available. There are other activities and groups that are specific to regions within Minnesota that are not highlighted in this report. For assistance with questions regarding what resources might be available in your area, contact Diane Dohnalik (Diane.Dohnalik@state.mn.us).

A brief description of each collaborative agency is included after the table. Readers are encouraged to follow the link to each agency's website for more information.

Table 6. MDE initiatives and collaborative agency supports

ECC Skills	Compensatory	O&M	Social Interaction	Career Education and Planning	AT and Optical Devices	Independent Living	Recreation and Leisure	Self-determination	Sensory efficiency
American Printing House for the Blind (APH)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Accessible Educational Material-Interagency Agreement	X		X	X		X	X	X	X
Email Lists for TBVI's and COMS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
BVI Communities of Practice	X			X	X				
District 917 ECC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Low Vision Clinics	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota Mentoring Program	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota Resource Libraries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Minnesota State Academies	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Child Institute/Transition Weekend	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
State Services for the Blind	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Statewide Vision Professional Development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Summer Transition Program (STP)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

The following non-profit agencies collaborate to provide all the ECC skills learning opportunities noted in the previous table.

- American Council of the Blind (ACB) of Minnesota
- American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)
- Camp Butterscotch
- Minnesota Deafblind Project
- Deafblind Services of Minnesota
- Duluth Center for Vital Living
- Minnesota Division on Vision Impairments (MDVI)
- Minnesota National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (MNAPVI)
- National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Minnesota
- Vision Loss Resources (VLR)

Accessible Educational Material/State Services for the Blind Interagency Agreement: This interagency agreement between MDE and State Services for the Blind (SSB) supports individual school districts with the provision of Accessible Educational Material (AEM) in the form of braille and audio materials. School districts in Minnesota who agree to participate in the special education assurances are provided with certain braille and audio materials at no cost.

American Printing House for the Blind: The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is the world's largest nonprofit organization creating educational, workplace and independent living products and services for people who are visually impaired. Founded in 1858 under the 1879 federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, APH is the official supplier of educational materials for visually impaired students in the U.S. who are working at less than college level. APH provides products, services, resources, and field services to students who are BVI.

BVI Email Lists: MDE sponsors three BVI-specific electronic lists through the Statewide Low-Incidence Projects dedicated solely to the education of children and youth who are blind or visually impaired in Minnesota. The lists are a public place where anyone interested in this field can post a question or an answer, share a BVI-specific announcement, or stimulate discussion related to the education or service delivery of children and youth who are BVI.

Communities of Practice: MDE facilitates communities of practice (CoP) which include TBVI, COMS, and collaborative partners from other state, local and nonprofit agencies who provide services to students who are BVI. The CoPs change as needs fluctuate throughout the state. The current CoPs are American Printing House and Tactile Graphics Producers, Low Vision, Assistive Technology and BVI Mentoring.

District 917 Extended School Year/ECC: Intermediate School District 917 Vision Program offers an extended school year (ESY) ECC program for students in grades 6–10. This is a day program that focuses on the nine areas of the ECC. Instruction is individualized to meet each student's specific needs.

Low Vision Clinics: A Low Vision Community of Practice Group composed of TBVI, COMS and Mayo Clinic/St. Cloud Clinic Optometrists have provided input to determine a process of providing low vision clinic services to students with the highest low vision needs around the state. Low Vision Clinics provided from 2005 to 2019 have served over 800 students from every region in Minnesota. They provide a unique and specific educational service to students who have low vision. Along with written reports and recommendations provided by the eye care specialists, low vision devices and training are provided for the recipients, parents, and educators.

Minnesota Mentoring Program: The BVI Mentoring CoP collaborated to build a research-based mentoring program that supports teachers in BVI higher education programs, newly licensed TBVI and experienced TBVI who may need specific topic assistance throughout their career. The Minnesota Mentoring Program (MMP) has grown to include professionals in other low-incidence disability categories through the Minnesota Low Incidence Project. For more information regarding the MMP, contact Kayna Plaisted (kayna.plaisted@metroecsu.org).

Minnesota Resource Libraries: Minnesota Resource Libraries (MNRL) is a statewide library operated by the Minnesota State Academies providing information and resources to help families and educators meet the educational needs of Minnesota children and youth who have hearing and or vision loss.

Minnesota State Academy for the Blind: The Minnesota State Academy for the Blind (MSAB) offers a challenging and rewarding educational experience for students who are blind and visually impaired from birth through age 21 (K–12 classes and the postsecondary Academy Plus Program). Licensed teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired provide formal instruction in small group settings. Emphasis is placed on creating an environment rich in access/exposure to braille, assistive technology, and the expanded core curriculum. The curriculum is designed to meet Minnesota Standards while accommodating the unique needs of blind and visually impaired students.

MSAB Parent Child Institute (PCI): The Parent Child Institute (PCI) is an interagency program between MDE, MSAB, and SSB. PCI addresses family BVI-specific needs for children who are ages 5 and under.

State Services for the Blind: State Services for the Blind (SSB) is a Minnesota state agency under the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). SSB provides tools and training for employment, living independently, and accessing print. They assist Minnesotans who are blind, are deafblind, are experiencing vision loss, or have difficulty accessing the printed word. SSB provides a variety of supports and programs for students who are BVI, including: Transition Supports, Individualized Plan for Employment, Communication Center, Programs for Teens, Assistive Technology Lending Library, Assistive Technology Evaluations, Personal Budgeting, BLIND Incorporated Summer Program, Duluth Center for Vital Living Transition Program, Helen Keller National Center Youth Programs, and others. They publish a bi-monthly newsletter called “The Spectacle.”

