

# Both Over and Under-Identification: The Mysterious Case of English Learner Students with Disabilities

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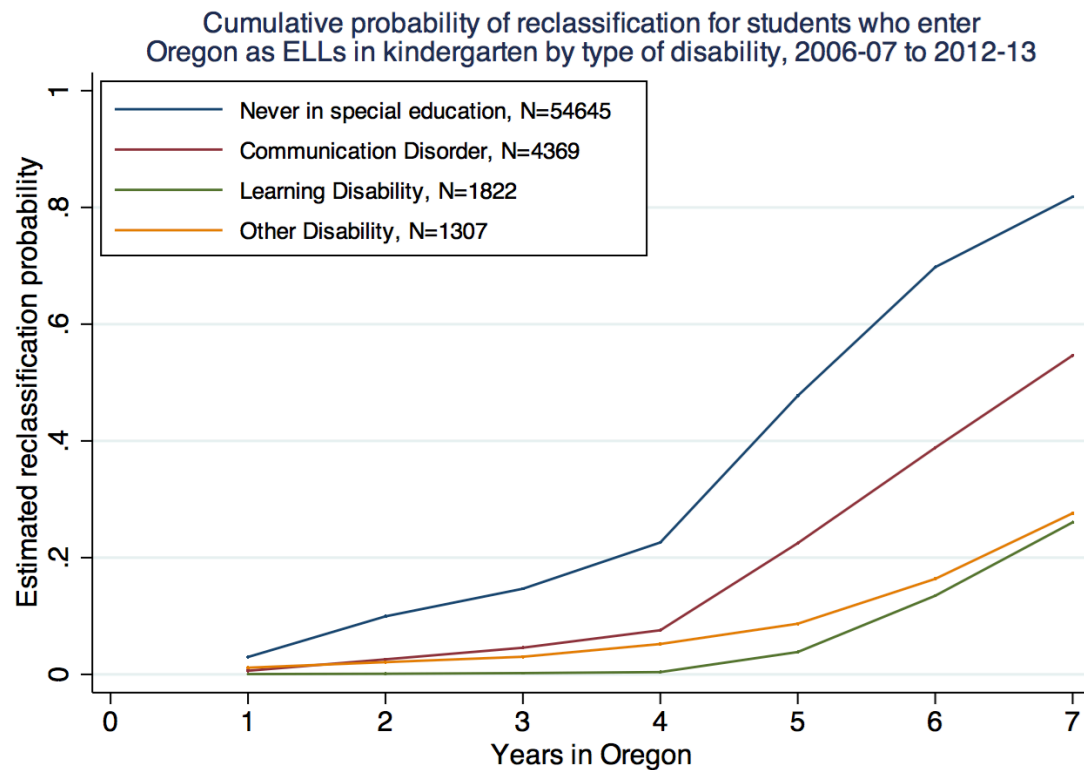
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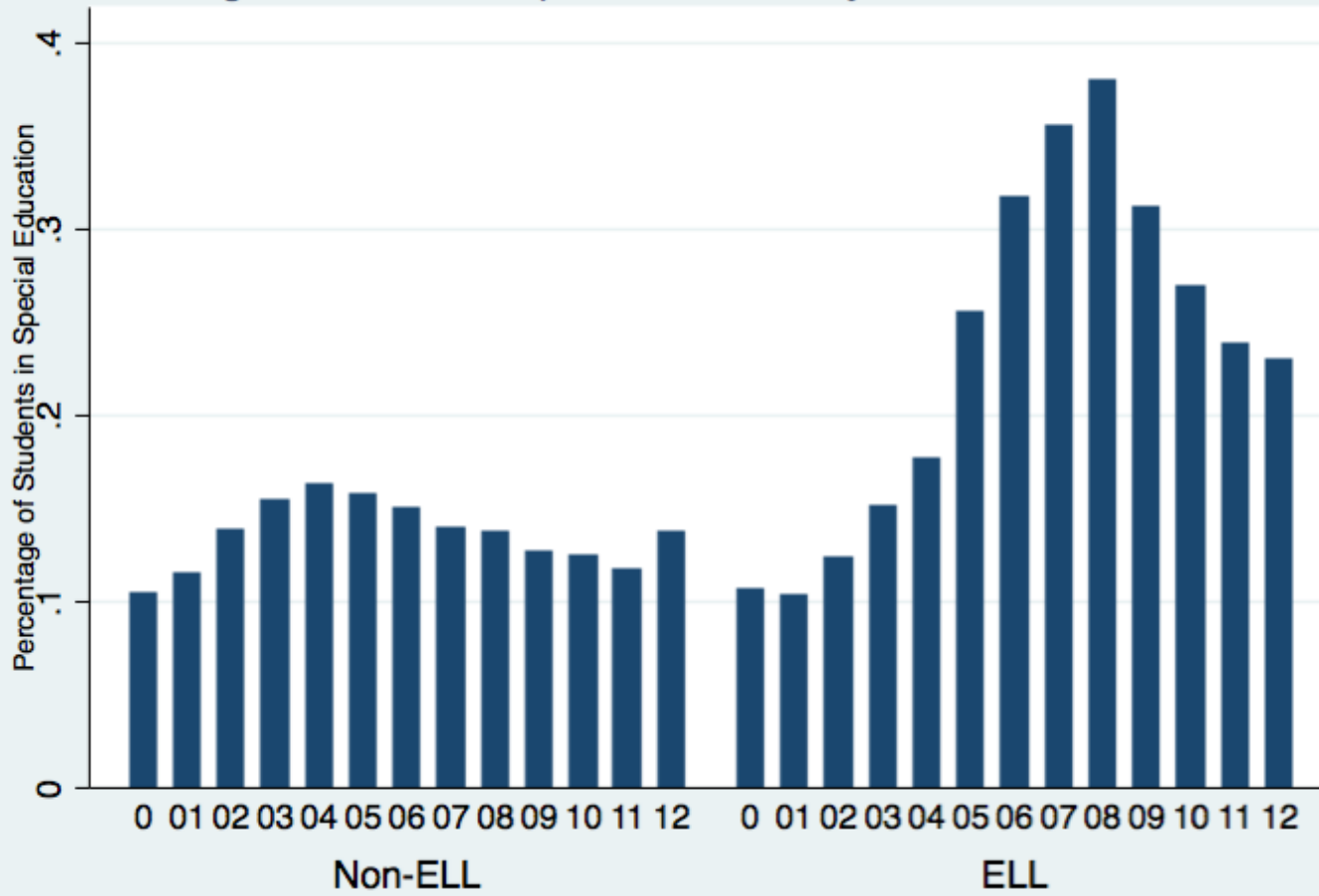
## Table talk

- What is your connection to the topic of English learner students with disabilities?

# Why are we focusing on English learner students with disabilities?



Percentage of Students in Special Education by ELL Status and Grade: 2014



# Key Subtopics Identified by Researchers and Practitioners

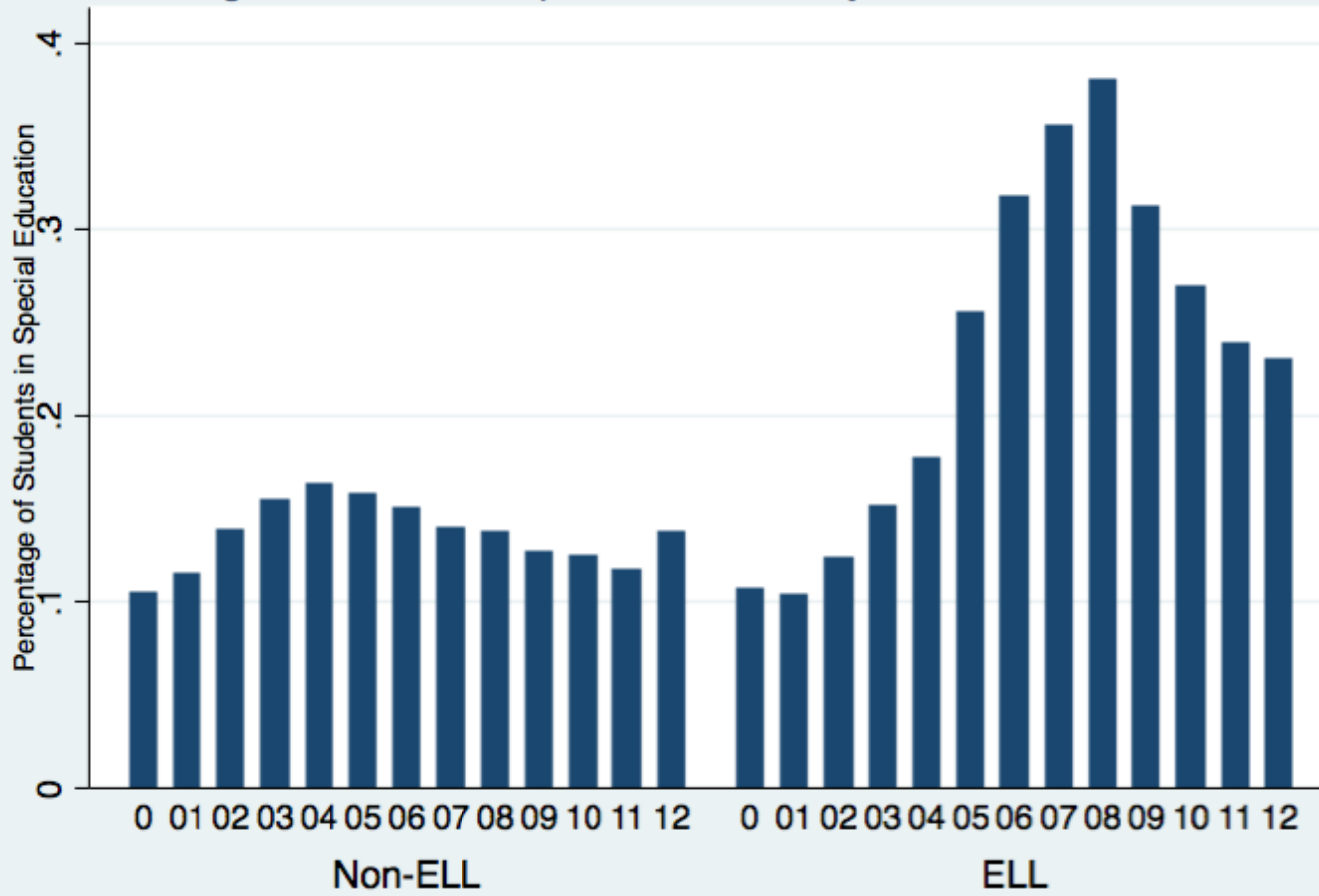
Adapted from *English Language Learners with Disabilities: A Call for Additional Research and Federal Guidance* by Soyoung Park (Stanford), Joni Magee (formerly with the Massachusetts Department of Education), Martha Martinez (ODE), Lynn Shafer Wilner (WIDA) & Jennifer Paul (Michigan Department of Education):

