

Chapter 7: Student Support Services

There are students who require additional assistance and supports to provide them with the opportunity to reach their full potential. In general, students with an exceptionality may access a wide range of school based services depending on degree of severity. An exceptionality is a term used by the Department of Education to identify patterns of strengths and needs common to groups of students. These strengths and needs may be cognitive, emotional, behavioural, medical, social or physical.

Exceptionalities can be grouped into the following categories:

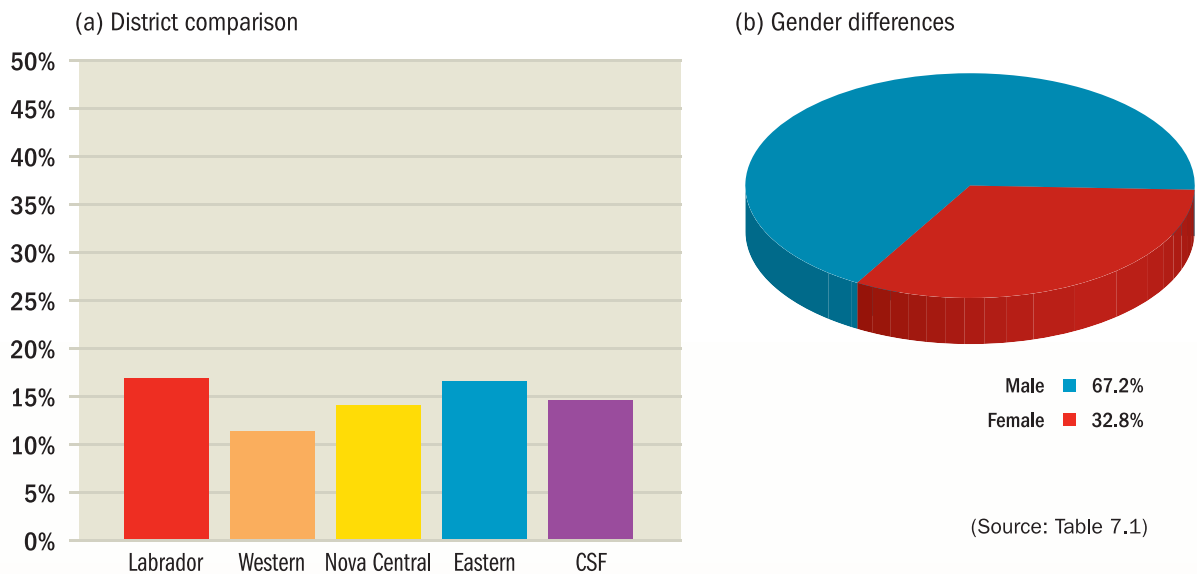
- Brain injury
- Cognitive Disorder
- Developmental delay
- Emotional, mental health and/or behavioural disorder
- Gifted and talented
- Hearing loss
- Health disorder
- Learning disability
- Pervasive developmental disorder
- Physical disability
- Speech and/or language disorder
- Vision loss

Student support services (2009/10)

In 2009/10, 15.3% (or 10,671) of the student population received some form of special education support. This is a decrease of 1,021 from the 11,692 students who received support in 2008/09.

There was little variation at the district level in the percentage of students who received special education supports (see Figure 7.1a). This percentage ranged from a low of 11.4% in the Western district to a high of 17.1% in Labrador. A higher percentage of males than females received special education support (see Figure 7.1b). Over two-thirds of the 10,671 students who received support were male and the remaining were female.

