

Separate School Placement for Students with Extensive Support Needs

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INTRODUCTION

- Longstanding federal mandates for educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment
- Research demonstrates the benefits of inclusive, general education classroom placements for students with ESN
- Research suggests separate schools may offer limited access to social networks, friendships, and augmentative/alternative communication options.
- Only 17.4% of students with intellectual disability were fully included in 2018, 6.8% were in separate schools.

Research Questions

1. How does the percentage of separate schools vary across locales (city, suburb, town, rural) for states with low, medium, and high separate school placement rates for students with ESN?
2. What is the relationship between the percentage of separate schools in each locale and overall placement rates of students with ESN in separate schools?
3. How have the number and location of separate special education charter schools in each state in the United States varied across the last decade and to what extent do they appear to specialize in students with ESN?

METHODS

Research Design

This study used state-level data files on IDEA Part B Child Count and Educational Environments from the OSEP and the NCES. Descriptive statistics and a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data.

Data Analysis

Several percentages were calculated. For each state, the percentage of the students with ESN in separate schools, and the percentage of separate schools by locale (city, suburban, town, and rural) were calculated, as well as the national mean percentage of students with ESN in separate schools that includes all 50 states and D.C. The formula is listed for each percentage by research questions. All the percentages were calculated for each year. Finally, MANOVAs were completed to determine whether there was an association between the percentage of separate schools in each locale and a state's placement rate group (high, medium, low).

RESULTS

RQ 1. - The percentage of separate schools varied from 1,825 nationwide in 2012-13 to 1,669 in 2019-20. Most of them (~1200 each year) were in cities and suburbs.

Table 1. Percentage of Students With ESN in Separate Schools in 2012–13 and 2019–20.

State	Percentage of students with ESN in separate schools		Pattern	
	2012-13	2019-20	2012-13	2019-20
50 states + D.C.	6.9%	5.9%	N/A	
California	6.9%	4.9%	Low	Low
Connecticut	12.4%	12.3%	High	High
Delaware	15.0%	9.9%	High	Medium
Florida	8.7%	6.7%	Medium	Medium
Minnesota	3.4%	4.6%	Low	Low
Texas	0.7%	0.4%	Low	Low

RQ 2. - The correlation analysis indicates a relationship between the percentage of suburban separate schools and overall separate school placement rate for students with ESN.