- Ensuring Accurate Identification
- Ensuring Appropriate Placement and Services
- Ensuring Appropriate Opportunities for Exiting EL Services and Exiting Special Education Services

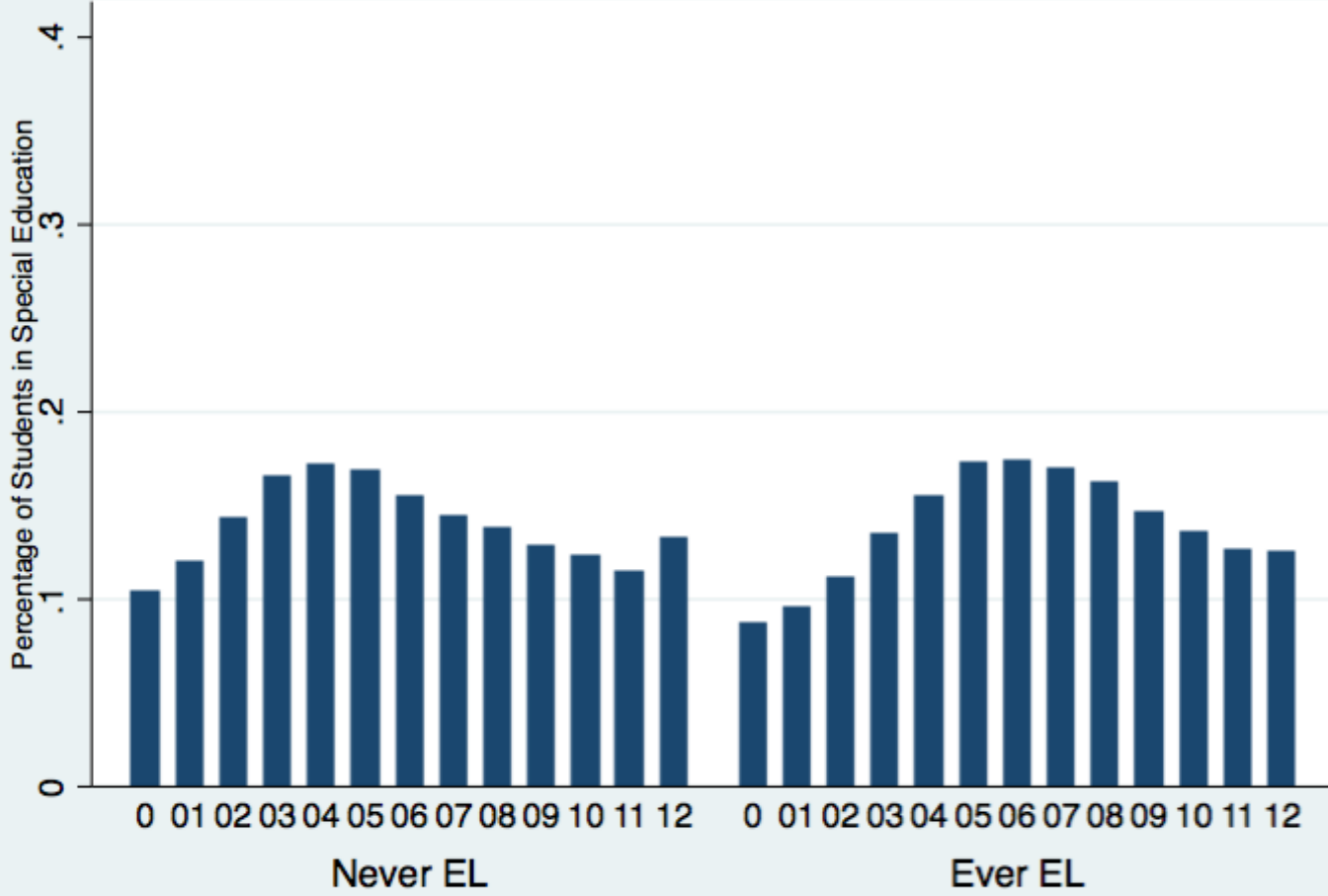
# Previous research on identification of ELSWDs

- ELs have been found to be both over- and under-represented in special education, depending on disability type, grade level, methodology, and sample (Artiles et al., 2005; Burt et al., 2015; Hibel & Jasper, 2012; Morgan et al., 2015).
- In some cases, ELs have been found to be initially less likely than other students to be identified for special education services but ultimately more likely to be identified for services (Hibel & Jasper, 2012; Samson & Lesaux, 2009).
- The over-representation of ELs in special education that has been found by some researchers may be mostly or entirely explained by differences between ELs and other students on other dimensions, such as SES and gender (Morgan et al., 2015; Trainor et al., 2016; U.S Department of Education, 2007).
  - For example, males and economically disadvantaged students are more likely to qualify for special education (Trainor et al., 2016; U.S Department of Education, 2007)

Percentage of Students in Special Education by ELL Status and Grade: 2014



Percentage of Students in Special Education by Ever EL Status and Grade: 2014

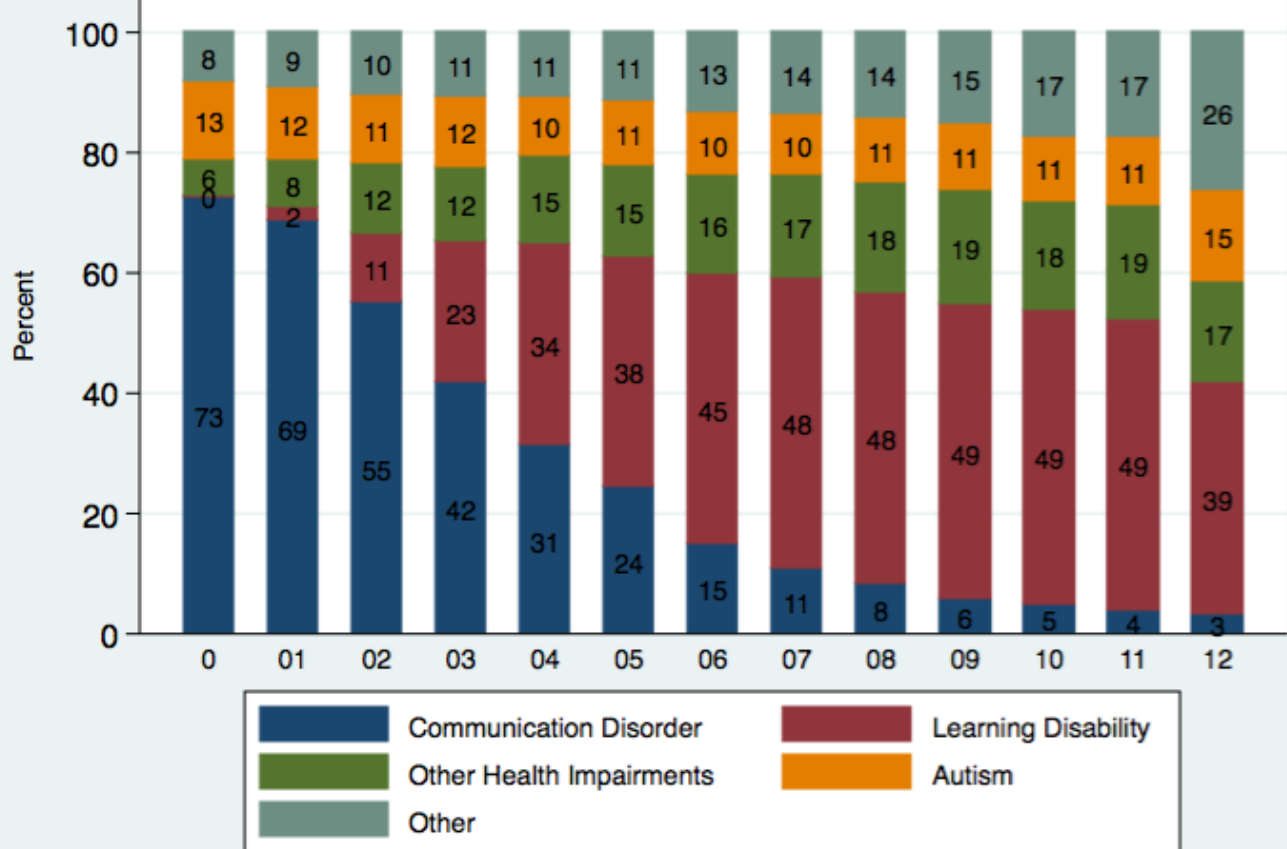




# Prevalence of disability types among students who qualify for special education, 2013-14

Disability	Among students who qualify for special education, the percentage identified with each disability type
Specific Learning Disability	31%
Communication Disorder	26%
Other Health Impairments	14%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	11%
Emotional Disturbance	5%
Intellectual Disability	5%
Hearing Impairment	2%
Orthopedic Impairment	2%
Visual Impairment	1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	1%
Deaf-Blindness	<1%