Statewide Vision Professional Development: The Minnesota Statewide Vision Community of Practice provides a forum to gather and share pertinent information and evidence-based practices for TBVI and COMS in the field to build teacher capacity to increase student outcomes. Outcomes of the statewide CoP include professional sharing of information and knowledge specific to BVI and O&M, provision of in-service training and resources specific to teachers of children and youth with visual impairments, opportunities to increase awareness of new research, and data on teaching strategies and program trends for BVI.

Summer Transition Program (STP): STP provides experiences to address the specific transition needs of students who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. STP complements each student’s core curriculum at their local school by providing individualized opportunities in the three transition areas identified in their IEP. These unique transition activities, as part of the ECC, give each student the opportunity to increase independence in their school home, community, and work environments. STP is provided through a collaboration between MDE, SSB, and local districts. The host district is Intermediate 916.

Appendix C: Early Childhood Outcomes Summary

School districts and local education providers that operate early childhood special education (ECSE) programs report back to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) ratings on the Child Outcomes Summary (COS) of development for infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities they serve.

COS ratings are a tool used at the state level for reporting early childhood development for children with disabilities. COS was developed by the US Department of Education and summarizes information on a child's functioning in three outcome areas using a seven-point scale. The three outcome areas are:[12]

- **Outcome A: Positive Social Emotional Skills (including social relationships).** Refers to the way children relate to and get along with other children and adults, solve social problems, interact in group situations, express emotions, and learn social rules and expectations.
- **Outcome B: Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language and communication and early literacy).** Refers to young children's abilities to think, reason, remember, problem solve, and use symbols and language plus knowledge and understanding of the world around them, early concepts.
- **Outcome C: Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.** Refers to children's abilities to take care of themselves in different settings. It also addresses children's integration of motor abilities to complete tasks and interact with their world.

The seven-point scale in each of the three areas helps compare an individual child's development to the typical development of same-age peers, with a score of seven meaning a child shows functioning expected for their age in all or almost all situations.

COS ratings for each of the three outcome areas are currently reported annually for children who experience:

1. Entrance to Part C Infant and Toddler Intervention
2. Exit from Part C Infant and Toddler Intervention
3. Entrance to Part B Preschool Special Education
4. Exit from Part B Preschool Special Education

To further assess the development status of children while participating in ECSE programs, MDE compares COS scores at program entry to the outcomes COS scores at exit and summarizes the results into two statements:

- Of those children who entered an ECSE program below age expectations in each outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.
- The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited an ECSE program.

[12] More information about the three childhood outcomes (https://ectacenter.org/~pdfs/eco/three-child-outcomes-breadth.pdf)

Information in this summary provides the outcome summary statement results reported to MDE for young children who were identified as blind or visually impaired (BVI), or deafblind (DB), or identified with another primary disability and vision loss, who exited Part B services between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. Because there were fewer than ten children with vision loss exiting Part C, those developmental status results are not included. Additionally, there were not enough young children who were identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss who exited Part C or Part B services to report the counts in any progress category within the three COS outcome ratings (i.e., Outcome A, Outcome B, or Outcome C).[13]

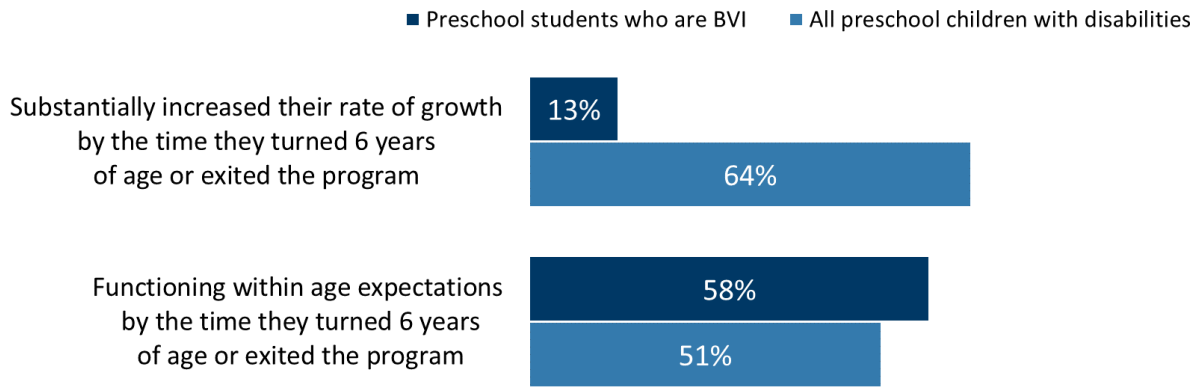
For more information on the COS ratings, contact MDE Early Childhood Special Education staff at mde.ecse@state.mn.us.

COS Outcomes Summary Statement Results for Children Identified as BVI, or DB, or Have Another Primary Disability and Vision Loss, at Exit from Part B Preschool Special Education

The COS outcomes summary statement results at Part B exit are based on data submitted for seventeen of the twenty-one children with vision loss because four children exiting did not have sufficient data submitted to calculate all three COS outcome ratings.

