



Special Education: Design Considerations

April 2019

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Setting the Context

Special Education (pre-1950)

Students with mild disabilities:

- Educated along with general population

Students with significant disabilities:

- Private agencies
- Institutions
- No school whatsoever

Educational Access as a Civil Right

Brown v. the Board of Education (1954)

Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.



Federal Legislation

- Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504
 - No discrimination against individuals in programs that receive federal \$\$\$
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975
 - Regulations defined disabilities, processes, etc.
 - Provided funding
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990
 - Set minimum standards for accessibility



Major Policy Concepts in IDEA

Free and appropriate public education (FAPE)

Special education and related services that—

- Are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;
- Meet the standards of the state educational agency,
- Include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and
- Are provided in conformity with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of IDEA

Least restrictive environment (LRE)

- To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are nondisabled; and
- Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Landmark Court Cases

Brown v. the Board of Education (1954)

- Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.

Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education (1989)

- Students with disabilities have a right to be included in both academic and extracurricular programs of general education.
- Schools are required to offer a continuum of services.

Olmstead v. L.C. (1999)

- Unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Positive Effects of Integrating Students with Disabilities

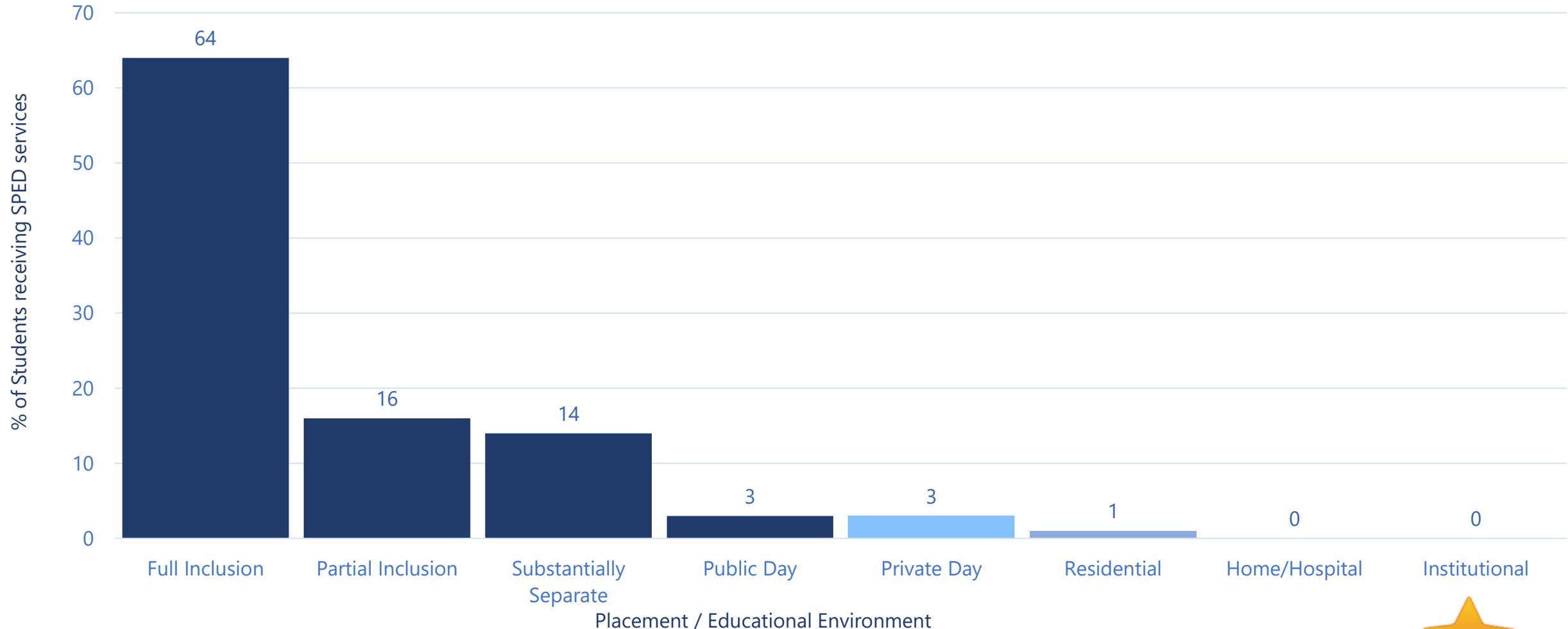
- Students with disabilities placed in typical classrooms experienced an increase in instruction in both functional and academic domains (*Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, & Goetz, 1994*).
- Time spent in a general education classroom is positively correlated with increased employment and independent living (*National Longitudinal Transition Study; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2006*).
- Teaching students in natural environments increases their ability to assume more typical adult roles (*Agran, Snow, Swaner; 1999*).