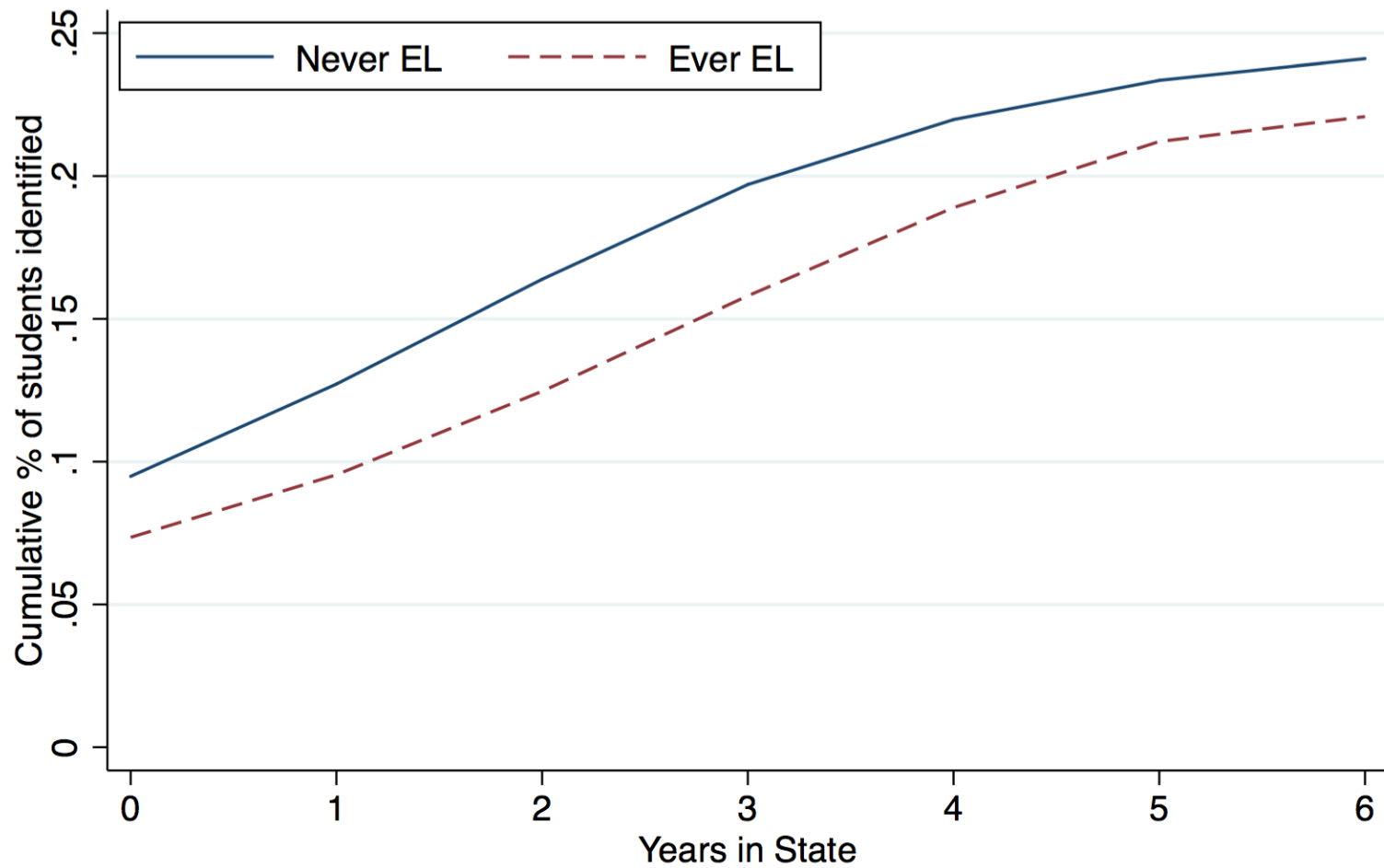
Type of Disabilities for Students Who Qualify for Special Education by Grade: 2014



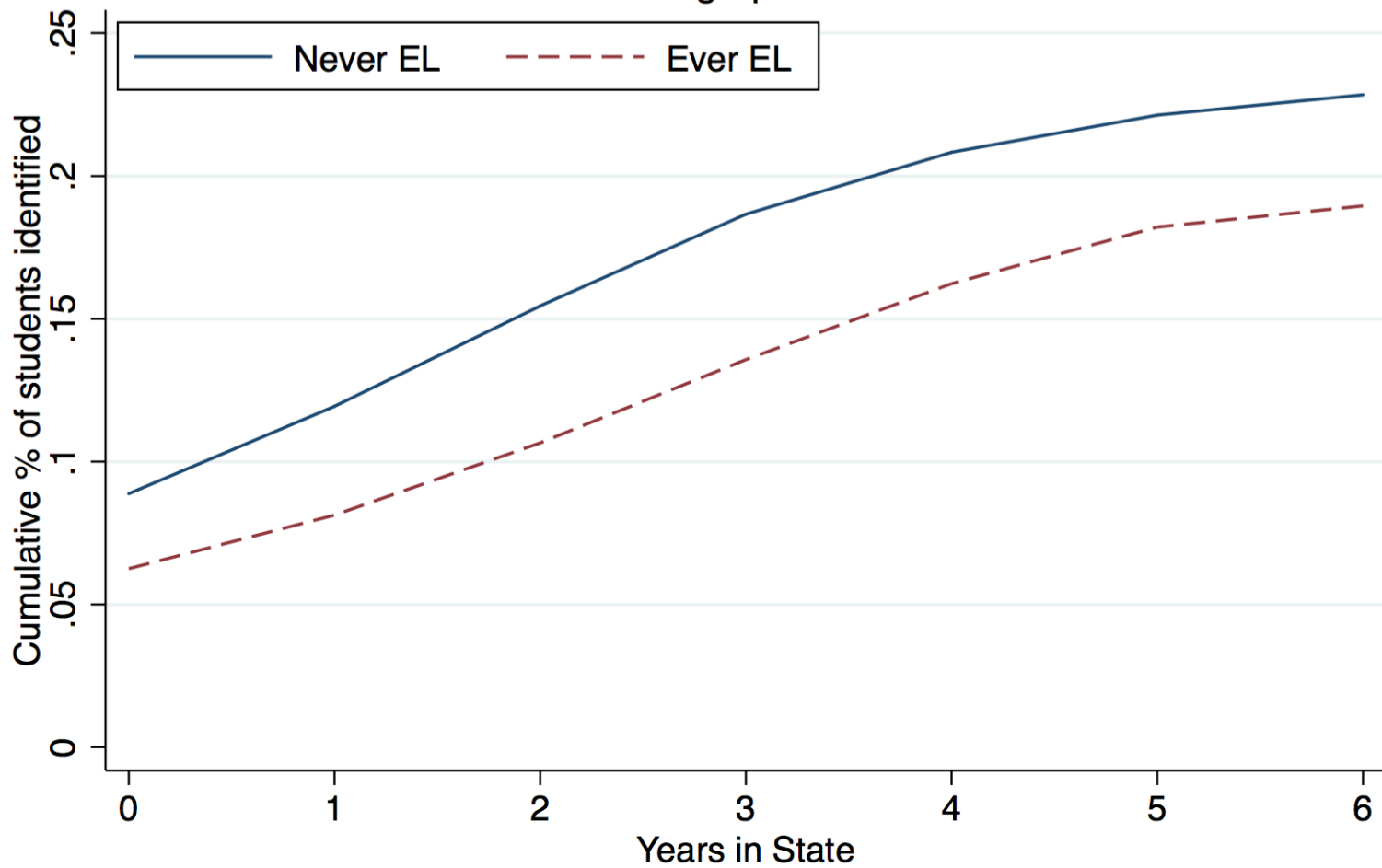
So how does likelihood of identification for special education compare for Ever ELs and other students in Oregon?

