



The special education enrollment gap in Louisiana: Charter vs. traditional schools

Facilitator: Shannon Lasserre-Cortez, PhD, REL Southwest



Agenda

1. Welcome, Event Orientation, and Speaker Introductions
2. Review of the Research
3. Researcher Reflection on the Findings
4. Practitioner Reflection on the Findings
5. Facilitated Presenter Discussion and Q&A
6. Thank You and Stakeholder Feedback Survey

Meet the presenters



Shannon Lasserre-
Cortez, PhD

*Senior Researcher,
REL Southwest*



Patrick Wolf, PhD

*Distinguished
Professor of
Education Policy,
University of
Arkansas*



Tessie Bailey, PhD

*Principal Technical
Assistance
Consultant, American
Institutes for Research*



Sametta Brown, MEd

*Retired Chief
Executive Officer,
New Beginnings
Schools Foundation*

How does REL Southwest do this work?

REL Southwest conducts its work through collaborative research partnerships with stakeholders in **Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.**

To address the priorities and interests of these states, REL Southwest supports **six** collaborative research partnerships.



Research partnerships

- College and Career Readiness
- Early Childhood Education
- English Learners
- Networked Improvement Communities
- School Improvement
- Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Today's goal

To provide attendees with information about the special education enrollment gap between charter schools and traditional schools in Louisiana.



Bridge event outcomes

1. **Gain** a better understanding of the population of students in special education and their enrollment rates in charter and traditional schools in Louisiana.
2. **Understand** the factors associated with differences in classification and enrollment rates of students with an individualized education program (IEP).
3. **Learn** about the report findings' applications and implications for practice.



Stakeholder feedback survey

Don't forget to tell us what you thought about the webinar by completing our stakeholder feedback survey.

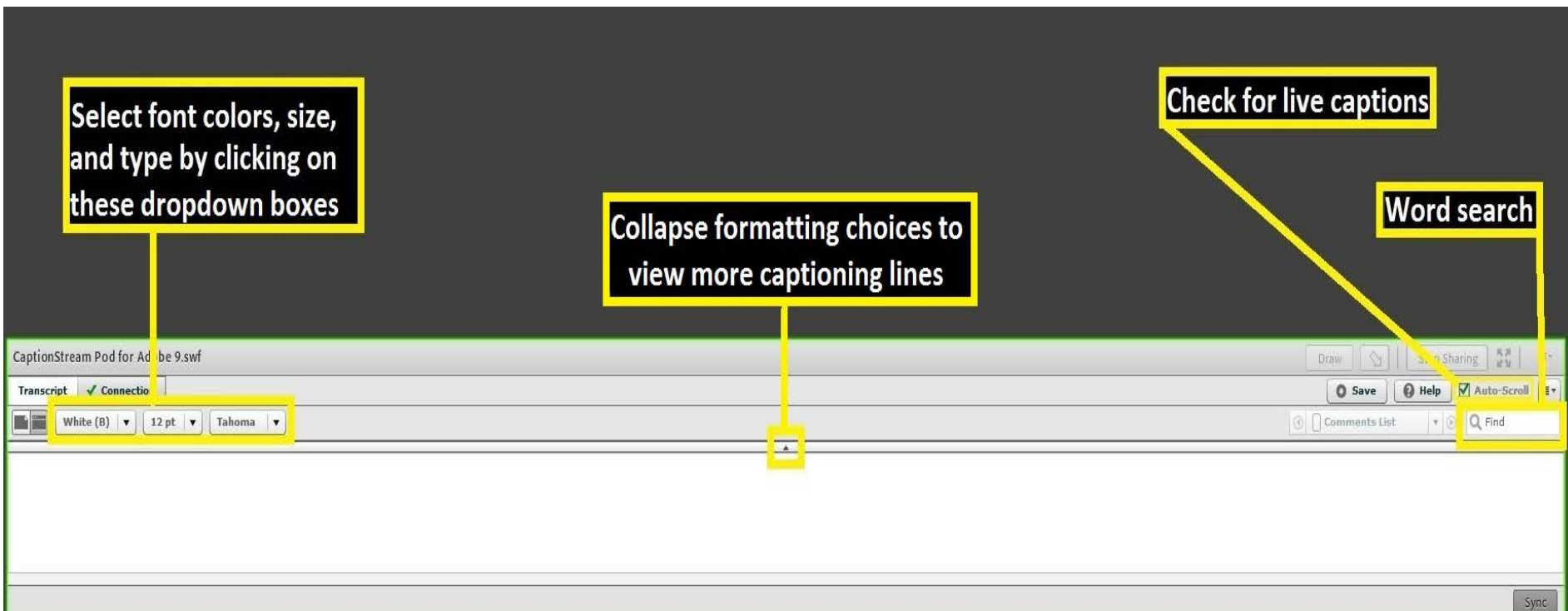
Your responses help us improve our future events.



