

6. *Changes in the School Programs of Students with Disabilities* By Mary Wagner

Inside the Classroom: The Language Arts Classroom Experiences of Elementary and Middle School Students with Disabilities (Blackorby, Wagner, Cameto, et al., 2004) sets the language arts classroom experiences of students with disabilities in the larger context of their overall school programs. This chapter documents the changes in their school programs in a 1-year period between Waves 1 and 2 of the SEELS school surveys¹ in terms of their:

- Grade level and grade progression
- Course taking
- Instructional settings
- Accommodations and learning supports
- Participation in mandated standardized testing.

The following sections describe changes in these aspects of the school programs of students with disabilities by using data reported by school staff who were identified by schools as best able to document the overall school programs of individual SEELS students. Findings are reported for students with disabilities as a whole and for students who differ in their primary disability category, grade level, and selected demographic characteristics when significant.

Grade Level and Grade Progression

As students progress up the grade levels, they encounter more complex curricula, changing expectations for behavior and academic performance, and sometimes marked changes in the organization of the school day. The moves from elementary to middle school (often in sixth grade) and from middle to high school (often in ninth grade) in particular can affect several aspects of students' school experiences. Therefore, understanding the grade levels represented in SEELS at Waves 1 and 2 is important context for interpreting changes in other dimensions of the school programs of students with disabilities.

- In Wave 2, students with disabilities span the range from second through tenth grades (Exhibit 6-1), and about 2% are in not assigned to a grade level.

¹ The Wave 1 SEELS school questionnaires were conducted in the spring of the 2000-01 school year. Wave 2 questionnaires were conducted the following year.

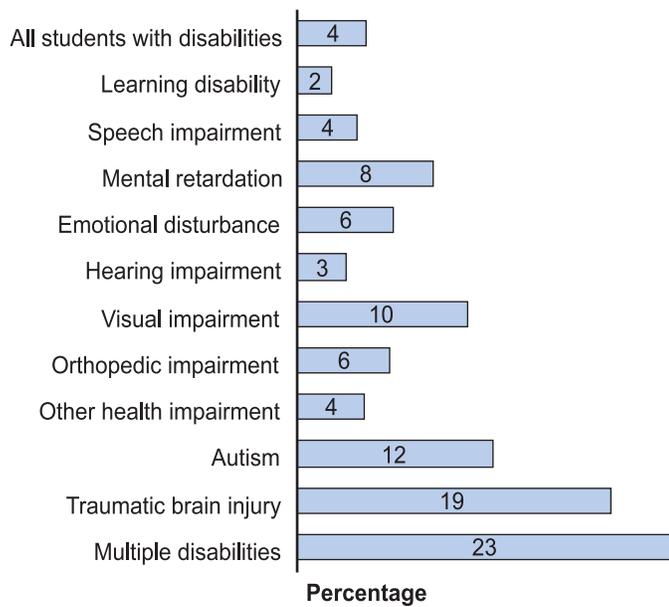
Exhibit 6-1
Grade Levels of Students with
Disabilities in the 2001-02
School Year

	Percentage
Second	2.3
Third	13.4
Fourth	17.3
Fifth	16.5
Sixth	15.4
Seventh	13.7
Eighth	13.7
Ninth	5.8
Tenth	.3
Ungraded	1.5

Source: SEELS Wave 2 student's school program questionnaire.

- Between 13% and 17% of students with disabilities are in each of the grades from third through ninth; few are in second grade or at high school grade levels
- In all, 4% of students with disabilities represented in SEELS are at the same grade level in Wave 2 as in Wave 1 (Exhibit 6-2).
- Five percent or fewer of students with learning disabilities or speech, hearing, or other health impairments are retained at grade level in a 1-year period.
- Ten and 12% of students with visual impairments or autism are repeating a grade in Wave 2, as are 20% and 23% of students with traumatic brain injuries or multiple disabilities.
- There are no differences between students at different grade levels or demographic groups in the likelihood of having been retained at grade level.