# Cumulative Likelihood of Identification for All Disabilities

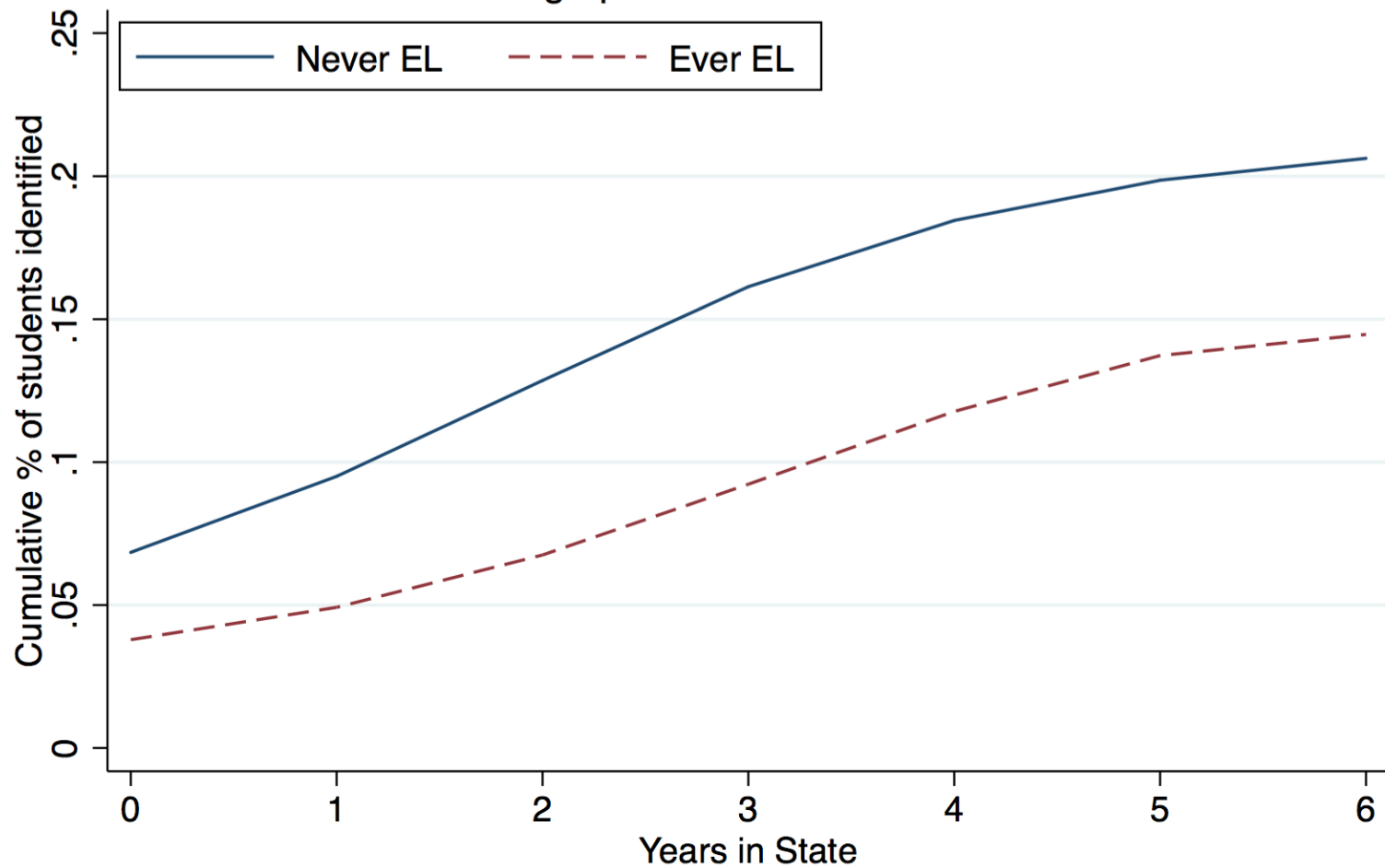
Base Model



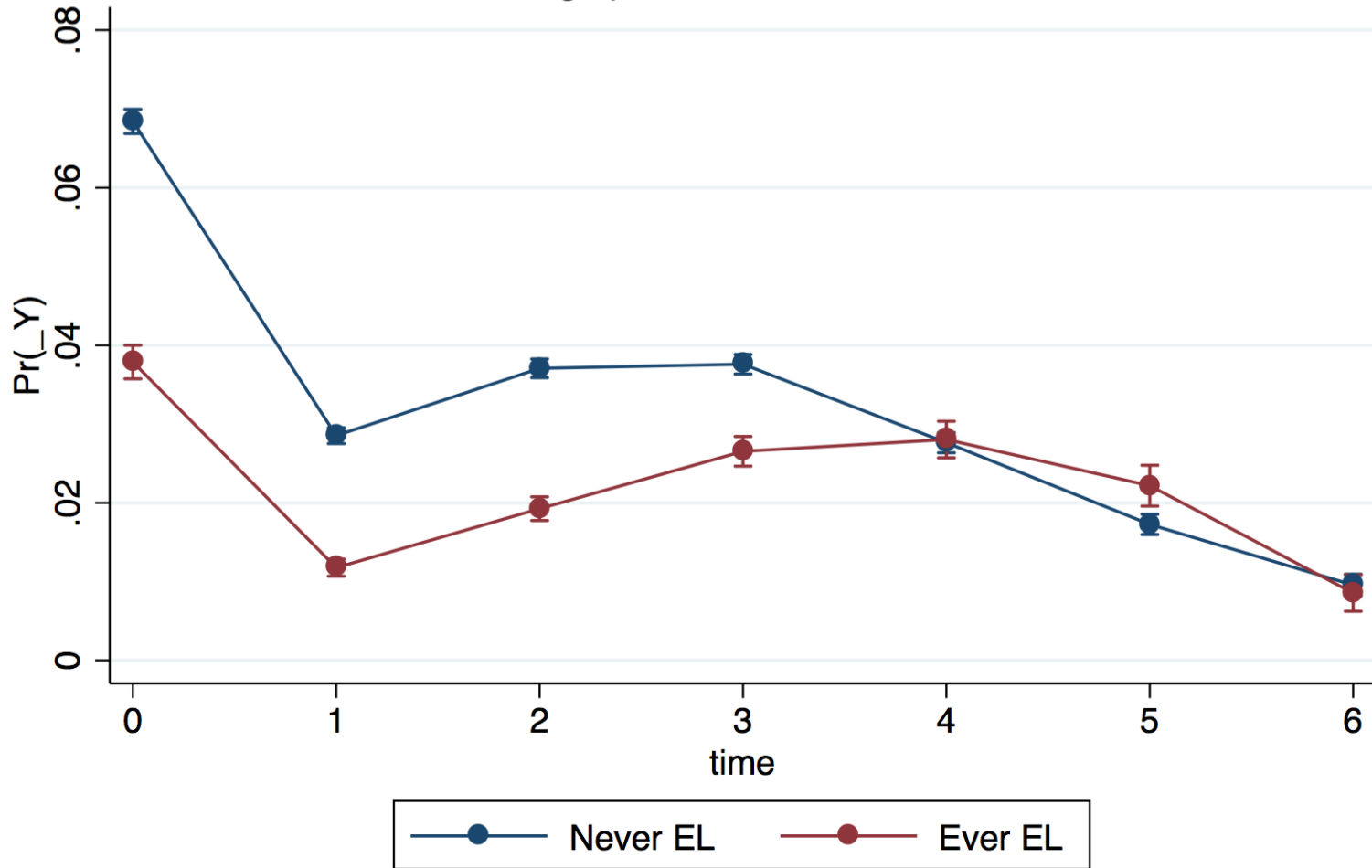
## Cumulative Likelihood of Identification for All Disabilities with Demographic Controls



## Cumulative Likelihood of Identification for All Disabilities with Demographic and Achievement Controls



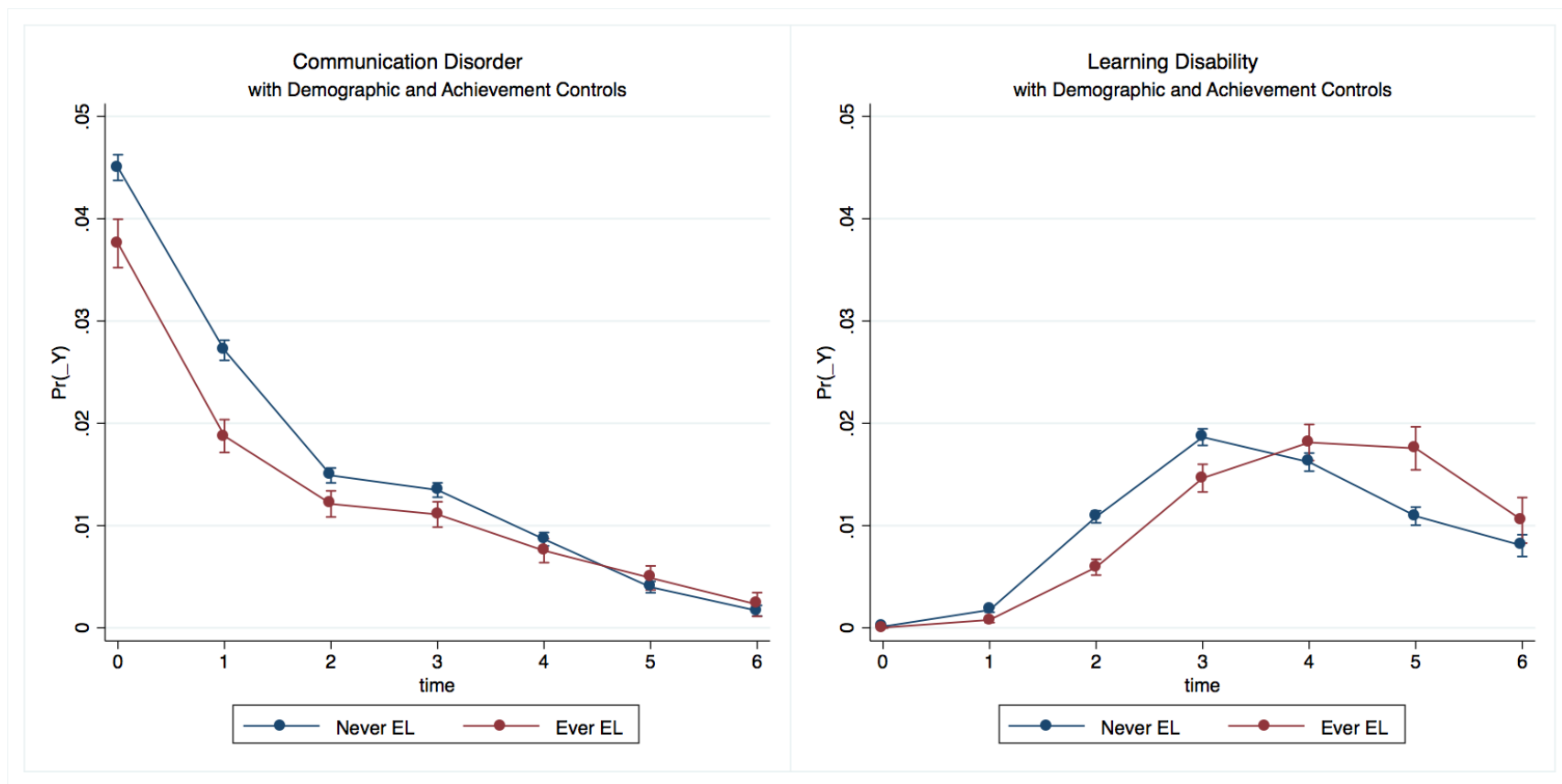
Likelihood of Identification for All Disabilities within Each Year  
with Demographic and Achievement Controls