Outcome A: Positive Social-Emotional Skills Summary Statements

Figure 51. Percent of preschool children who substantially increased or were functioning within age expectations **by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited Part B in Outcome A**



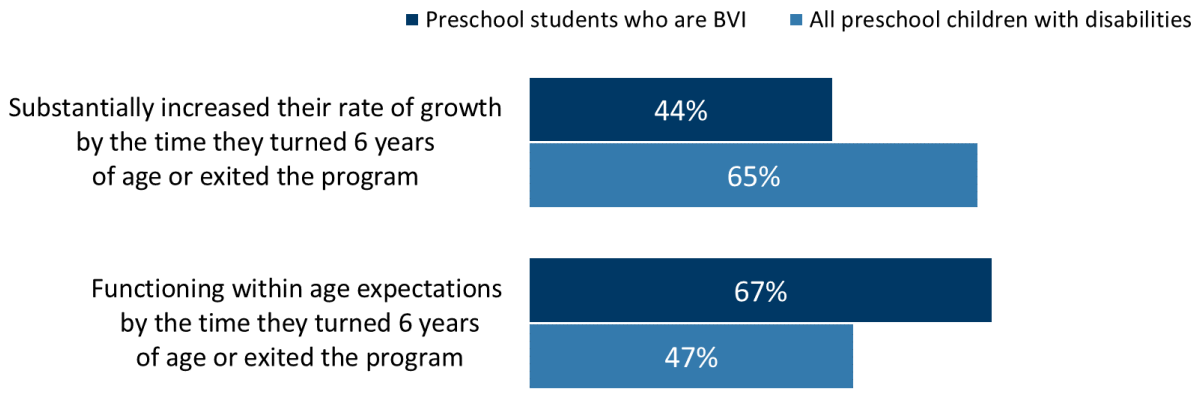
[13] The five outcome categories include: Children who did not improve functioning, children who improved functioning but not sufficient to move nearer to functioning comparable to same-age peers, children who improved functioning to a level nearer the same-aged peers but did not reach it, children who improved functioning to reach a level comparable to same-aged peers, and children who maintained functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers.

Of the children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss who entered or exited Part B services below age expectations in Outcome A (Figure 51), 13% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is markedly lower than the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (64%).

Fifty-eight percent of preschool children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss were functioning within age expectations in Outcome A by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is higher than the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (51%).

Outcome B: Acquisition and Use of Knowledge and Skills Summary Statements

Figure 52. Percent of preschool children who substantially increased or were functioning within age expectations **by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited Part B in Outcome B**

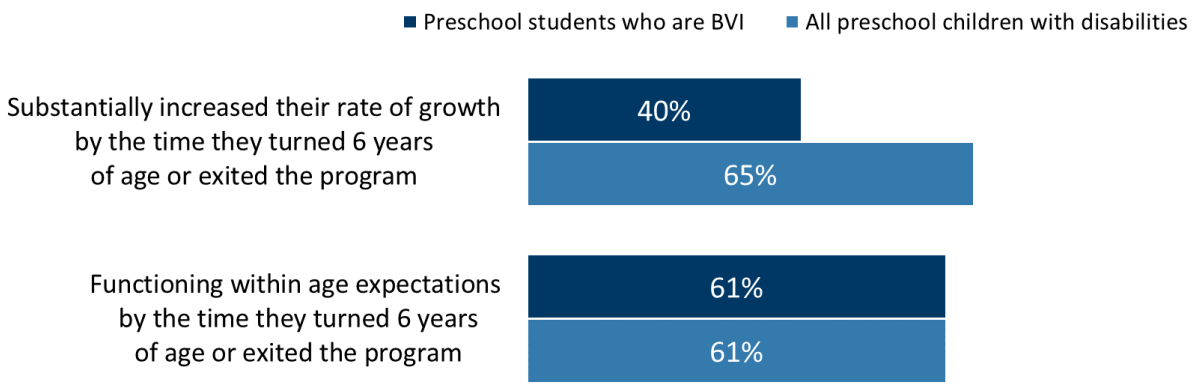


Of the children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss who entered or exited Part B services below age expectations in Outcome B (Figure 52), 44% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is lower than the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (65%).

Sixty-seven percent of preschool children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss were functioning within age expectations in Outcome B by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is higher than the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (47%).

Outcome C: Use of Appropriate Behaviors to Meet Their Needs Summary Statements

Figure 53. Percent of preschool children who substantially increased or were functioning within age expectations **by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited Part B in Outcome C**



Of the children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss who entered or exited Part B services below age expectations in Outcome C (Figure 53), 40% substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is lower than the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (65%).

Sixty-one percent of preschool children identified as BVI, or DB, or identified with another primary disability and vision loss were functioning within age expectations in Outcome C by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited the program, which is similar to the state rate for all preschool children with disabilities (61%).

Appendix D: Outcomes for Students Who Are Deafblind

Deafblindness is defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as "concomitant (simultaneous) hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness." Under Minnesota Administrative Rules, part 3525.1327, a student is eligible for special education services under the deafblind category if they have medically verified visual loss coupled with medically verified hearing loss that, together, interfere with acquiring information or interacting with the environment.

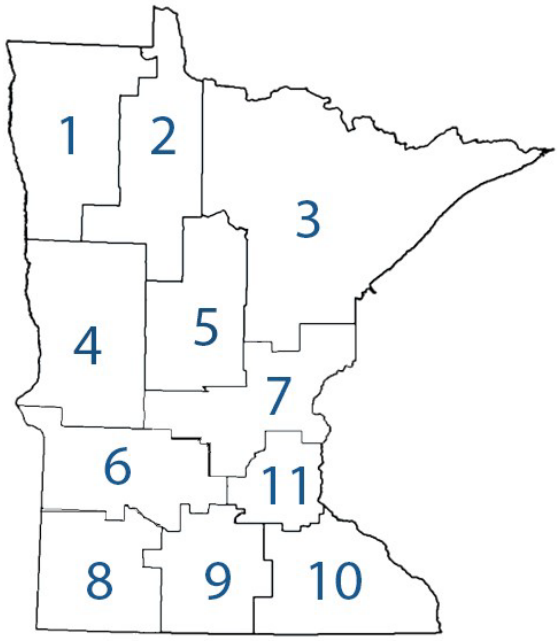
Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 125A.63, requires the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to establish advisory committees for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) and blind and visually impaired (BVI) students. Although students who are deafblind (DB) are not mentioned in the statute, they must be identified and meet criteria for both DHH and BVI, by nature of eligibility for special education services. Therefore, the staff who serve students who are DHH and BVI are the same staff who support and serve students who are deafblind, and recommendations made in this report could have a positive impact on students who are DB. However, it is important to note that deafblindness is a separate disability with a multiplicative impact with a high degree of heterogeneity due to the exponential number of possible combinations of hearing and vision loss.

