

# Did You Know?

## MATHEMATICS

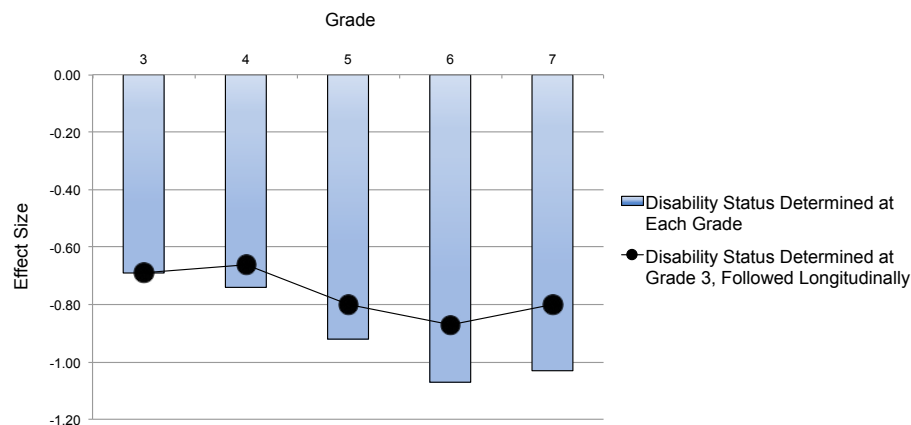
Research Note No. 11 – April 2018

**Students' entrances and exits from special education may create a downward bias in annual reports of the academic performance of the special education subgroup. Compared to students remaining in special education, students exiting special education are likely to have higher achievement, and students newly identified for special education are likely to have lower achievement.**

**The good news:** *Achievement gaps for students with disabilities are smaller when a stable group of students is followed longitudinally compared to the usual reporting method where group membership is determined annually at each grade.<sup>1</sup>*

**The challenge ahead:** Accountability systems are needed that are less sensitive to annual changes in the student composition of schools (also see [DYK #7](#)) and more accurately represent student outcomes for subgroups whose composition may change from year to year.

### Differences in Achievement Gap Effect Size for Students With Disabilities When Group Membership Is Stable Versus Changing at Each Grade



- This graph shows mathematics achievement gaps as effect sizes (ES).
- Achievement gaps are larger (blue bars) when disability group membership changes at each grade compared to the size of achievement gaps when a stable group of students with disabilities is followed over time (black line).
- More information about ES and their interpretation can be found in [DYK #4](#) and [ES\\_Details.pdf](#)
- Using both annual and longitudinal reporting methods may provide a more complete picture of outcomes for students with disabilities.

**<sup>1</sup> For more information, see:**

Schulte, A. C., & Stevens, J. J. (2015). Once, sometimes, or always in special education: Mathematics growth and achievement gaps. *Exceptional Children*, 81, 370-387. doi: 10.1177/0014402914563695 or visit our website: [www.ncaase.com](http://www.ncaase.com).

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