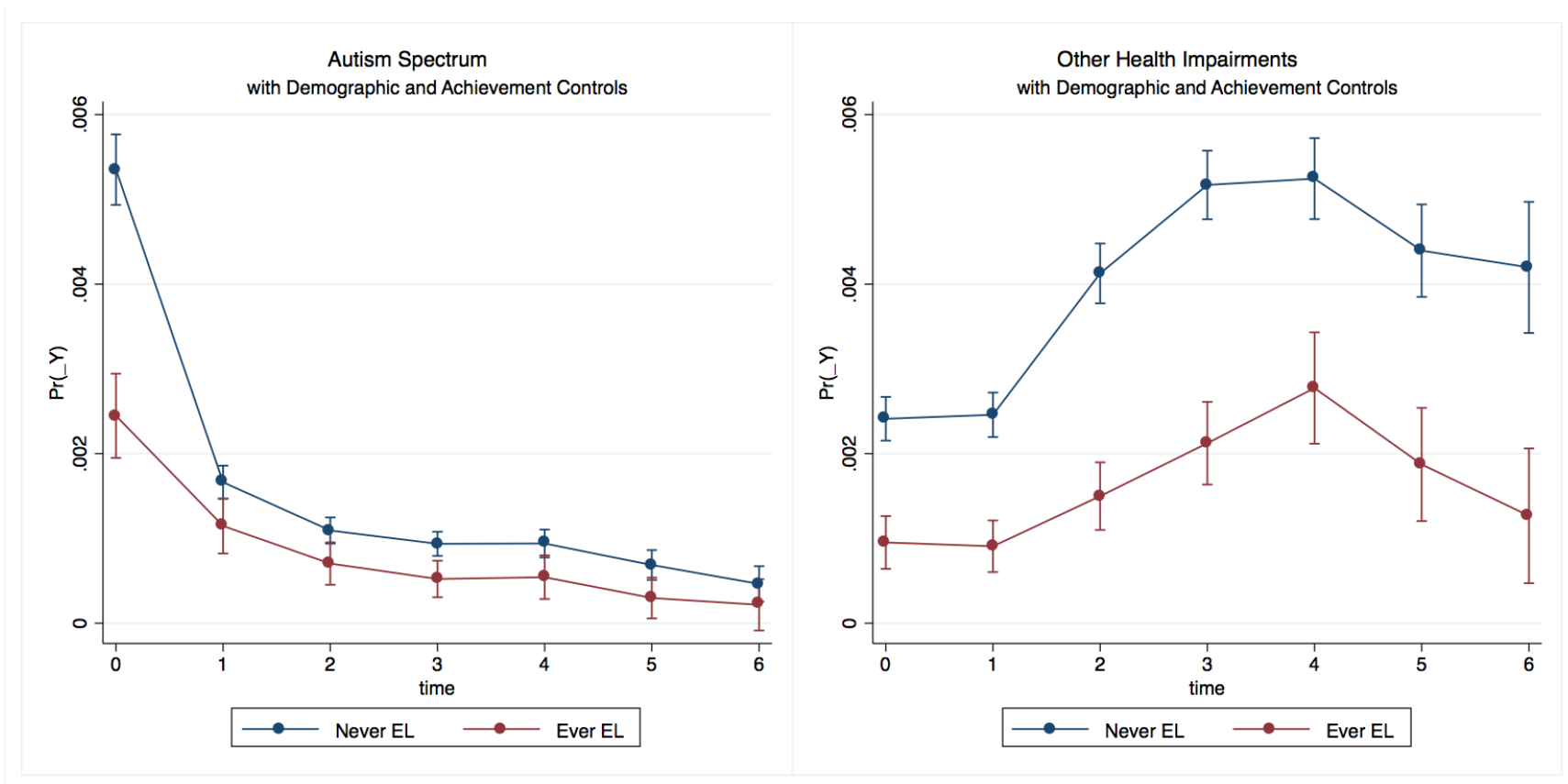
Differences by disability category



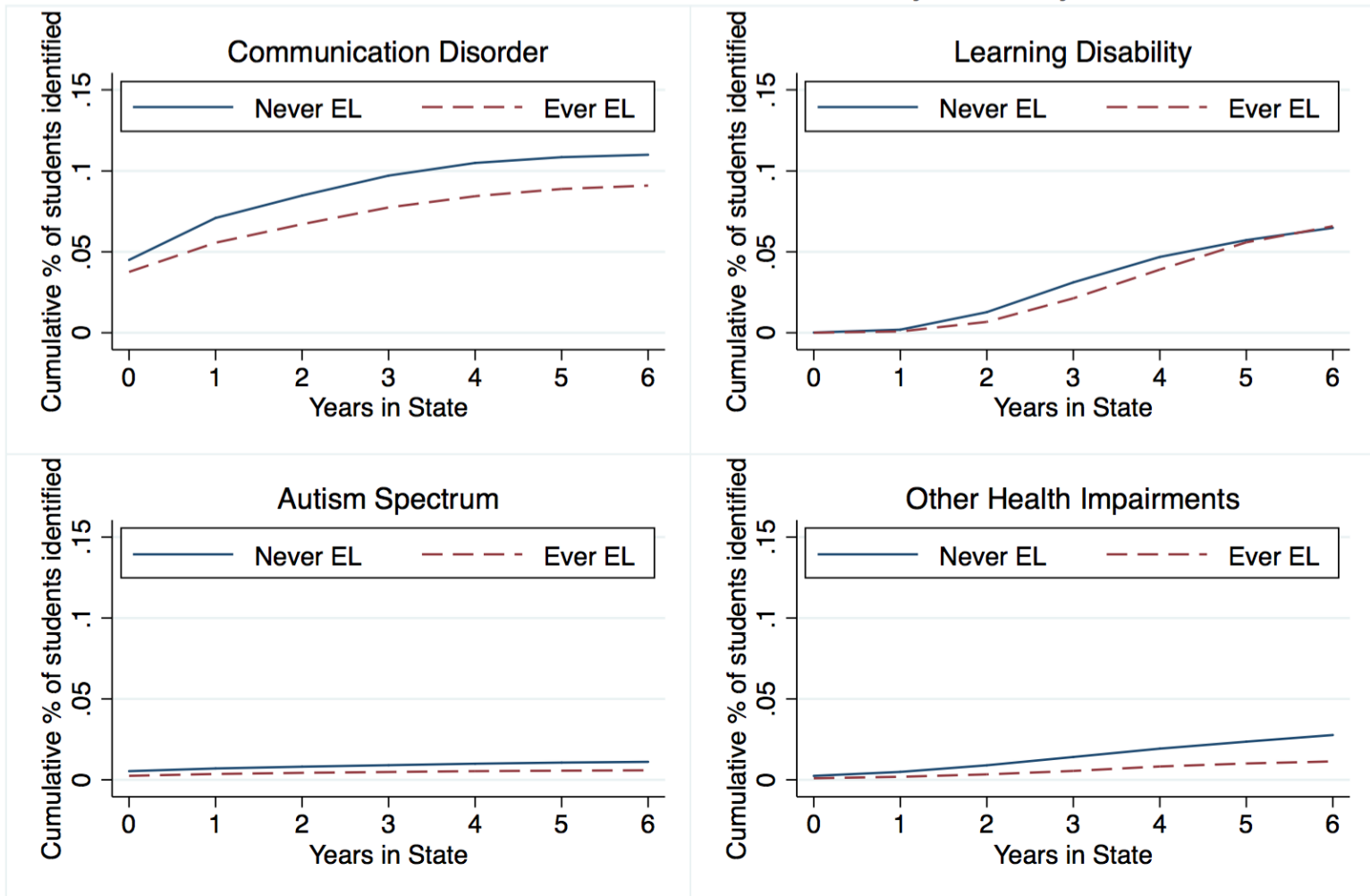
# Likelihood of identification for particular disabilities within each year



# Likelihood of identification for particular disabilities within each year



## Cumulative Likelihood of Identification by Disability

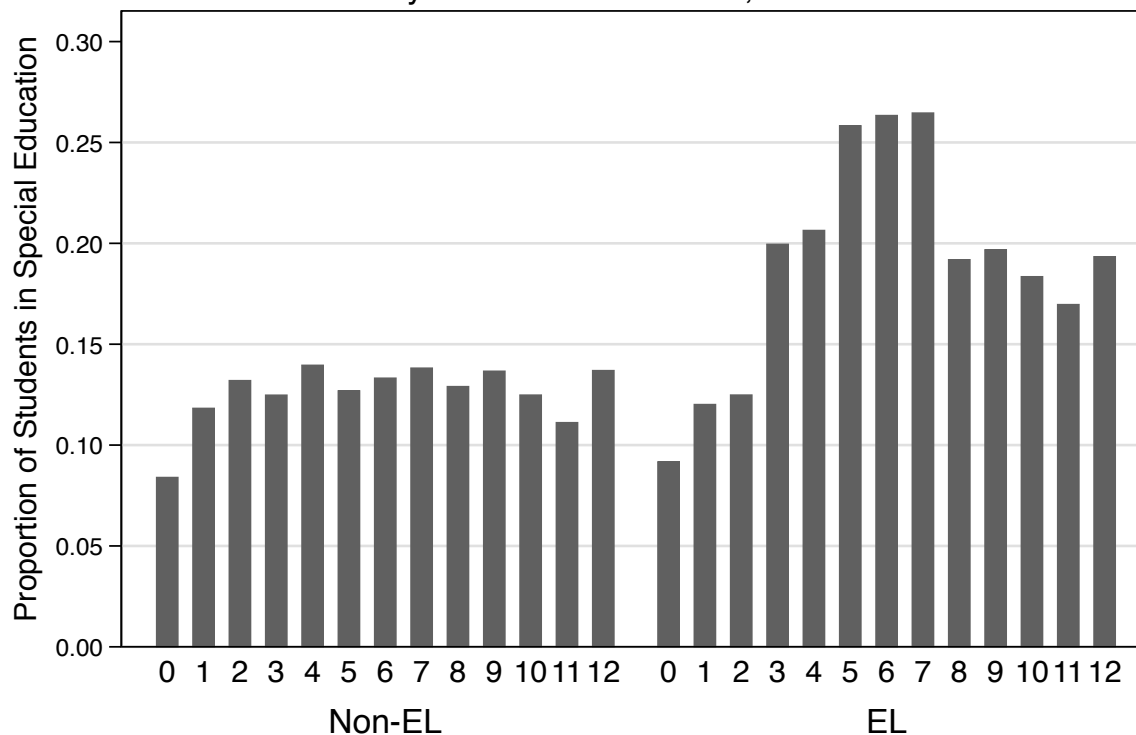


Models include demographic and achievement controls.