Provided below is more information on the enrollment and demographics of students whose primary disability is identified as DB. In the data provided below, there were 118 children and students from birth to age 21 whose primary disability category was DB in MDE's child count data in the 2022–23 school year. However, approximately 250 more students in Minnesota have met eligibility for both DHH and BVI, but do not have DB as the primary disability. Also provided below are reading and math assessment outcomes for students whose primary disability is identified as DB. Please note that some data on the educational outcomes of students who are DB cannot be reported, as data is suppressed for groups smaller than ten.

Students Who Are Deafblind Enrollment and Demographics

The tables and figures include summaries of student enrollment, child count, age, gender, race and ethnicity, home languages, and graduation rates.

Figure 54. Map of Minnesota's regional development commissions



The number of students who are DB on individual TBVI workloads can vary significantly due to individual student need, school district size, district sparsity, travel distance between schools, and travel times in rural and metropolitan areas (Table 7).

Table 7. Numbers of students who are DB and staff who are TBVI and COMS by region

Region name	Number of students on 2023 Unduplicated Child Count (ages 0 to 21)	Number of students on 2023 APH Federal Quota Count	Estimated number of students on TBVI caseloads (blind, low vision, deafblind, and multiple needs)	Number of TBVI	Estimated number of students on each TBVI caseload	Number of COMS
Regions 1 and 2	13	34	69	10	7	2
Region 3	30	48	81	4	20	1 (part-time), 2 (contracted)
Region 4	21	43	78	4	20	1
Regions 5 and 7	86	155	329	17	19	4
Regions 6 and 8	27	34	58	3	19	1
Region 9	12	31	45	3	15	0.2

Region name	Number of students on 2023 Unduplicated Child Count (ages 0 to 21)	Number of students on 2023 APH Federal Quota Count	Estimated number of students on TBVI caseloads (blind, low vision, deafblind, and multiple needs)	Number of TBVI	Estimated number of students on each TBVI caseload	Number of COMS
Region 10	65	104	MSAB (46) [14] 258	MSAB (7) 19	14	MSAB (2) 6
Region 11	216	501	986	49	20	17
Statewide total	**470**	**950**	**1,904**	**109**	**18 (average)**	**34**

Enrollment Summary

Table 8 shows enrollment for K–12 students who are DB, compared with other student populations in 2022–23. At the statewide level, students whose primary disability was DB made up 0.01% of the overall K–12 enrollment and 0.07% of the K–12 enrollment of students receiving special education services in 2022–23. The largest number of students who are DB are located in Region 11 (61 students), while the largest percentage of students who are DB within special education is in Region 10 (0.13%). Given the small number of students who are DB, MDE advises caution in interpreting percentage fluctuations in this report. A change for a small number of individuals within the group can appear as more noticeable fluctuations from year to year than those for all their peers in special education and all students.

Table 8. Enrollment of K–12 student categories by region, 2022–23

Region name	All students K–12 fall enrollment	DB K–12	Percent DB	K–12 special education enrollment	Percent DB
Regions 1 and 2	26,946	5	0.02%	4,981	0.10%
Region 3	40,558	1	0.00%	7,835	0.01%
Region 4	34,748	3	0.01%	6,033	0.05%
Region 5	25,030	2	0.01%	5,130	0.04%
Regions 6 and 8	42,499	1	0.00%	7,437	0.01%
Region 7	103,373	11	0.01%	17,378	0.06%
Region 9	32,863	2	0.01%	5,648	0.04%
Region 10	74,800	16	0.02%	12,323	0.13%
Region 11	466,049	61	0.01%	69,529	0.09%
Statewide total	**846,866**	**102**	**0.01%**	**136,294**	**0.07%**

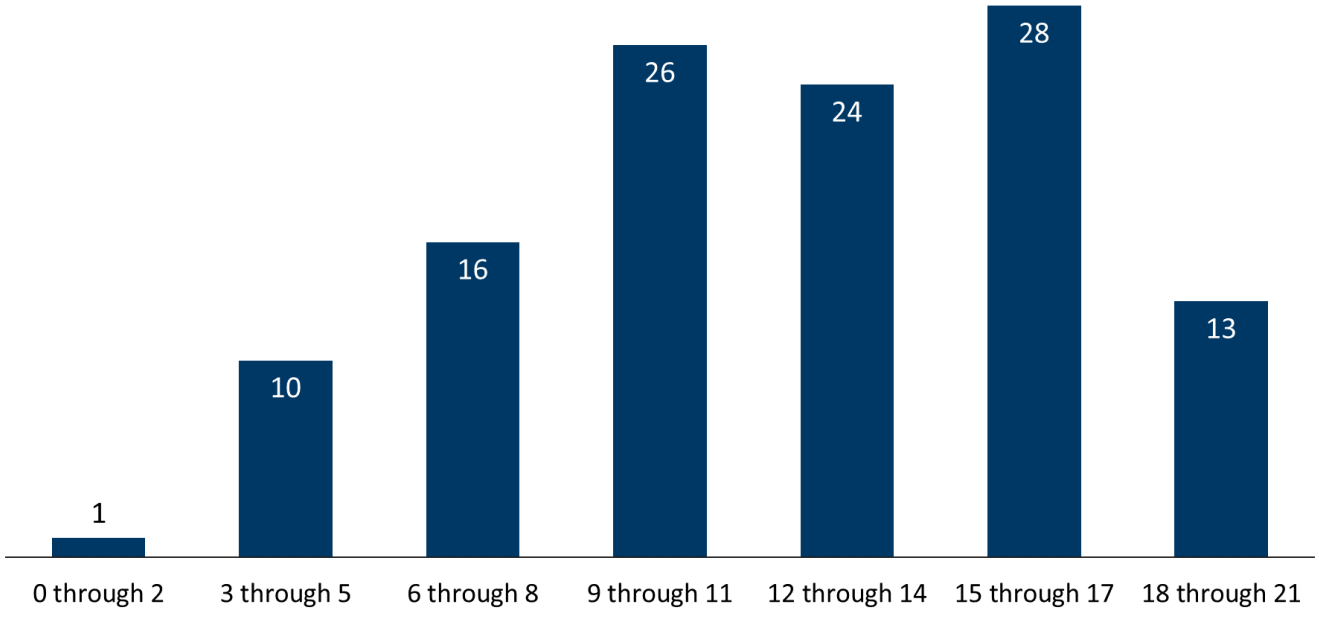
[14] MSAB: Minnesota State Academy for the Blind located in Faribault, Minnesota.