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Special Ed: a continuum of services

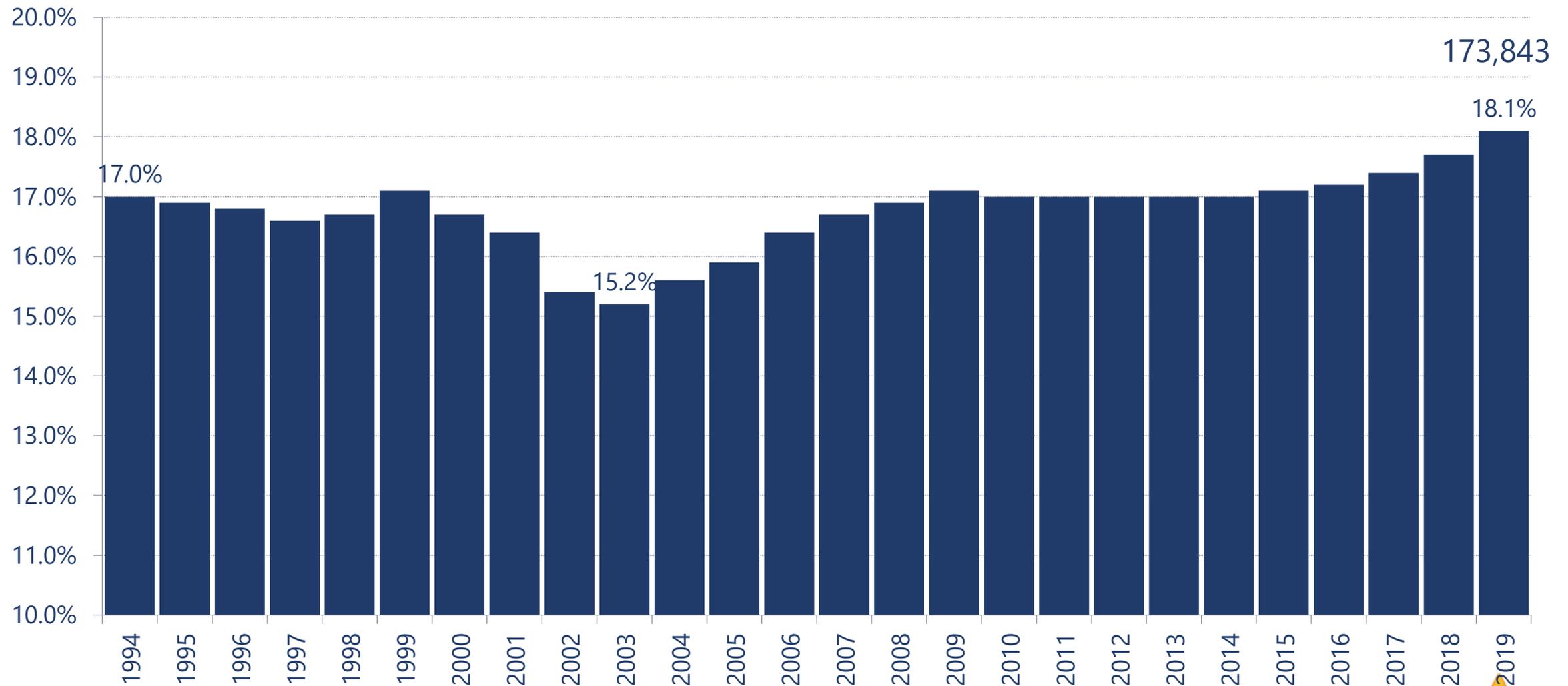
80% of students with IEPs in MA are in full or partial inclusion