Questions so far?

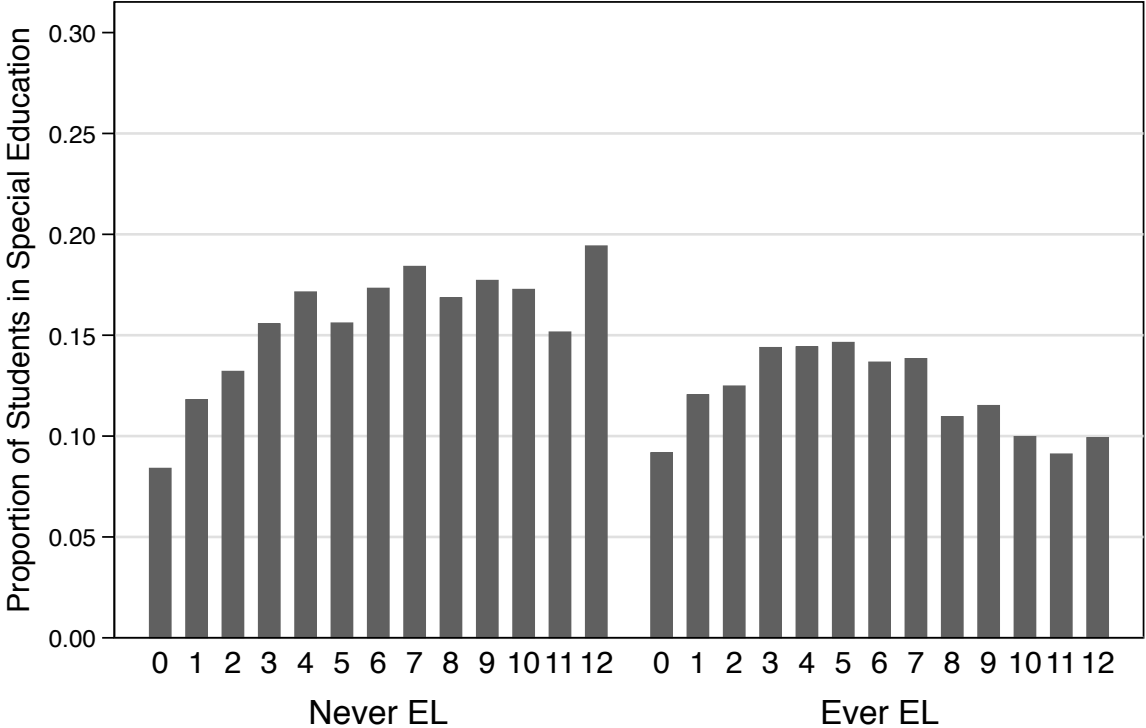
A California story

Proportion of Students in Special Education  
by EL Status and Grade, 2011-12



This graph shows the proportion of non-EL (left) and EL (right) students who have a SPED identification. While proportions are similar in grades K-3, the proportions of ELs with SPED identification are much higher than non-ELs beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This suggests a **possible** bottleneck in which dual identified students are not able to reach reclassification criteria.

Proportion of Students in Special Education  
by Ever EL Status and Grade, 2011-12



This graph shows the proportion of never-EL (left) (EO & IFEP) and ever-EL (right) (EL & RFEP) students who have a SPED identification. Likelihood of SPED identification is slightly lower in the never-EL population suggesting a **possible** under-representation of ELs in SPED (as found in other research in other locations).

**Proportion of Students Classified as Special Needs, by Language Status**

Ever SPED		EOs & IFEPs	ELs & RFEPs (excluding LTELs)	LTELs	Total
No	N	25,655	19,156	1,913	46,724
	%	85%	90%	65%	86%
Yes	N	4,407	2,219	1,038	7,664
	%	15%	10%	35%	14%
Total	N	30,062	21,375	2,951	54,388

Notes:

- 1) Sample includes all students who entered the district in Kinder, from 2000-2012.
- 2) LTEL defined as a student classified as EL for over 6 years.



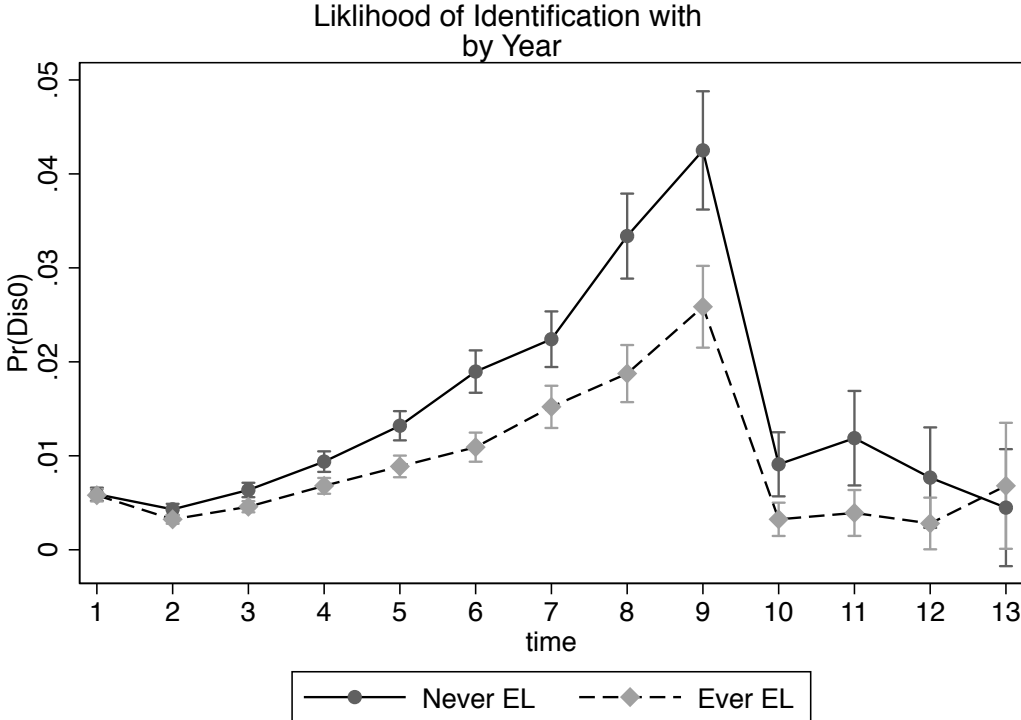
**Types of Disability Classification Among SPED Students, by Language Status**

Disability Category		EOs & IFEPs	ELs & RFEPs (excluding LTELs)	LTELs	Total
Mental Retardation	N	120	35	32	187
	%	4%	2%	4%	3%
Hard of Hearing	N	30	39	13	82
	%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Deafness	N	7	4	2	13
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Speech or Language Impairment	N	897	823	167	1,887
	%	29%	56%	20%	35%
Visual Impairment	N	9	13	2	24
	%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Emotional Disturbance	N	231	25	30	286
	%	7%	2%	4%	5%
Orthopedic Impairment	N	25	15	5	45
	%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other Health Impairment	N	395	94	60	549
	%	13%	6%	7%	10%
Specific Learning Disability	N	1,128	321	498	1,947
	%	36%	22%	59%	36%
Multiple Disabilities	N	18	4	1	23
	%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Autism	N	266	87	33	386
	%	9%	6%	4%	7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	N	1	2	2	5
	%	0%	0%	0%	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>3,130</b>	<b>1,463</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>5,438</b>