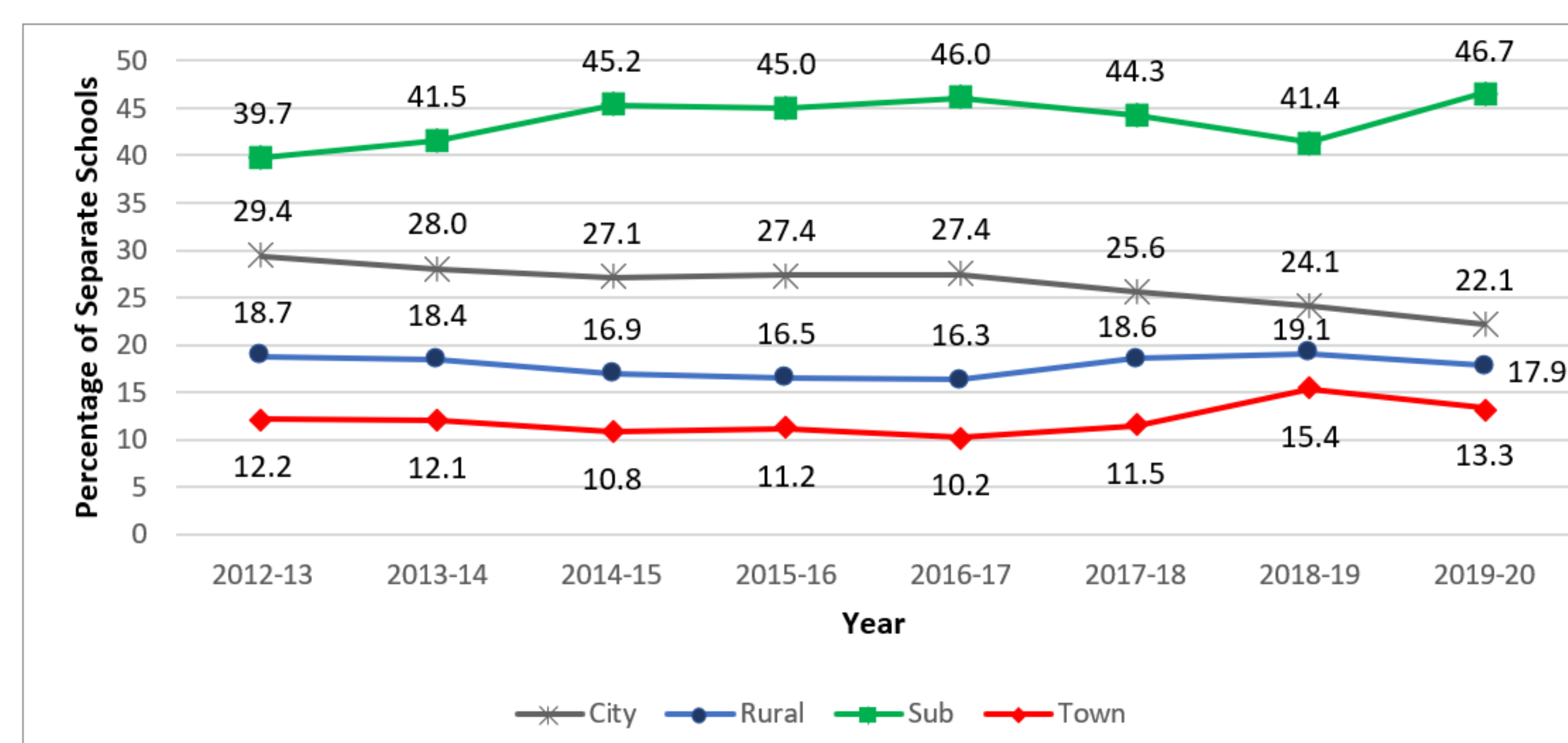


Figure 1. Percentage of Separate Schools for States With More Than 10% of Students With Extensive Support Needs (ESN) in Separate Schools in 2019–20 (High Placement Rate Group)