Figure 7.1: Percentage of students receiving special education services (2009/10)



Types of exceptionalities (2009/10)

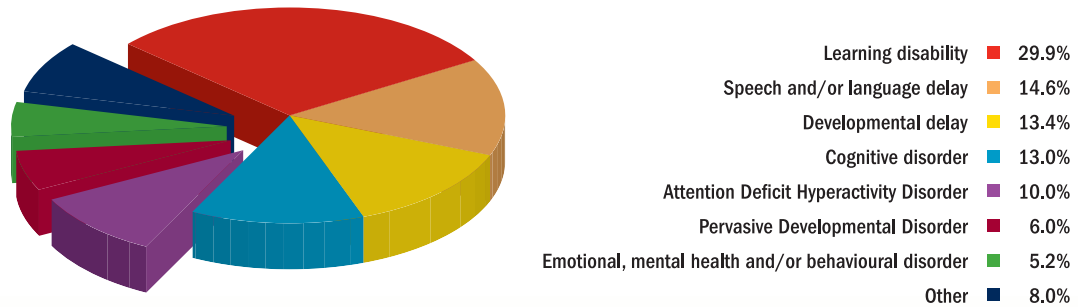
Overall, the highest percentage of students receiving special education support had a diagnosed learning disability. This was the case for 29.9% of the students. There were similar percentages of students with speech and/or language delays, developmental delays and cognitive disorders (see Figure 7.2a). The other category includes a variety of exceptionalities, such as Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, physical disability, and gifted and/or talented.

At the district level, Labrador, Nova Central and Eastern had the highest percentage of students with a diagnosed learning disability. For example, in Labrador there were 596 students receiving student support services. Of these, 26.7% were diagnosed with a learning disability. The Western and Labrador districts had a high percentage of students with a speech and/or language disorder. Also, similar percentages of students receiving special education services were diagnosed with a cognitive disorder in each of the districts. This percentage ranged from a low of 10.8% in the CSF to a high of 17.9% in Western (see Figure 7.2b).

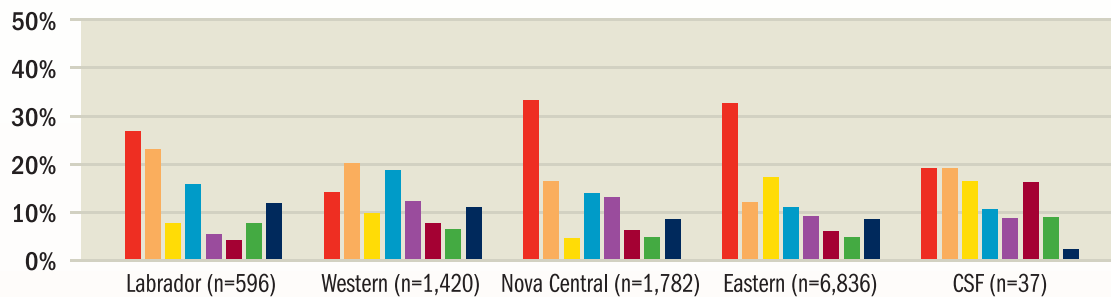


Figure 7.2: Types of exceptionalities (n=10,671)

(a) Provincial



(b) District differences



(Source: Table 7.2)

Trends in student support services (2005/06-2009/10)

The percentage of students receiving special education support has remained fairly consistent between 2005/06 and 2009/10 ranging between 15.3% and 17.2% (see Figure 7.3a).

Overall, the percentage of students receiving special education support increased during this time in both the Labrador and CSF districts and decreased in Nova Central. In the Eastern school district, the percentage of students remained fairly consistent ranging between 16.2% and 17.9%. Finally in the Western district, the percentage of students receiving special education support ranged from 13.0% to 15.6% between 2005/06 and 2008/09, and dropped to 11.4% in 2009/10 (see Figure 7.3b).