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- On the far left, select font type, color, and size.
- In the center, click the small arrow to hide the formatting choices and see more lines of captioning.
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- On the right, there is also a word search feature.





Special education enrollment and classification in Louisiana charter and traditional schools

Patrick J. Wolf, PhD, University of Arkansas
Shannon Lasserre-Cortez, PhD, REL Southwest

10/12/18



Meet the presenter



Patrick J. Wolf, PhD

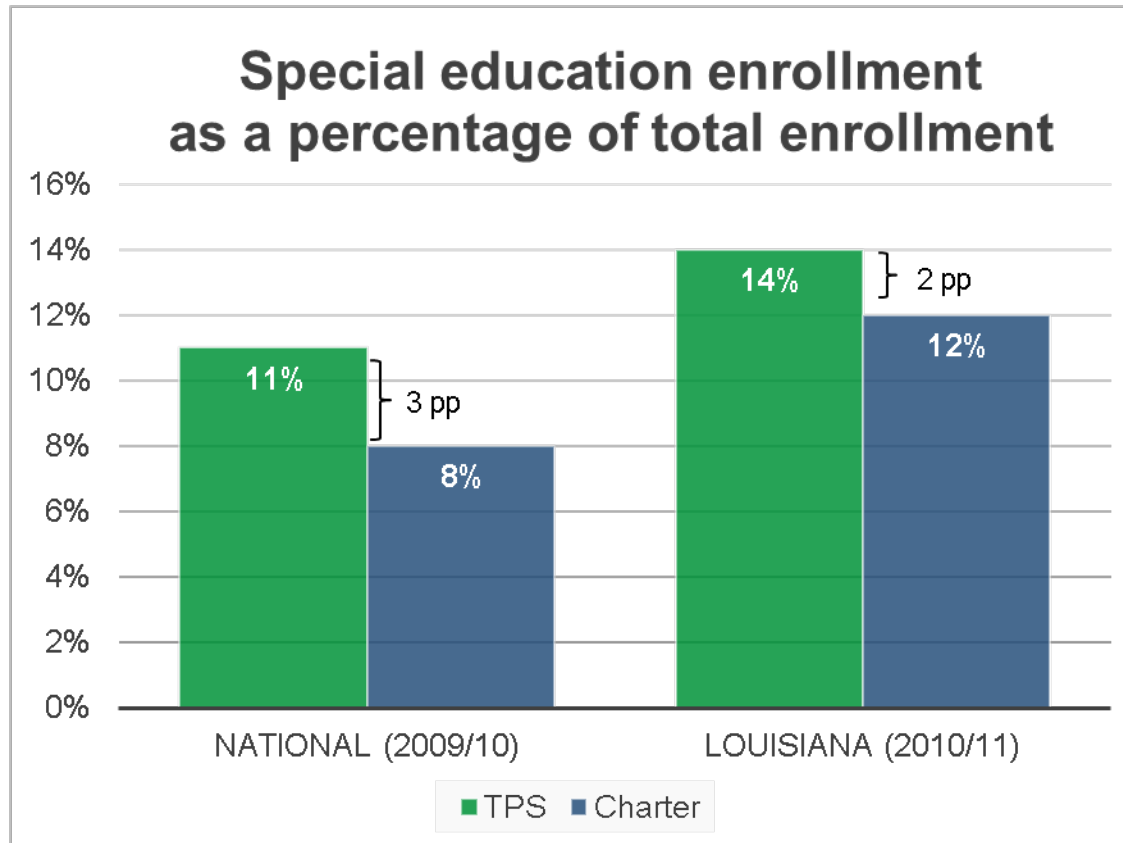
*Co-Principal
Investigator, Louisiana
Charter School
Research Alliance*