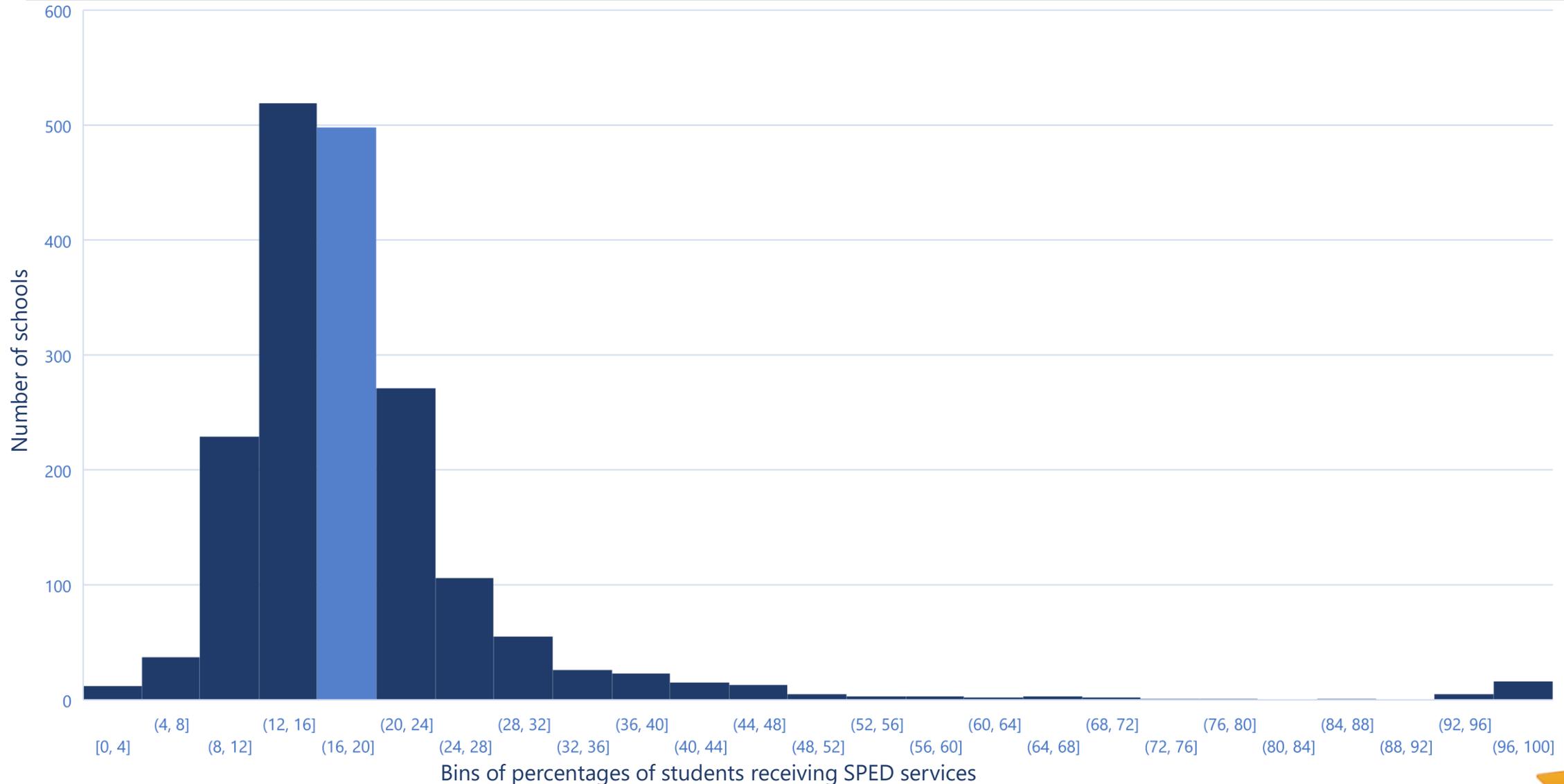
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Special Ed: state trends