Exhibit 6-2
Students with Disabilities Retained
at Grade Level in the 2001-02 School Year



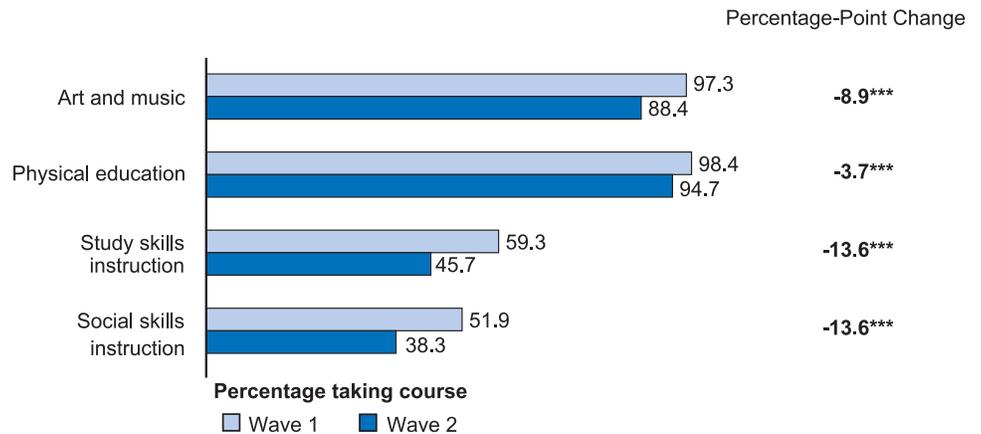
Students' Course Taking

Wave 2 brings virtually no change to the academic course taking of elementary and middle school students with disabilities over the preceding school year. Nearly all students with disabilities—97% to 100% across subject areas—take the core academic subjects of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

- Across disabilities, more than 90% of students in every category take language arts and math in Wave 2. From 84% to 98% take science and from 82% to 99% take social studies.
- Students with autism are the least likely to take science and social studies, and students with learning disabilities, speech or hearing impairments, or emotional disturbances are the most likely.

In contrast to the stability of academic course taking, the likelihood that students' school programs include several kinds of nonacademic courses has declined in the 1-year period between Waves 1 and 2 (Exhibit 6-3).

Exhibit 6-3
Changes in the Nonacademic Course Taking of Students with Disabilities



Source: SEELS students' school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.
 Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following level: *** $p < .001$.

- Although students with disabilities are just as likely to take vocational education and life skills instruction in the 2 school years (about one in five take vocational education and two in five take life skills instruction), students with disabilities show notable declines in taking art and music, physical education, and study skills and social skills instruction.
- Although the large majority of students with disabilities still take art and music and physical education in Wave 2 (88% and 95%), decreases of 9 and 4 percentage points are noted for enrollment in these courses. A decline in physical education course taking also is apparent among students in the general population and is thought to reflect an increased emphasis on academics in upper grades and America's schools generally (Jacobson, 2004; American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 2004).
- Larger declines, 14 percentage points, are evident in students with disabilities receiving study skills and social skills instruction, so that 46% and 38% of students receive such instruction in Wave 2.

Differential Changes in Nonacademic Course Taking across Disability Categories

Students in different primary disability categories have experienced changes in nonacademic course taking to different degrees (Exhibit 6-4).

- Declines in social skills instruction are the most widespread of the nonacademic courses; students in eight disability categories show declines, ranging from 12 percentage points for students with learning disabilities or mental retardation to 20 percentage points for students with emotional

disturbances. The decline in other kinds of nonacademic courses each affects students in five disability categories.

- Students with learning disabilities show decreases in all four kinds of instruction, ranging from 5 percentage points in enrollment in physical education to 15-percentage-point declines in taking art or music or in receiving study skills instruction.
- Students in other categories have experienced changes in from one kind of course (students with other health impairments) to three kinds of courses (students with speech, hearing, or visual impairments; or mental retardation). Students with emotional disturbances show changes only in skills instruction, not in the more formal kinds of subjects.
- Declines in course taking are smallest for physical education across all categories of students. The largest declines for students in six categories are in social skills instruction. In contrast, students with learning disabilities show their largest decline in taking art or music and students with speech impairments or autism show their largest declines in receiving study skills instruction.