Each year, the group of students receiving special education support is composed of approximately two-thirds boys and one-third girls. For example, in 2005/06, 12,342 students received special education support. Of these, 66.8% were male and the remaining 33.2% female. During 2009/10, the 10,671 students receiving support were made up of 67.2% male and 32.8% female (see Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.3: Percentage of students receiving special education support (2005/06-2009/10)

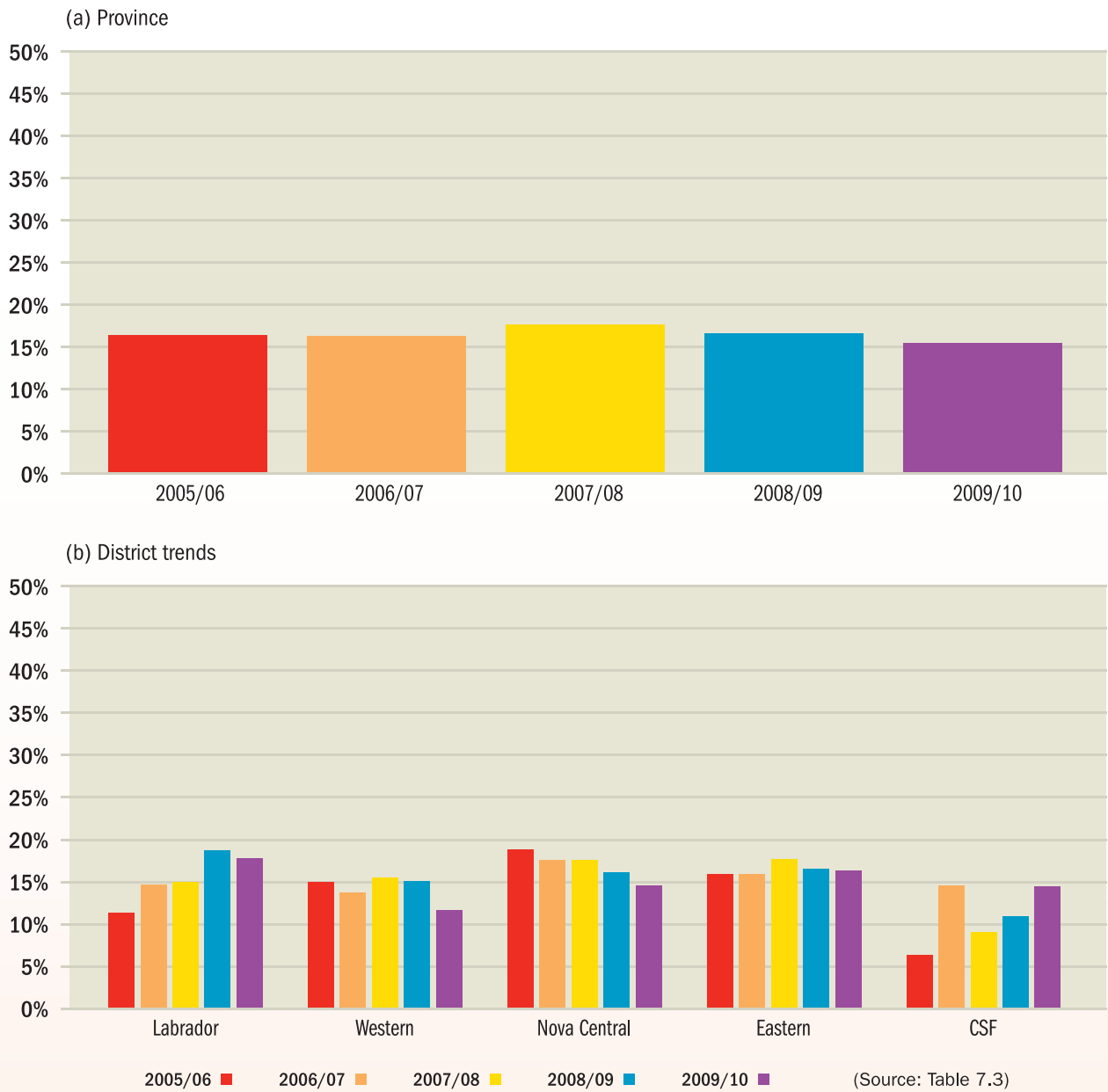


Figure 7.4: Gender differences in the percentage of students receiving special education support (2005/06-2009/10)