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Arkansas*

Agenda

1. Background and Objectives
2. Study Regions
3. Research Questions
4. Data and Sample
5. Methods
6. Findings and Implications

Background



Sources: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013; Cremata, Davis, Dickey, Lawyer, Negassi, Raymond, & Woodworth, 2013.

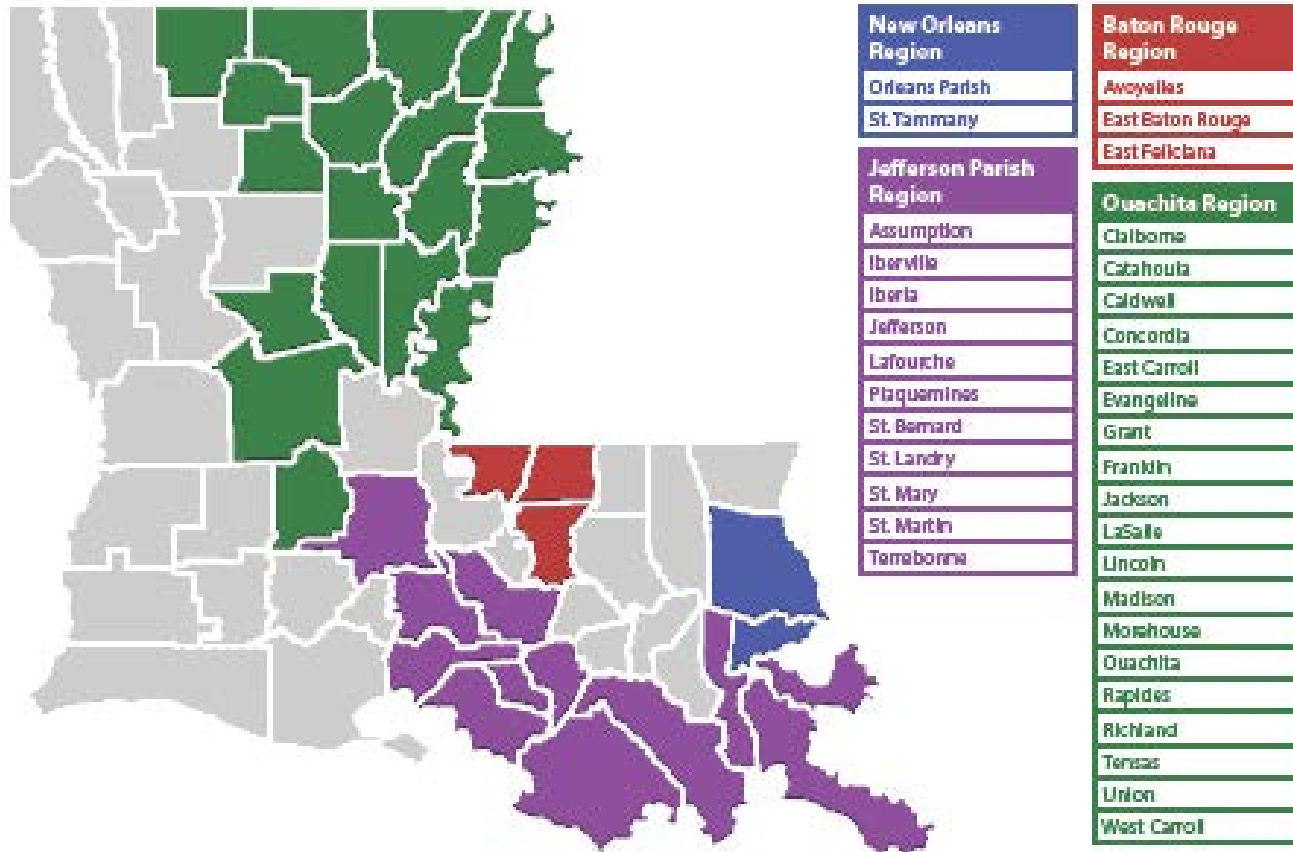
Study objectives

Explore special education enrollment rate gaps between the charter and traditional school sectors.

Identify factors associated with differences in classification and declassification rates of students with individualized education programs (IEPs) across these sectors.

Focus on the four educational regions of Louisiana with three or more charter schools in 2010/11.

Study educational regions



Research question 1

How has the enrollment rate of **students with an IEP** differed between **open-enrollment charter schools** and **traditional schools** between the 2010/11 and 2013/14 school years, overall and by specific educational region?

- a. Does the size of the gap vary across schools that serve **elementary**, **middle**, and **high school** levels?
- b. Does the size of the gap vary across different **disability classifications**?

Research question 2

Were special education **classification and declassification rates** different between charter and traditional schools between the 2010/11 and 2013/14 school years?

- a. Controlling for **student grade**?
- b. Controlling for **continuous years in the same school**?

Data

Louisiana Department of Education information for all public school students and schools in the regions, 2010/11–2013/14:

School-level

- Public charter school or traditional public school.
- Educational region.

Student-level

- Grade.
- Whether they had an IEP.
- Specific category or categories of disability.



Sample

For research question 1, tracked all K–12 public school students in study regions.

- More than 366,000 in 2010/11.
- Nearly 400,000 in 2013/14.
- 5.7% to 10.9% charter students over study period.

For research question 2, tracked 2010/11 cohort across outcome years 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14.