Exhibit 6-4
Changes in Nonacademic Course Taking, by Disability Category

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retardation	Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Autism	Traumatic Brain Injury	Multiple Disabilities
Percentage taking:											
Art or music											
Wave 1	97.4	98.7	95.7	93.4	95.3	96.9	95.1	94.6	97.0	94.2	97.0
Wave 2	82.5	95.2	88.6	88.6	86.6	85.9	91.7	88.4	91.4	93.4	93.2
Percentage-point change	-14.9***		-7.1**		-8.7**	-11.0**			-5.6*		
Physical education											
Wave 1	97.5	99.8	98.7	98.2	98.0	96.5	96.8	97.8	98.6	99.5	95.8
Wave 2	92.5	97.1	94.9	95.6	96.0	86.3	90.6	96.5	95.3	96.0	93.3
Percentage-point change	-5.0*	-2.7*	-3.8*			-10.2**	-6.2*				
Study skills instruction											
Wave 1	61.9	56.7	57.5	62.1	56.4	55.1	53.0	63.0	53.3	60.0	46.9
Wave 2	47.3	42.4	49.4	43.5	42.9	45.7	43.2	50.4	37.7	54.1	51.7
Percentage-point change	-14.6**	-14.3*		-18.6**	-13.5*				-15.6**		
Social skills instruction											
Wave 1	42.2	46.3	75.9	81.8	53.0	61.9	59.3	55.4	83.9	62.4	79.5
Wave 2	30.3	32.7	63.8	61.9	36.2	46.1	43.7	37.3	78.1	53.0	74.9
Percentage-point change	-11.9*	-13.6*	-12.1*	-19.9***	-16.8**	-15.8*	-15.6*	-18.1**			

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Differential Changes in Nonacademic Course Taking across Demographic Groups

Grade level. Declines in receipt of the various kinds of nonacademic courses do not occur equally among students at different grade levels (Exhibit 6-5).

- Few changes in course taking are evident for students who were in first through third grades in Wave 1; only social skills instruction has declined for this group (17 percentage points), bringing the Wave 2 rate of receiving social skills instruction to 44% of these students.
- Students who were in fourth or fifth grades in Wave 1, many of whom moved from elementary to middle school, show declines in all four kinds of nonacademic courses, ranging from a 5-percentage-point decrease in taking physical education to a 19-percentage-point increase in study skills instruction.

Exhibit 6-5
Changes in Nonacademic Course Taking, by Grade Level

	Grade level in the 2000-01 school year		
	1st through 3rd	4th or 5th	6th or above
Percentage taking:			
Art or music			
Wave 1	99.1	99.2	93.2
Wave 2	98.7	92.1	75.1
Percentage-point change		-7.1**	-18.1***
Physical education			
Wave 1	99.5	99.6	96.0
Wave 2	98.1	94.7	90.9
Percentage-point change		-4.9**	-5.1*
Study skills instruction			
Wave 1	54.3	64.3	60.0
Wave 2	43.9	45.2	47.9
Percentage-point change		-19.1***	-12.1*
Social skills instruction			
Wave 1	58.5	53.4	40.0
Wave 2	41.4	38.0	32.4
Percentage-point change	-17.1**	-15.4**	

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels:

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

- With the exception of social skills instructions, students who were in sixth grade or above in Wave 1 experienced declines in nonacademic course taking that range from 5 to 18 percentage points (physical education and art or music, respectively). The large decline in taking art or music results in older students being much less likely to receive that kind of instruction in Wave 2 than other students (75% vs. 99% and 92%)

Household income. Students with disabilities from households with different income levels show different experiences with changes in nonacademic course taking (Exhibit 6-6).

- Declines in both taking art and music and in social skills instruction affect all three income groups. Decreases in taking art and music range from 7 to 11 percentage points; they range from 12 to 17 percentage points for social skills instruction.
- The middle-income group has experienced declines in all four nonacademic subjects, from a 5-percentage-point decrease in taking physical education to a 19-percentage-point decrease in receiving study skills instruction.

Exhibit 6-6
Changes in Nonacademic Course Taking of Students with Disabilities,
by Household Income and Race/Ethnicity

	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity		
	\$25,000 and Less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic
Percentage taking:						
Art or music						
Wave 1	97.0	97.3	96.9	97.4	96.3	97.4
Wave 2	86.3	90.4	88.2	90.8	80.3	85.1
Percentage-point change	-10.7***	-6.9*	-8.7**	-6.6***	-16.0***	-12.3*
Physical education						
Wave 1	97.4	99.0	98.8	98.6	99.4	96.2
Wave 2	93.3	93.8	92.9	94.9	93.5	95.4
Percentage-point change		-5.2*	-5.9**	-3.7**	-5.9*	
Study skills instruction						
Wave 1	58.6	63.8	57.2	60.0	58.0	59.9
Wave 2	43.1	44.5	47.9	46.4	39.6	44.7
Percentage-point change	-15.5*	-19.3**		-13.6***	-18.4*	
Social skills instruction						
Wave 1	53.6	51.7	48.3	51.9	60.5	43.3
Wave 2	41.5	37.9	31.6	37.3	43.1	36.9
Percentage-point change	-12.1*	-13.8*	-16.7**	-14.6**	-17.4*	

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

- The lowest income group does not show declines in taking physical education; declines in other nonacademic course taking range from 11 percentage points for art and music to 16 percentage points for study skills instruction.
- The highest income group does not show declines in study skills instruction; other nonacademic course taking has declined from 6 percentage points for physical education to 17 percentage points for study skills instruction.
- In Wave 2, there are similar rates of nonacademic course taking, regardless of household income levels.