Demographics

The demographic data is presented here to help understand the student populations that make up the group of students who are DB are based on child count data from the 2022–23 school year, which includes students aged birth to twenty-one years old who are enrolled in the school system. A total of 118 students were counted as DB that school year.

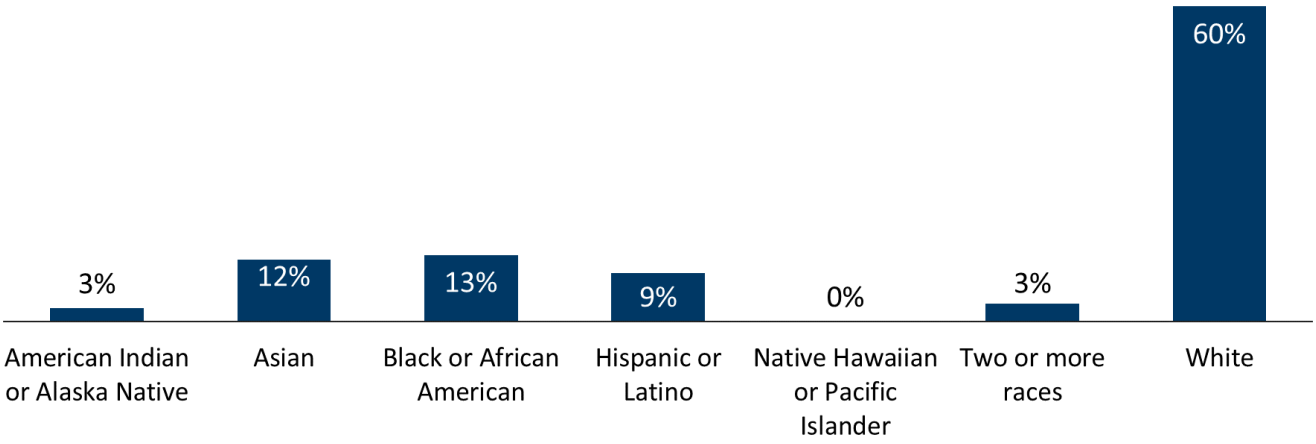
The highest concentrations of students who are DB are found in ages nine through seventeen (Figure 55). The lowest concentrations are found in the youngest age groups.

Figure 55. Child count by age distribution of DB students, 2022–23 (n=118)



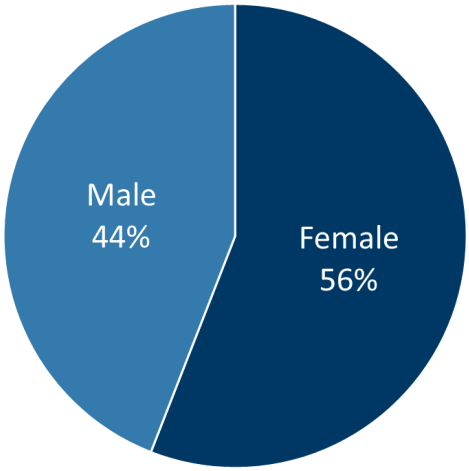
Sixty percent of students who are DB are white (Figure 56). The next largest group is students who are Black or African American (13%), followed by Asian (12%) and Hispanic or Latino (9%).

Figure 56. Race/ethnicity of students who are DB, 2022–23 (n=118)



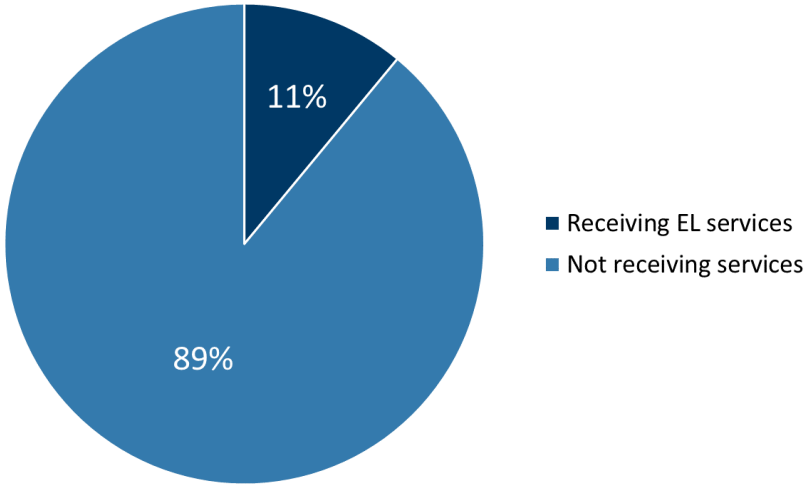
Fifty-six percent of students who are DB are female (56%), and 44% are male (Figure 57).