Methods

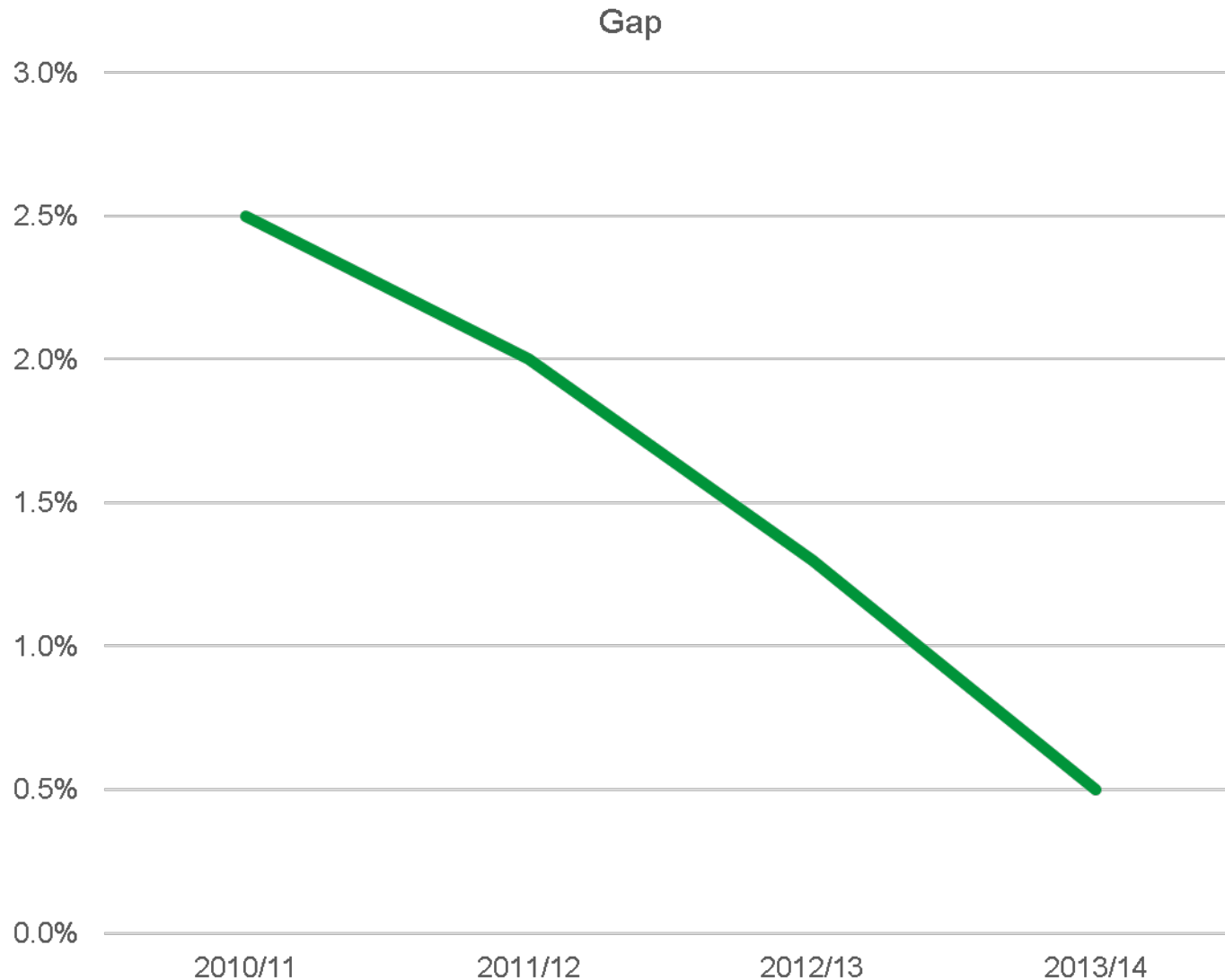
Research question 1

- Variation in the special education enrollment gap by year, region, grade level, and disability type.
- Descriptive statistics.