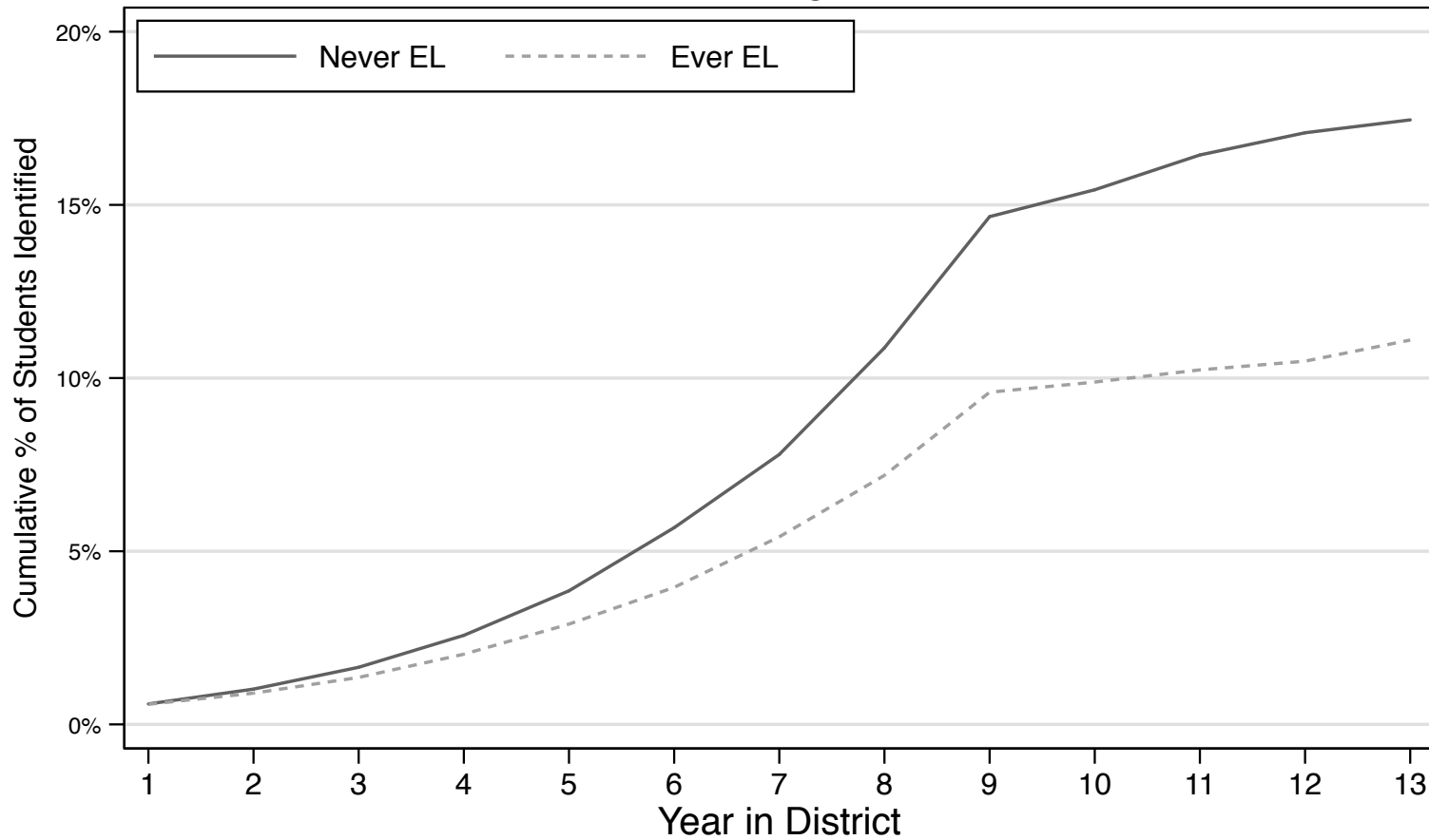
Notes:

- 1) Sample includes all students who entered the district in Kindergarten from 2000-2012.
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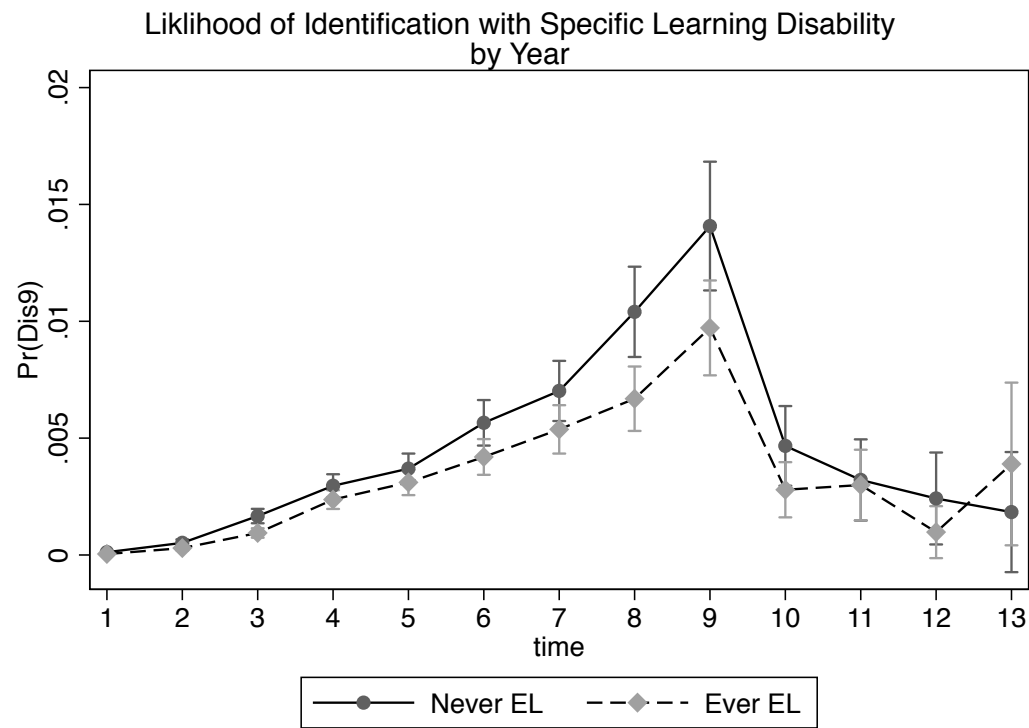
# All Disabilities Combined



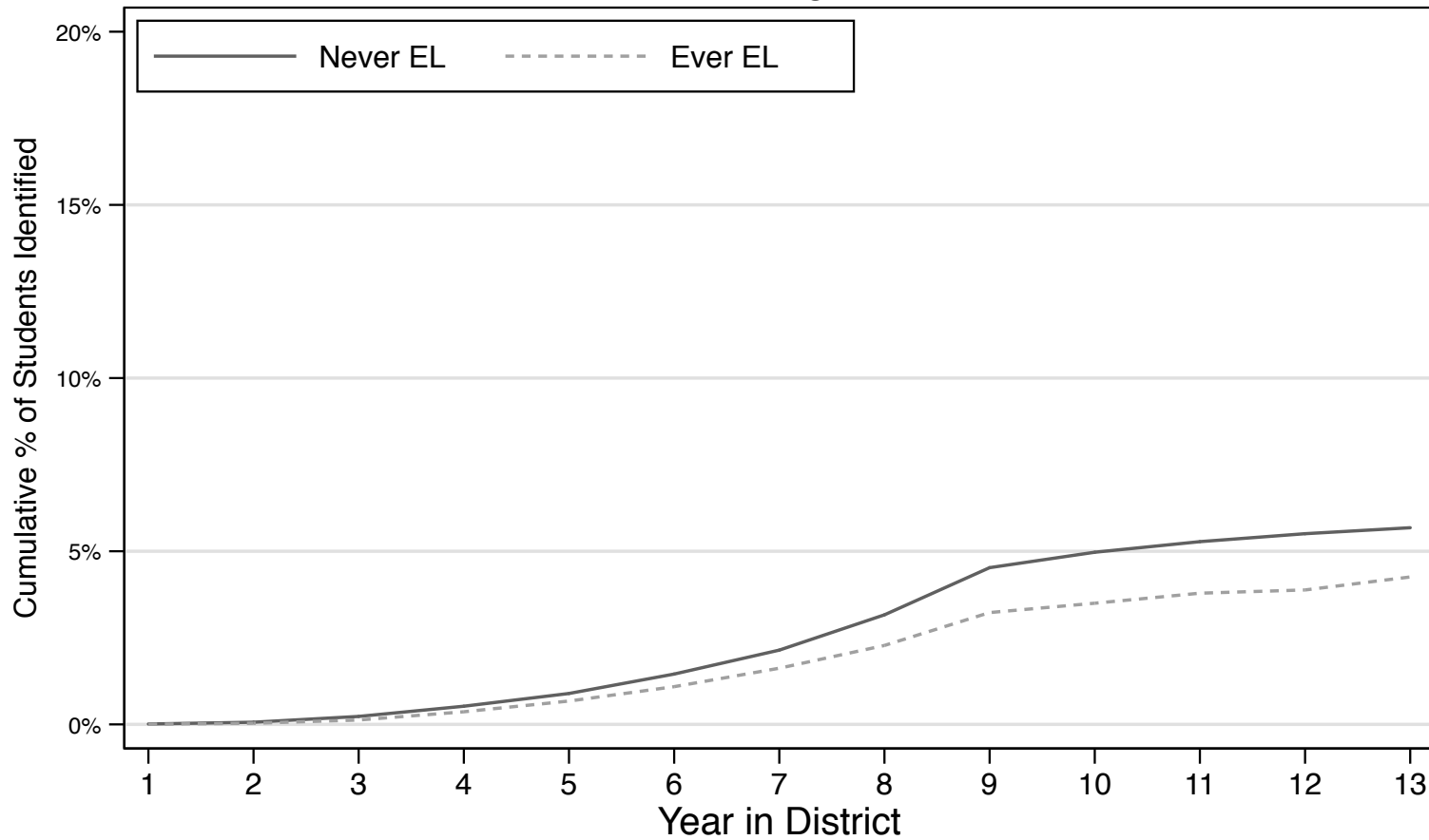
# Adjusted Cumulative Proportion of Students Identified with a Disability, by Year and Linguistic Status