Figure 57. Gender of students who are DB, 2022–23



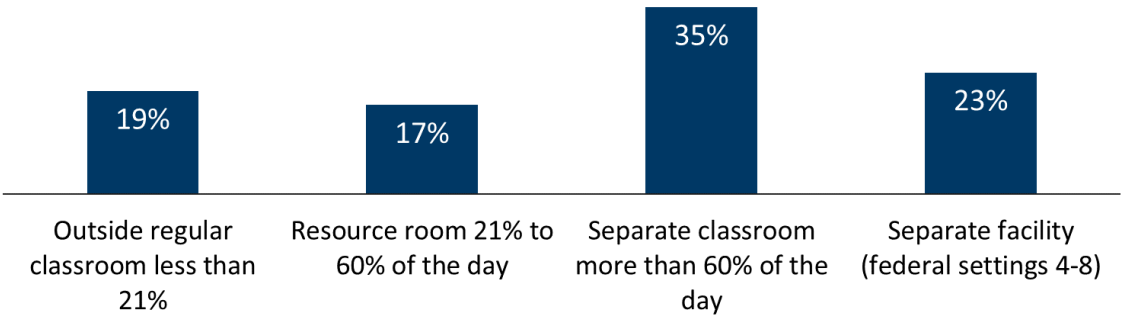
Eleven percent of students who are DB also receive services for English learners (EL) (Figure 58).

Figure 58. Percentage of students who are DB who are receiving EL services, 2022–23 (n=118)



In 2022–23, over half of students who are DB were placed in a special education federal setting that had them in a separate classroom or facility (i.e., outside of a general education classroom) 60% or more of the day (Figure 59). Nineteen percent of students who are DB were in the least restrictive federal setting, outside of a regular education classroom less than 21% of the day.

Figure 59. Federal instructional settings for DH students, 2022–23 (n=118)



Students Who are Deafblind Assessment Analysis

Consistent with the commissioner's school performance report cards, this section reports on aggregate math and reading assessment data at the state and regional levels for students who are DB. It is important to note the high degree of diversity in the population of students who are DB. Approximately 80% of students who have combined hearing and vision loss have additional disabilities and are emergent communicators (i.e., nonverbal). There is variation in instructional placement for the remaining 20% who receive instruction in an academic setting and exhibit a wide degree of variability as well. In addition, the length of time for processing the test questions may be extraordinary for students who are DB, due to the demands on short-term memory to comprehend and remember test options in multiple-choice format as well as the intent of questions.

Assessment results are reported here as "proficient" and "not proficient." Students are considered proficient if they meet or exceed the state proficiency standards for their grade level, while students are considered not proficient if they only partially meet or do not meet the standards. The MCA and MTAS tests are given only in grades 3 through 8, and either grade 10 (reading) or grade 11 (math).

The MTAS is an adapted test for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and must be required by a student's IEP; the MTAS assesses proficiency in the same way as the MCA, so the results are presented in this section using similar terminology and visualizations.

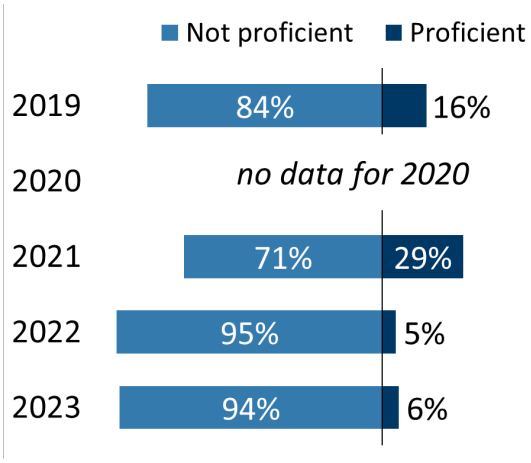
Throughout this report, results are only reported for groups with ten or more students to protect individual privacy. The note "not enough data" or "CTSTR" means the number of students was too small to report, or that there were fewer than ten students in that group.

Statewide Assessment Trends

Math

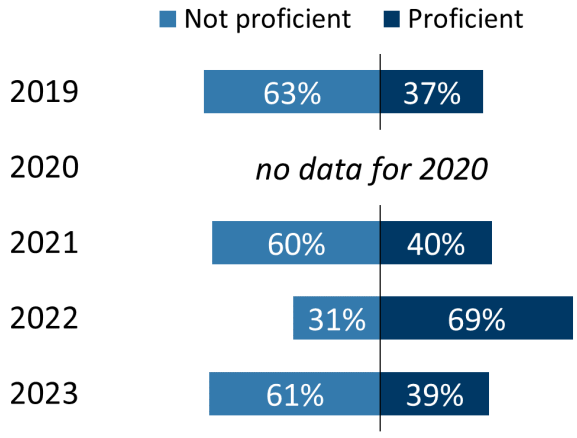
Around twenty students who are DB took the MCA math assessment in 2022 and 2023. Approximately 6% of students who are DB are proficient on the MCA math assessment in both years, a sharp decline from 29% in 2021 (Figure 60).

Figure 60. Percentage of students who are DB who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA math assessment



Thirteen and 18 students who are DB took the MTAS math assessment in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Their proficiency rates soared from 40% in 2021 to 69% in 2022 before sharply declining to 39% in 2023 (Figure 61).