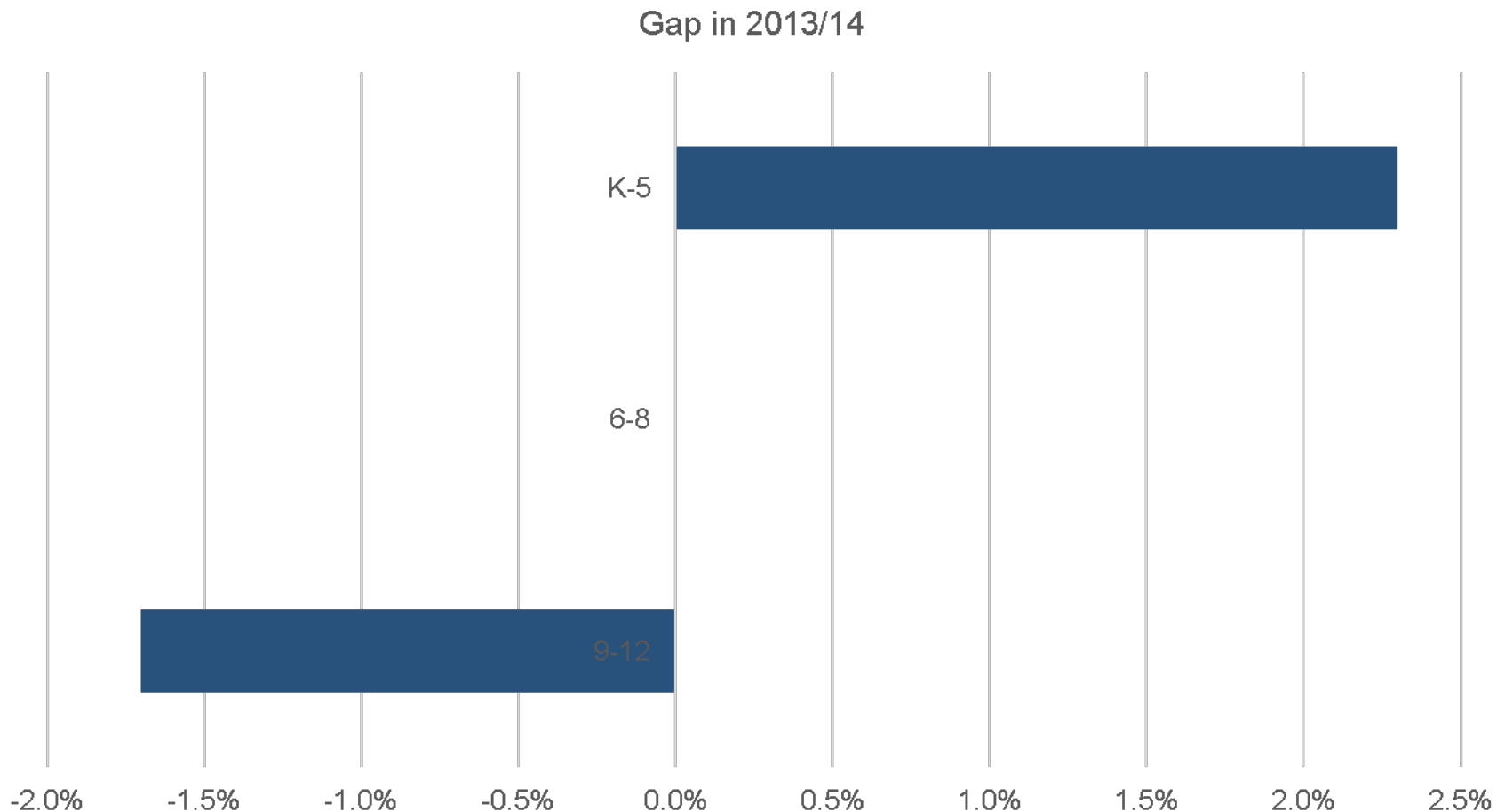
Research question 2

- Possible differences in special education classification and declassification rates.
- Regression methods.

Key findings I: Charter SPED gap declined over time



Key findings II: Gap varied by grade level



Key findings III: The gap...

- Was **lowest in the Baton Rouge** region all 4 years.
- Was **highest in the Ouachita region** 3 of 4 years.
- Favored charters for students with **emotional disturbance** (ED).
- Favored traditional schools for students with **most other disabilities**.



Key findings IV: Charter school enrollment...

- Was **not associated** with the likelihood of being **newly classified** as requiring an IEP.
- Was associated with an **increased likelihood** of being **declassified** as requiring an IEP.



Implications

- Louisiana charters have reduced the special education enrollment gap.
- Study occurred before new policies in 2014/15 to better fund and support students with IEPs in charters.
- **Some sector specialization apparent:**
 - Charters for emotional disturbance and high school.
 - Traditional for lower incidence and earlier grades.

Implications

- Gaps **lower** in urban than rural regions.
- **Higher** rate of charter school declassification confirmed.
- Classifications and declassifications not necessarily good or bad outcomes.



References

U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012; Center for Research on Education Outcomes, 2013; Cremata, Davis, Dickey, Lawyer, Negassi, Raymond, & Woodworth, 2013.

Wolf, P. J., & Lasserre-Cortez, S. (2018). *Special education enrollment and classification in Louisiana charter schools and traditional schools* (REL 2018–288). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

Questions?



Thank you!