Racial/ethnic background. Changes in nonacademic course taking vary with students' racial/ethnic background (Exhibit 6-6).

- Both white and African-American students with disabilities have experienced declines in all four kinds of nonacademic course taking, with declines being somewhat larger for African-American students with disabilities (ranging from 6 to 18 percentage points) than their white peers (ranging from 4 to 15 percentage points).
- Hispanic students with disabilities show a sizable decrease only in taking art and music (12 percentage points).

- The racial/ethnic groups have very similar levels of participation in all four nonacademic subjects in Wave 2.

Instructional Settings

Consistent with the absence of change in students' academic course taking, there has been no change in the instructional placements for academic courses.

- In Wave 2, almost two-thirds of students with disabilities who take language arts and mathematics do so in general education classrooms, as do about 8 in 10 of students taking science and social studies.
- Although there have been changes in students' nonacademic course taking, the placements for various nonacademic subjects have not changed. About 90% of students with disabilities who take art and music or physical education take them in general education classes, as do three-fourths of students who take vocational education, about 6 in 10 students who receive life skills or study skills instruction, and about half of students who receive social skills instruction.
- Overall, 95% of students with disabilities receive some instruction in a general education classroom in Wave 2; they average five classes a day there.
- Seventy percent of students with disabilities take special education classes (an average of two per day).
- There are no notable differences across disability categories or demographic groups in the likelihood of students having particular instructional settings

Receipt of Accommodations and Learning Supports

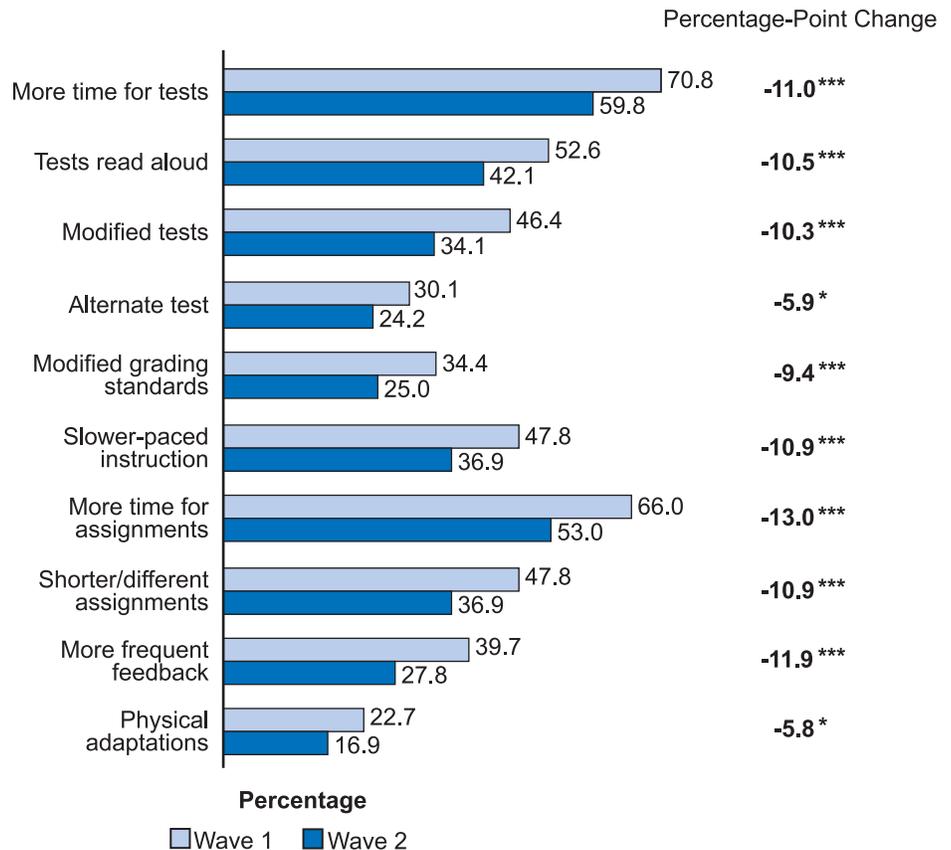
The success that students with disabilities achieve in school can be influenced by access to a variety of services, accommodations, modifications, and other learning supports that further their ability to meet their educational goals. The preceding chapter addresses the extent to which provision of related services to students with disabilities has changed from Wave 1 to Wave 2 of SEELS, according to parents. This section considers the provision of other kinds of learning supports to students with disabilities by their schools.