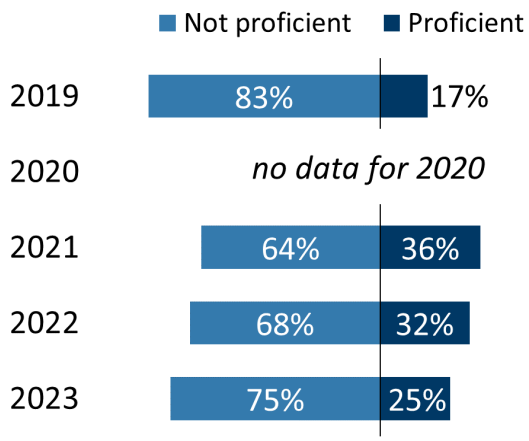
Figure 61. Percentage of students who are DB who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS math assessment



Reading

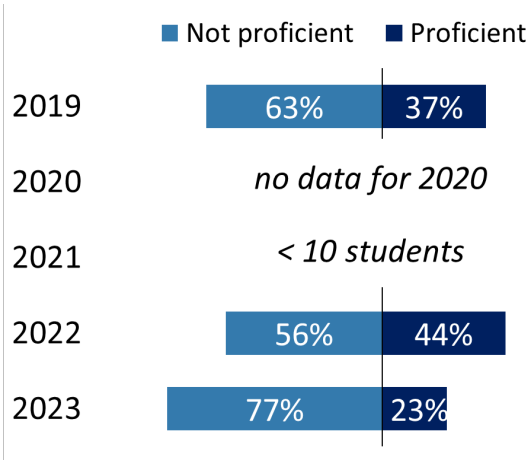
Twenty students who are DB took the MCA reading assessment in 2023. Twenty-five percent of them were proficient (Figure 62).

Figure 62. Percentage of students who are DB who are proficient and not proficient on the MCA reading assessment



Sixteen and 13 students who are DB took the MTAS reading assessment in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Twenty-five percent of them were proficient in 2023, a sharp drop from 44% in 2022 (Figure 63).

Figure 63. Percentage of students who are DB who are proficient and not proficient on the MTAS reading assessment



Appendix E: Data Tables for Report Figures

Enrollment and Demographic Data

Table 9. Statewide BVI child counts, 2012–13 to 2022–23

School year	Number of students who are BVI	Number of students receiving special education services
2012–13	442	128,812
2013–14	460	129,669
2014–15	460	130,886
2015–16	467	133,678
2016–17	489	137,601
2017–18	503	142,270
2018–19	502	147,604
2019–20	512	152,016
2020–21	492	149,382
2021–22	482	151,532

Table 10. Child count by age distribution of BVI students, 2022–23

Age group	Number of students who are BVI in that category	Percent of students who are BVI in that category
0–2	18	4%
3–5	47	10%
6–8	81	17%
9–11	104	22%
12–14	96	20%
15–17	101	21%
18–21	23	5%
Total	**470**	**100%**

Table 11. Race and ethnicity of students who are BVI, 2022–23

Race and ethnicity	Number of students who are BVI in that category	Percent of students who are BVI in that category
American Indian or Alaska Native	10	2%
Asian	35	7%
Black or African American	48	10%
Hispanic or Latino	50	11%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3	1%
Two or more races	23	5%
White	301	64%
Total	**470**	**100%**

Table 12. Gender of students who are BVI, 2022–23

Gender	Number of students who are BVI in that category	Percent of students who are BVI in that category
Female	215	46%
Male	255	54%
Total	**470**	**100%**

Table 13. Students who are BVI who are receiving English learner (EL) services, 2022–23

EL Participation status	Number of students who are BVI	Percent of students who are BVI
Receiving EL services	48	10%
Not receiving EL services	422	90%
Total	**470**	**100%**

Table 14. Federally defined instructional settings for BVI students, 2022–23

Federal instructional setting	Number of students who are BVI	Percent of students who are BVI
Outside regular classroom less than 21%	283	60%
Resource room 21% to 60% of the day	83	18%
Separate classroom more than 60% of the day	16	3%
Separate facility (federal settings 4–8)	23	5%
Other settings (e.g., home, service provider location, separate class, etc.)	65	14%
Total	**470**	**100%**

Statewide Student Assessment Data

Math

Table 15. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MCA math assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	405,876	16%	28%	23%	33%
Students receiving special education services	58,743	6%	14%	16%	64%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***162***	***10%***	***23%***	***20%***	***47%***
3rd grade	19	11%	21%	21%	47%
4th grade	23	22%	26%	26%	26%
5th grade	33	9%	24%	21%	45%
6th grade	16	6%	31%	31%	31%
7th grade	27	11%	26%	19%	44%
8th grade	29	3%	17%	17%	62%
11th grade	15	7%	13%	7%	73%

Table 16. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MCA math assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	401,502	17%	29%	23%	32%
Students receiving special education services	60,299	7%	14%	17%	62%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***180***	***13%***	***18%***	***23%***	***46%***
3rd grade	33	24%	24%	12%	39%
4th grade	23	17%	22%	4%	57%
5th grade	23	13%	26%	30%	30%
6th grade	30	10%	13%	37%	40%
7th grade	18	6%	17%	39%	39%
8th grade	25	12%	20%	24%	44%
11th grade	28	7%	7%	18%	68%

Table 17. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MTAS math assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
Students receiving special education services	5,469	14%	48%	25%	12%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***10***	***20%***	***70%***	***10%***	***0%***

Table 18. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MTAS math assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
Students receiving special education services	5,558	17%	43%	27%	13%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***12***	***0%***	***58%***	***42%***	***0%***

Reading

Table 19. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MCA reading assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	418,438	15%	36%	21%	29%
Students receiving special education services	60,319	5%	17%	16%	62%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***171***	**9%**	**27%**	**19%**	**44%**
3rd grade	19	0%	26%	21%	53%
4th grade	23	0%	39%	35%	26%
5th grade	33	12%	39%	9%	39%
6th grade	15	27%	7%	33%	33%
7th grade	25	16%	20%	28%	36%
8th grade	28	4%	25%	11%	61%
10th grade	28	11%	21%	11%	57%