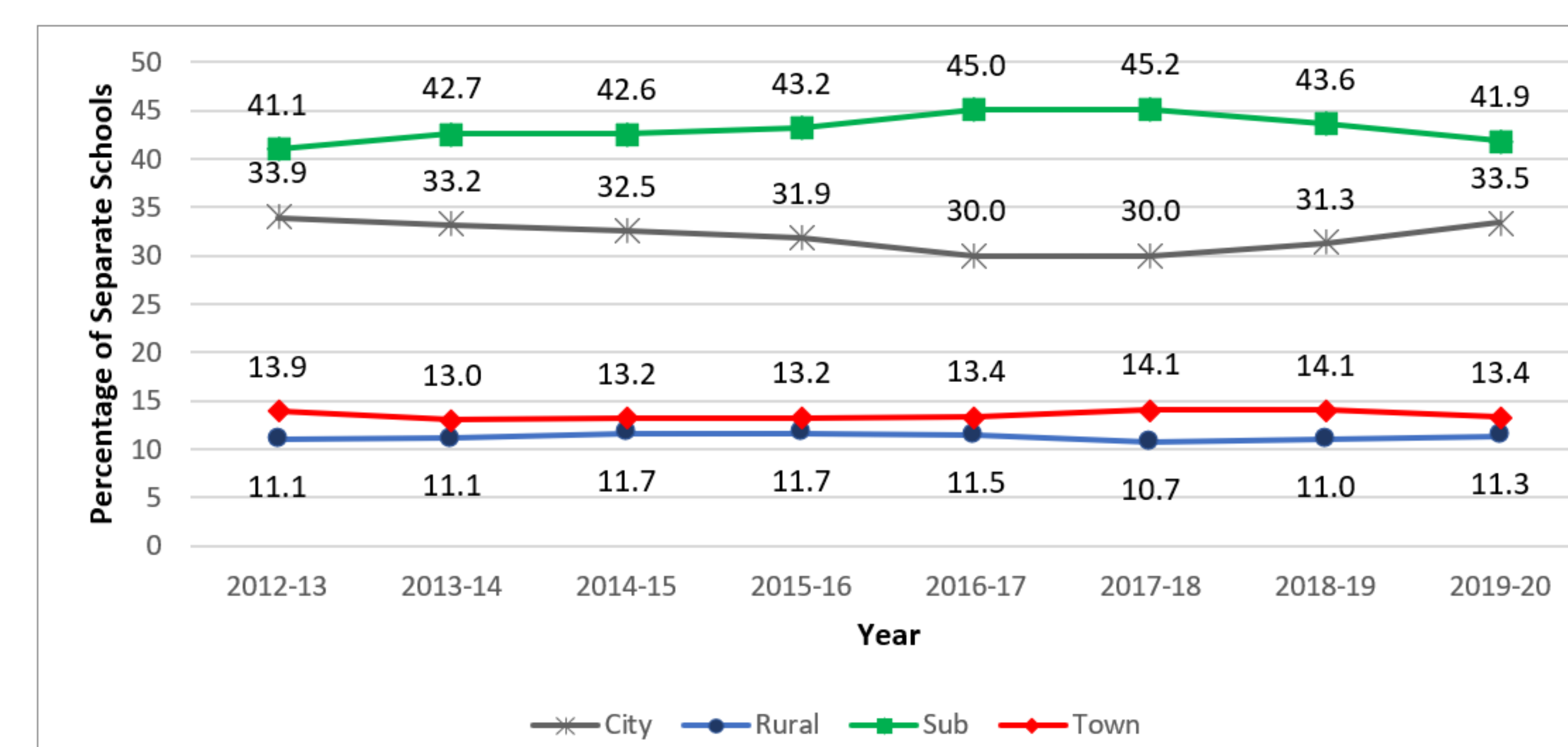


Figure 2 Percentage of Separate Schools for States With Less Than 10% of Students With Extensive Support Needs (ESN) in Separate Schools (Low Placement Rate Group)

Table 1. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) in Percentage of Separate Schools in Each Locale by State Placement Rate (Low, Medium, and High) in 2012–13 and 2019–20.

Year	Source	Dependent variable % of separate schools	SS	df	MS	F	Post-hoc test
2012-13	Placement Rate	City	1607.97	2	803.98	0.97	
		Suburb	3297.79	2	1648.89	7.27**	Low < High (F = 23.58**); Medium < High (F = 6.70*)
		Town	763.37	2	381.68	1.03	
		Rural	677.88	2	338.94	0.76	
	Error	City	31408.82	38	826.55		
		Suburb	5898.91	26	226.88		
		Town	9968.17	27	369.19		
2019-20	Placement Rate	City	3226.63	2	1613.31	1.64	
		Suburb	4146.21	2	2073.11	5.82**	Low < High (F = 8.10**); Low < Medium (F = 5.93*)
		Town	763.60	2	381.80	0.55	
		Rural	784.35	2	392.17	0.73	
	Error	City	33530.24	34	986.18		
		Suburb	8186.79	23	355.95		
		Town	16086.83	23	699.43		
		Rural	10264.29	19	540.23		

*p < .05. **p < .01.

RQ 3. The introduction of separate charter schools has not appeared to significantly influence more students being placed in separate placements, however, these data seem unreliable.

State	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
50 states + D.C.	85	86	78	79	74	70	68	46
		42	36	39	36	36	36	36
City	43 (50.6)	(48.8)	(46.2)	(49.4)	(48.7)	(51.4)	(52.9)	23 (50)
		36	36	35	32	30	22	
Suburb	35 (41.2)	37 (43)	(46.2)	(45.6)	(47.3)	(45.7)	(44.1)	(47.8)
Town	4 (4.7)	4 (4.7)	2 (2.6)	2 (2.5)	2 (2.7)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.5)	0 (0)
Rural	3 (3.5)	3 (3.5)	4 (5.1)	2 (2.5)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	1 (1.5)	1 (2.2)

DISCUSSION

- There are states—a collection in the Midwest and a larger group in the Mid-Atlantic and New England—in which the percentage of students with ESN placed in separate schools is above the national average in 2019–2020. These findings may warrant further investigation into these states to see what contributes to this result.
- With the variability across districts and states for how separate schools are identified, guidance at the federal and state levels for the interpretation of the definitions of a separate school is warranted.
- States and districts should also consider providing technical assistance in promoting high-quality inclusive placement options for students with ESN, similar to an initiative implemented in Kentucky (Kleinert & Kearns, 2022).

REFERENCES

- Anderson & Brock (2020). *Inclusion*.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, PL 108-446, 20 U. S. C. §1414, H. R. 2705.
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