SEELS has investigated the extent to which students with disabilities receive 10 kinds of modifications or accommodations to support their learning and success at school. Students are less likely to receive each of these kinds of learning supports in Wave 2 than in Wave 1 (Exhibit 6-7).

- In a 1-year period, there have been decreases of 6 to 9 percentage points in the likelihood that students with disabilities receive accommodations or modifications that involve taking alternative tests, being subject to modified grading standards, or receiving physical accommodations at school (e.g., seating at the front of the room, a modified desk or chair).

- Receipt of all other accommodations or modifications investigated in SEELS show declines of 10 to 13 percentage points.

Exhibit 6-7
Changes in Accommodations and Modifications Provided to Students with Disabilities



Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.
 Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels:
 * p < .05; *** p < .001.

In addition to these kinds of accommodations and modifications, SEELS also assessed the extent to which students with disabilities receive nine other kinds of learning supports.² Changes in provision of only three of them are noted in a 1-year period.

- There has been a 13-percentage-point decline in students having their progress monitored by a special education teacher; two-thirds of students

² These include having: a teacher aide, instructional assistant, or other personal aide in the classroom; the students' progress monitored by a special education teacher; a behavior management plan or program; self-advocacy training; and access to a variety of technology supports (i.e., computer hardware or software for students with disabilities to help with assignments, tests, or skill development; books on tape; communication aides; or use of a computer when it is not available to other students).

with disabilities were subject to such monitoring in Wave 1, compared with 54% in Wave 2.

- Whereas in Wave 1, 41% of students with disabilities were reported by school staff to have a teacher aide, instructional assistant, or other personal aide in the classroom, 32% receive such support in Wave 2, a 9-percentage-point decline.
- Computer software for students with disabilities is provided to 8% of students with disabilities in Wave 2, a 5-percentage-point decline from Wave 1.

Differential Changes in Receipt of Learning Supports across Disability Categories

Declines in receipt of learning supports have been experienced by students in only six disability categories (Exhibit 6-8).

- Students with speech impairments are by far the most likely to have experienced declines in their receipt of accommodations, modifications, or other learning supports consistent with their relatively high rate of exiting special education (see Chapter 5) and, therefore, no longer being eligible to receive them. Sizable declines are noted for seven of the learning supports, ranging from 13 to 28 percentage points.
- Students with learning disabilities show declines of 10 or 11 percentage points in taking modified tests, being subject to modified grading standards, or receiving more frequent feedback on their performance.
- Students with emotional disturbances show an 11-percentage-point decline in receiving shorter or different assignments, a 13-percentage-point decline in having their progress monitored by a special education teacher, and a 6-percentage-point decline in having the use of computer software that is designed for students with disabilities.

Exhibit 6-8
Changes in Learning Supports Provided to Students, by Disability Category

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retardation	Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Ortho- pedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Autism	Traumatic Brain Injury	Multiple Disabili- ties
Percentage provided:											
More time for tests											
Wave 1	80.3	54.4	68.2	73.0	54.9	62.9	65.9	73.9	50.7	71.8	45.0
Wave 2	76.0	28.7	71.0	72.6	54.9	64.7	61.4	73.8	52.8	81.6	50.6
Percentage-point change		-25.7***									
Test read to student											
Wave 1	59.8	38.5	62.4	47.8	38.6	34.4	38.5	44.4	38.1	50.6	38.2
Wave 2	51.6	23.0	60.0	43.4	36.0	37.4	36.3	43.9	34.9	50.0	40.1
Percentage-point change		-15.5*									
Modified tests											
Wave 1	52.0	31.9	54.1	47.0	30.9	39.4	40.6	46.0	38.9	50.0	31.3
Wave 2	40.6	15.9	51.4	40.1	27.3	35.2	36.4	44.9	38.2	47.0	37.2
Percentage-point change	-11.4*	-16.0**									
Modified grading standards											
Wave 1	35.3	21.5	52.3	37.1	13.3	18.9	34.8	33.4	40.3	43.0	36.4
Wave 2	25.6	14.7	45.3	32.2	16.8	19.3	27.8	25.8	39.5	28.5	34.1
Percentage-point change	-9.7*										
Slower-paced instruction											
Wave 1	49.4	31.7	71.9	50.5	33.8	31.7	45.6	41.0	48.5	57.5	49.2
Wave 2	41.7	20.2	61.9	42.8	36.5	30.2	39.6	31.3	40.9	58.6	50.7
Percentage-point change			-10.0*								
More time for assignments											
Wave 1	72.7	47.3	74.0	66.8	40.0	61.2	71.1	72.0	57.4	69.7	44.8
Wave 2	65.1	26.9	68.4	60.6	43.5	59.0	64.5	63.0	57.0	73.7	50.5
Percentage-point change		-20.4**									
Shorter or different assignments											
Wave 1	50.0	30.7	65.5	50.0	25.0	39.0	53.6	52.0	57.2	62.9	36.9
Wave 2	42.5	20.2	58.5	38.7	25.7	35.2	45.2	36.4	49.0	63.1	45.8
Percentage-point change				-11.3*				-15.6*			