Table 20. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MCA reading assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	410,939	14%	36%	21%	30%
Students receiving special education services	61,533	5%	17%	16%	62%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***164***	***13%***	***28%***	***21%***	***38%***
3rd grade	27	7%	22%	26%	44%
4th grade	23	9%	17%	17%	57%
5th grade	22	9%	55%	18%	18%
6th grade	29	10%	28%	31%	31%
7th grade	18	22%	28%	17%	33%
8th grade	24	21%	13%	17%	50%
10th grade	21	14%	38%	14%	33%

Table 21. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MTAS reading assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
Students receiving special education services	5,493	29%	34%	22%	15%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***13***	***38%***	***38%***	***23%***	***0%***

Table 22. Percentage of students in each proficiency category on the MTAS reading assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
Students receiving special education services	5,633	27%	36%	20%	17%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***14***	***21%***	***50%***	***29%***	***0%***

Regional Student Assessment Data

Region 7

Table 23. Percentage of students in Region 7 in each proficiency category on the MCA math assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	50,933	17%	32%	24%	27%
Students receiving special education services	7,581	7%	15%	17%	61%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***30***	***13%***	***27%***	***20%***	***40%***

Table 24. Percentage of students in Region 7 in each proficiency category on the MCA reading assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	51,027	18%	32%	24%	27%
Students receiving special education services	8,013	7%	16%	18%	59%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***35***	***11%***	***34%***	***9%***	***46%***

Region 10

Table 25. Percentage of students in Region 10 in each proficiency category on the MCA math assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	35,897	14%	28%	24%	34%
Students receiving special education services	5,245	5%	12%	15%	68%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***24***	***13%***	***17%***	***17%***	***54%***

Table 26. Percentage of students in Region 10 in each proficiency category on the MCA reading assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	27,993	14%	29%	25%	32%
Students receiving special education services	4,336	5%	12%	17%	66%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***21***	***19%***	***10%***	***19%***	***52%***

Region 11

Table 27. Percentage of students in Region 11 in each proficiency category on the MCA math assessment in 2022

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	218,101	17%	27%	21%	34%
Students receiving special education services	28,935	8%	14%	15%	63%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***65***	***11%***	***23%***	***20%***	***46%***

Table 28. Percentage of students in Region 11 in each proficiency category on the MCA reading assessment in 2023

Student group	Total	Exceeds	Meets	Partially meets	Does not meet
All students	221,805	18%	27%	21%	34%
Students receiving special education services	30,314	8%	15%	15%	62%
Students who are blind or visually impaired	***76***	***16%***	***17%***	***22%***	***45%***

Graduation Rates

Table 29. Four-year graduation outcomes for general education students, class of 2014 to class of 2022

Graduation outcome	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Continue	3,808	3,735	3,608	3,439	3,389	3,242	3,499	3,582	3,260
Drop out	1,944	2,011	2,099	2,248	2,215	2,181	1,841	2,046	2,331
Graduate	47,819	48,193	48,210	48,723	49,471	50,486	49,890	50,463	51,417
Unknown	2,478	2,220	1,957	1,916	1,803	1,796	1,931	2,042	2,174
Total	**56,049**	**56,159**	**55,874**	**56,326**	**56,878**	**57,705**	**57,161**	**58,133**	**59,182**

Table 30. Four-year graduation outcomes for special education students, class of 2014 to class of 2022

Graduation outcome	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Continue	2,576	2,526	2,427	2,372	2,436	2,501	2,378	2,399	2,241
Drop out	698	718	742	862	849	829	684	730	839
Graduate	5,614	5,957	5,861	6,120	6,398	6,685	6,794	6,674	7,169
Unknown	738	609	623	650	587	594	601	631	688
Total	**9,626**	**9,810**	**9,653**	**10,004**	**10,270**	**10,609**	**10,457**	**10,434**	**10,937**

Table 31. Four-year graduation outcomes for students who are BVI, class of 2014 to class of 2022

Graduation outcome	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Continue	7	6	6	3	7	4	7	6	4
Drop out	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	2
Graduate	17	12	13	15	26	28	25	26	37
Unknown	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	1
Total	**25**	**20**	**20**	**21**	**37**	**34**	**34**	**36**	**44**

Table 32. Seven-year graduation outcomes for general education students, class of 2011 to class of 2019

Graduation outcome	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
Continue	13	9	12	6	7	18	10	11	9
Drop out	3,369	3,412	3,404	3,315	3,433	3,496	3,426	3,298	3,175
Graduate	51,133	50,070	50,037	49,556	49,971	50,026	50,691	51,434	52,249
Unknown	5,654	4,692	3,544	2,995	2,626	2,211	2,098	2,038	2,189
Total	**60,169**	**58,183**	**56,997**	**55,872**	**56,037**	**55,751**	**56,225**	**56,781**	**57,622**

Table 33. Seven-year graduation outcomes for special education students, class of 2011 to class of 2019

Graduation outcome	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
Continue	44	41	42	38	40	43	60	55	55
Drop out	1,261	1,248	1,312	1,281	1,308	1,294	1,362	1,270	1,222
Graduate	7,440	7,342	7,386	7,320	7,641	7,531	7,822	8,209	8,533
Unknown	1,342	1,239	963	900	790	737	739	732	779
Total	**10,087**	**9,870**	**9,703**	**9,539**	**9,779**	**9,605**	**9,983**	**10,266**	**10,589**

Table 34. Seven-year graduation outcomes for students who are BVI, class of 2011 to class of 2019

Graduation outcome	Class of 2011	Class of 2012	Class of 2013	Class of 2014	Class of 2015	Class of 2016	Class of 2017	Class of 2018	Class of 2019
Continue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drop out	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1
Graduate	21	19	20	22	17	18	20	32	32
Unknown	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	3	2
Total	**21**	**20**	**22**	**25**	**19**	**19**	**21**	**37**	**35**