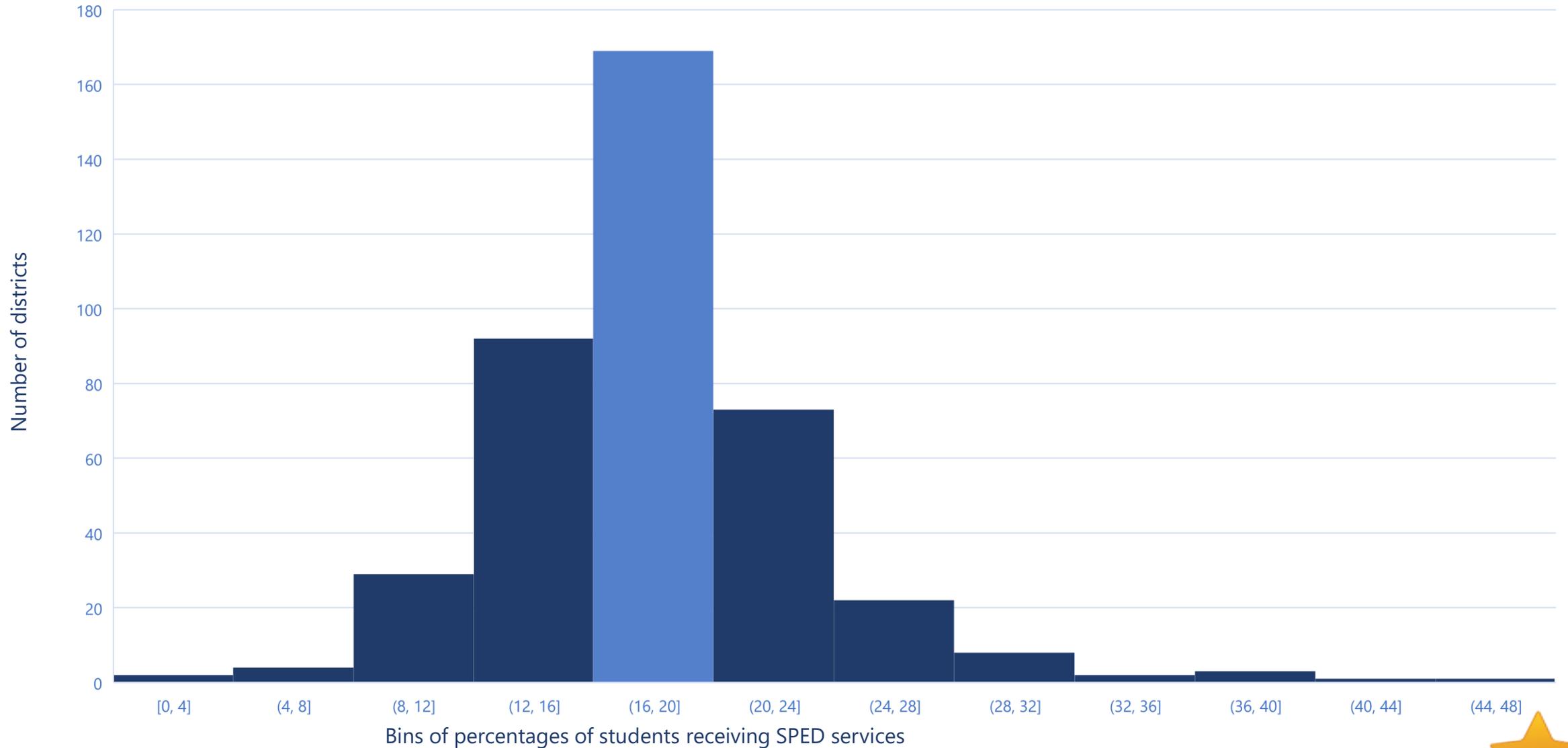
18.1% of students in MA are receiving special education services



82% of schools have SPED populations between 8% and 24%



89% of districts have SPED populations between 8% and 24%



THANK YOU

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