Exhibit 6-8
Changes in Learning Supports Provided to Students, by Disability Category (Concluded)

	Learning Disability	Speech/ Language Impairment	Mental Retardation	Emotional Disturbance	Hearing Impairment	Visual Impairment	Orthopedic Impairment	Other Health Impairment	Autism	Traumatic Brain Injury	Multiple Disabilities
Percentage provided:											
More frequent feedback											
Wave 1	40.2	27.0	53.0	52.3	25.6	26.7	37.3	41.0	46.3	47.8	32.0
Wave 2	30.3	14.2	40.6	43.1	25.8	22.9	25.2	34.4	36.0	52.0	44.8
Percentage-point change	-9.9*	-12.8*	-12.4*				-12.1*				
Progress monitored by special education teacher											
Wave 1	65.6	58.2	75.7	72.0	61.4	77.9	71.4	70.3	75.8	77.8	71.5
Wave 2	61.9	30.6	68.7	58.8	57.8	65.4	61.3	63.8	67.2	73.2	71.0
Percentage-point change		-27.6***									
Teacher aide, instructional assistant, or other personal aide											
Wave 1	35.0	31.7	61.7	48.8	38.3	40.9	56.8	40.7	73.9	61.7	71.7
Wave 2	32.9	14.7	57.7	42.9	28.9	39.0	56.7	33.0	72.0	45.0	70.4
Percentage-point change		-17.0**									
Computer software for students with disabilities											
Wave 1	10.2	7.1	25.5	10.1	5.7	38.5	23.4	10.3	17.9	29.2	30.5
Wave 2	5.1	3.8	21.3	3.6	6.3	41.7	19.5	10.9	24.9	15.4	31.0
Percentage-point change				-6.5*							

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Note: Only learning aids that change significantly for students in at least one disability category are included in the exhibit.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

- Students with mental retardation are 10-percentage-points less likely to receive slower-paced instruction, those with other health impairments show a 16-percentage-point decline in receiving modifications to their assignments, and students with orthopedic impairments have experienced a decline of 12 percentage points from Wave 1 to Wave 2 in receiving more frequent feedback on their performance.

Differential Changes in Receipt of Learning Supports across Demographic Groups

Grade level. Declines in receipt of the various kinds of learning supports occur largely among students with disabilities who were at elementary grade levels in Wave 1 (Exhibit 6-9).

- Students who were in fourth or fifth grades in Wave 1, many of whom subsequently made the transition to middle school, are the most likely to have experienced declines in receipt of learning supports. All eleven forms of support that have changed significantly for any grade level group have declined for these students. Declines range from 11 to 21 percentage points for having tests read aloud and having more time to complete assignments, respectively.
- Those in the early elementary grade levels in Wave 1 show decreases in receipt of nine kinds of learning supports; these range from an 11-percentage-point decrease in receiving more frequent feedback on their performance to a 22-percentage-point decrease in having their progress monitored by a special education teacher.
- Only with regard to receiving more frequent feedback on performance have students with disabilities who were in sixth grade or above experienced change in the learning supports they are provided (12 percentage points).

Exhibit 6-9
Changes in Learning Supports Provided to Students with Disabilities,
by Grade Level

	Grade level in the 2000-01 school year		
	1st through 3rd	4th or 5th	6th or above
Percentage provided:			
More time for tests			
Wave 1	63.4	73.3	76.9
Wave 2	50.2	56.5	72.1
Percentage-point change	-13.2*	-16.8**	
Test read to student			
Wave 1	52.8	51.1	54.7
Wave 2	39.1	39.8	47.2
Percentage-point change	-13.7*	-11.3*	
Modified tests			
Wave 1	37.0	50.2	51.3
Wave 2	27.6	31.5	42.5
Percentage-point change		-18.7***	
Alternative tests/assessments			
Wave 1	27.6	35.2	24.9
Wave 2	22.9	23.3	24.0
Percentage-point change		-11.9*	
Modified grading standards			
Wave 1	32.9	37.6	33.2
Wave 2	21.3	24.3	27.0
Percentage-point change	-11.6*	-13.3**	
Slower-paced instruction			
Wave 1	43.5	51.0	46.3
Wave 2	31.3	38.9	37.4
Percentage-point change	12.2*	12.1*	
More time for assignments			
Wave 1	61.3	73.0	65.1
Wave 2	43.5	51.7	61.9
Percentage-point change	-17.8***	-21.3***	-3.2
Shorter or different assignments			
Wave 1	46.1	53.2	45.3
Wave 2	32.8	37.7	38.9
Percentage-point change	-13.3*	-15.5**	
More frequent feedback			
Wave 1	38.5	43.4	38.0
Wave 2	27.6	28.1	25.9
Percentage-point change	-10.9*	-15.3**	-12.2*

Exhibit 6-9
Changes in Learning Supports Provided to Students with Disabilities,
by Grade Level (Concluded)

	Grade level in the 2000-01 school year		
	1st through 3rd	4th or 5th	6th or above
Percentage provided:			
Progress monitored by a special education teacher			
Wave 1	69.3	68.8	62.6
Wave 2	47.4	53.4	57.1
Percentage-point change	-21.9***	-15.4**	
Teacher aide, instructional assistant, or other personal assistant			
Wave 1	41.6	42.1	36.1
Wave 2	27.7	27.7	37.2
Percentage-point change	-13.9**	-14.4**	

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Note: Only learning aids that change significantly for students in at least one grade level grouping are included in the exhibit.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels:

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

Household income. Students with disabilities from households with different income levels show different experiences with changes in receipt of various learning supports (Exhibit 6-10).

- Declines in receipt of learning supports has been most widespread among students from the middle income group—those from households with annual incomes of \$25,001 to \$50,000. They show declines in receipt of seven kinds of learning supports, ranging from 13 percentage points for being subject to modified grading standards and having progress monitored by a special education teacher to 16 percentage points for taking modified forms of tests.
- Students with disabilities in the lowest and highest income groups show declines in four and three forms of learning supports, respectively. Declines range from 10 to 14 percentage points for the lowest income group (for receipt of physical accommodations and receiving more frequent feedback) and 13 and 22 percentage points for the highest income group (13 percentage points for being given more time to take tests and having tests read aloud and 22 percentage points for having progress monitored).

Exhibit 6-10
Changes in Accommodations Provided to Students with Disabilities,
by Household Income and Race/Ethnicity

	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity		
	\$25,000 and Less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic
Percentage provided:						
More time for tests						
Wave 1	74.1	75.0	64.7	70.9	72.1	65.8
Wave 2	66.7	64.2	51.8	58.8	67.2	57.6
Percentage-point change			-12.9*	-12.1***		
Test read to student						
Wave 1	52.7	56.8	45.8	53.7	53.1	46.9
Wave 2	44.3	49.8	32.8	44.2	45.2	30.3
Percentage-point change			-13.0*	-9.5**		
Modified tests						
Wave 1	47.5	52.4	35.9	43.7	50.7	56.4
Wave 2	35.7	35.9	31.1	34.0	33.5	37.4
Percentage-point change	-11.8*	-16.5**		-9.7**	-17.2*	
Modified grading standards						
Wave 1	41.1	36.7	27.9	32.0	42.5	37.9
Wave 2	30.3	23.9	21.7	22.5	31.9	31.8
Percentage-point change		-12.8*		-9.5**		
Slower-paced instruction						
Wave 1	54.1	51.3	37.3	43.3	64.5	48.5
Wave 2	45.8	37.2	27.1	33.1	48.4	43.1
Percentage-point change		-14.1*		-10.2**	-16.1*	
More time for assignments						
Wave 1	71.8	68.7	58.1	63.5	71.1	74.2
Wave 2	59.2	52.5	47.1	49.6	68.1	56.2
Percentage-point change	-12.6*	-16.2**		-13.9***	-3.0	-18.0
Shorter or different assignments						
Wave 1	53.1	50.0	36.6	43.8	55.7	61.1
Wave 2	45.2	35.7	28.2	33.5	44.5	50.0
Percentage-point change		-14.3*		-10.3**		
More frequent feedback						
Wave 1	44.1	43.6	32.7	37.2	51.3	41.0
Wave 2	29.7	28.7	24.1	26.2	35.2	30.2
Percentage-point change	-14.4*	-14.9*		-11.0***	-16.1*	
Physical accommodations						
Wave 1	27.1	20.4	27.3	22.9	23.2	19.5
Wave 2	16.6	16.9	21.2	16.8	20.9	11.8
Percentage-point change	-10.5*			-6.9*		

Exhibit 6-10
Changes in Accommodations Provided to Students with Disabilities ,
by Household Income and Race/Ethnicity (Concluded)

	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity		
	\$25,000 and Less	\$25,001 to \$50,000	More than \$50,000	White	African American	Hispanic
Percentage provided:						
Progress monitored by a special education teacher						
Wave 1	63.7	70.2	70.4	64.8	69.3	73.7
Wave 2	57.5	56.9	48.1	52.3	57.8	56.5
Percentage-point change		-13.3*		-12.5***		
Teacher aide, instructional assistant, or other personal aide						
Wave 1	44.3	45.1	33.1	38.4	47.3	42.5
Wave 2	39.5	35.8	27.8	31.4	39.4	29.8
Percentage-point change				-7.0*		
Computer software for students with disabilities						
Wave 1	13.3	13.4	8.2	11.0	18.1	13.4
Wave 2	11.2	7.2	6.2	5.8	14.3	13.0
Percentage-point change				-5.2**		

Source: SEELS student's school program questionnaire, Waves 1 and 2.

Note: Only learning aids that change significantly for students in at least one income or racial/ethnic group are included in the exhibit.

Statistically significant difference in a two-tailed test at the following levels: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Racial/ethnic background. Changes in receipt of learning supports vary with students' racial/ethnic background (Exhibit 6-10).

- White students with disabilities show declines in receipt of all 12 of the learning supports included in Exhibit 6-10. Declines range from 5 percentage points in the receipt of physical accommodations to 14 percentage points in being subject to modified grading standards.
- African-American students with disabilities have experienced declines in three forms of learning support: 16 percentage points decreases in receipt of slower-paced instruction and more frequent feedback on their performance and 17 percentage points in taking modified tests.
- Although Hispanic students with disabilities show declines in the receipt of some learning supports that equal or surpass the size of those experienced by white or African-American students with disabilities, those declines do not reach statistical significance for this relatively small group.

Participation in Mandated Standardized Testing

NCLB requires that schools begin annual testing of students who are in grades three through eight and that they test students in grades nine or higher at least once during their high school careers. Students with disabilities are expected to be included to the maximum extent possible, with accommodations when necessary.

- In the 1-year period between Waves 1 and 2 of the SEELS school surveys, the percentage of students with disabilities who are reported to be at a grade level at which mandated standardized tests are given has increased, from 92% to 96%.
- The entire increase has occurred among students who were in first through third grades in Wave 1 (an increase from 85% to 98%) and who moved into the grade range at which annual mandatory testing applies the following school year.
- There have been no changes in the ways in which students with disabilities who are at grade levels in which testing occurs participate in testing; in Wave 2, 3% do not take the tests, 12% take an alternate form of the test, 62% are tested with modifications, and 19% take the tests without modifications.
- Changes in the participation of students with disabilities in mandated standardized testing have occurred similarly for students who differ in their primary disability category and demographic characteristics.

Summary

It is reasonable to have modest expectations for the kinds of changes in the school programs of students with disabilities that might occur in a 1-year period. In fact, many important features of students' school programs have not changed, including, for example, their academic course taking and instructional settings.

However, some changes that have occurred suggest that an increasing emphasis on academics may be displacing nonacademic courses in students' school schedules. There have been marked declines in students' taking art or music and physical education and in their receiving study skills and social skills instruction. These declines have been particularly pronounced for students with learning disabilities and, to a lesser extent, those with speech, hearing, or visual impairments or mental retardation. At the same time that academics appear to be taking a larger portion of students' school days, they have experienced a decline in the likelihood of receiving a variety of learning supports that could help them succeed in those classes.

These changes are particularly notable among students in grade levels that often mark the transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high school. Students at grade levels at which these transition points generally occur have experienced virtually all the decline in nonacademic course taking that has occurred; students in the earlier elementary grades show almost no such declines. Further, the group of students transitioning to middle school show the most widespread declines in receiving learning supports.

The differential experiences with changes in receipt of learning supports that are apparent across disability categories appear generally to reflect differential rates of students being declassified from special education. Those with the highest rates of declassification, particularly students with speech impairments, have the largest declines in receipt of learning supports because they no longer are eligible for them.