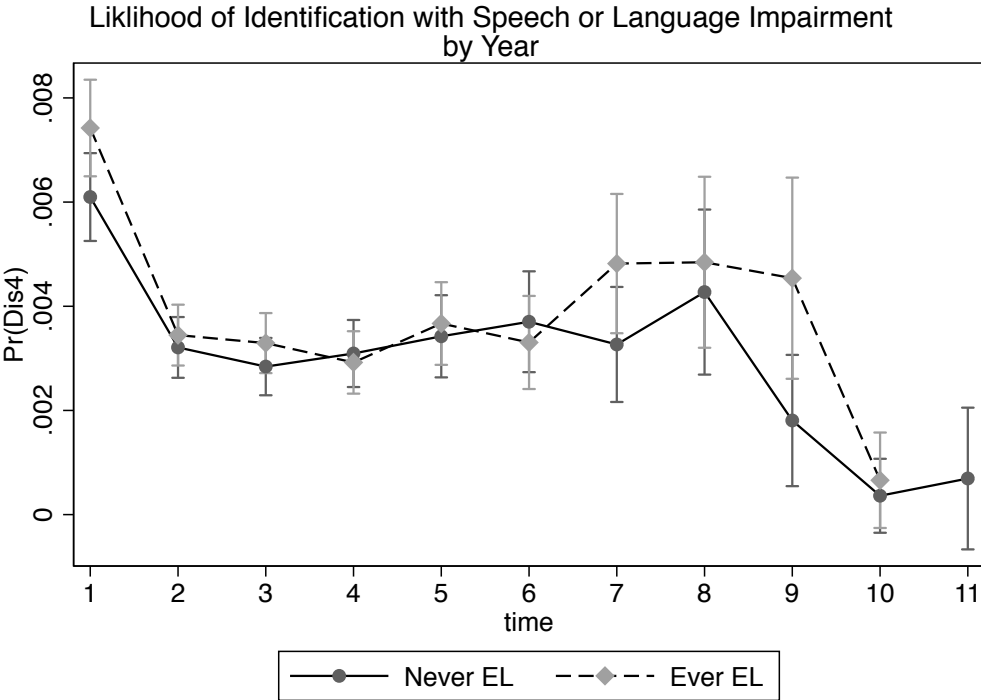
# Specific Learning Disability



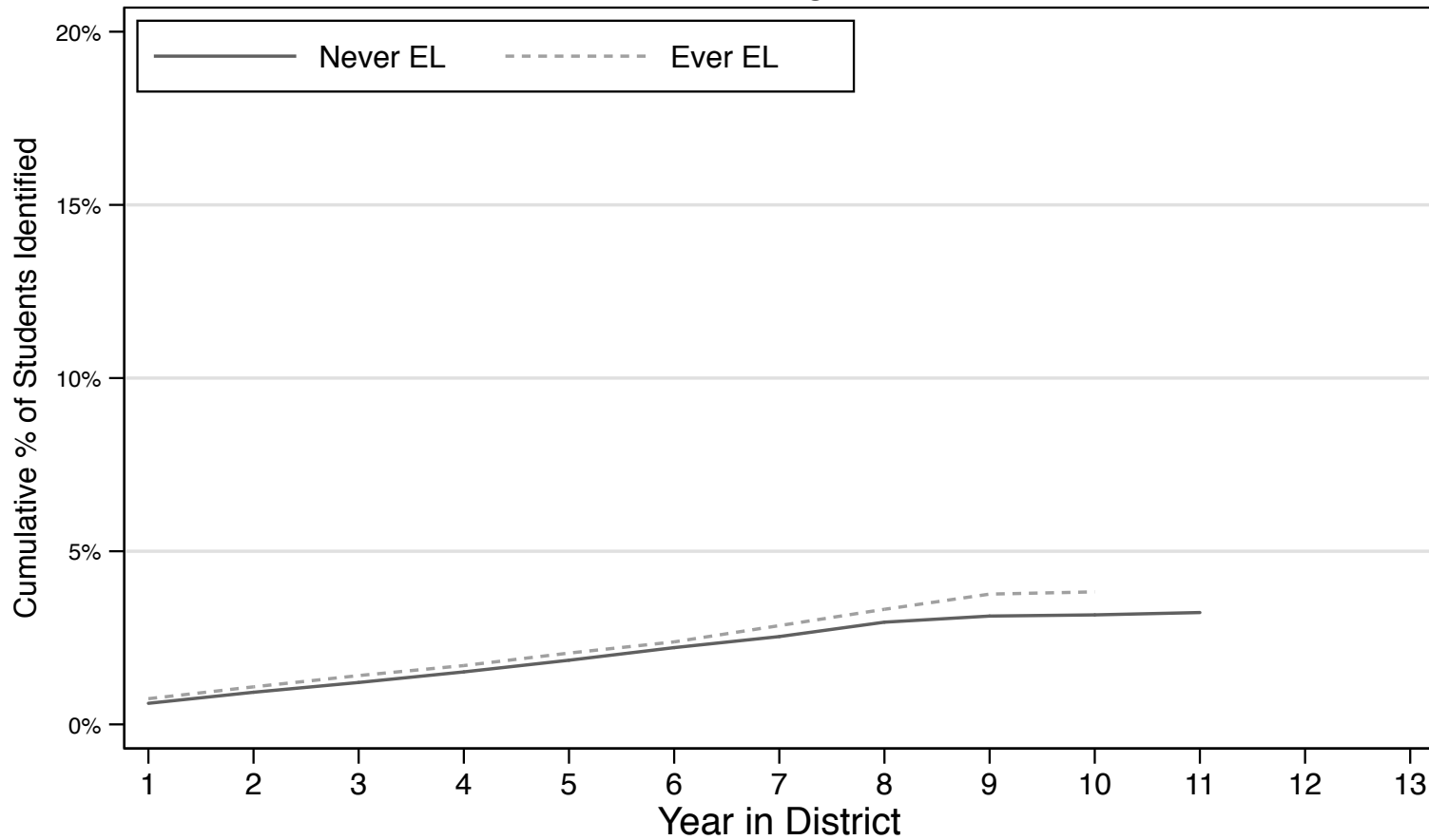
# Adjusted Cumulative Proportion of Students Identified with Specific Learning Disability, by Year and Linguistic Status



# Speech or Language Impairment



# Adjusted Cumulative Proportion of Students Identified with Speech or Language Impairment, by Year and Linguistic Status



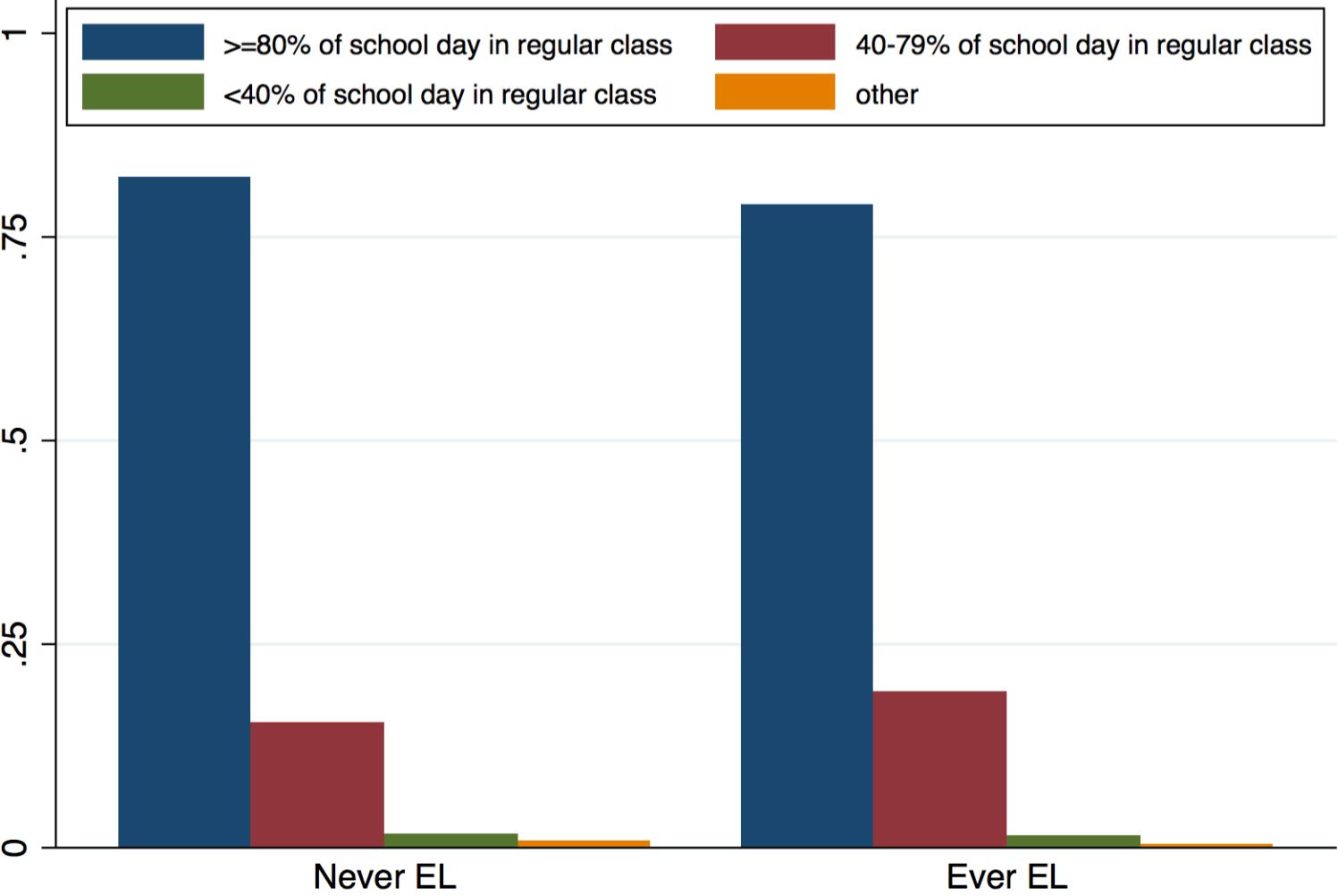
Questions now?



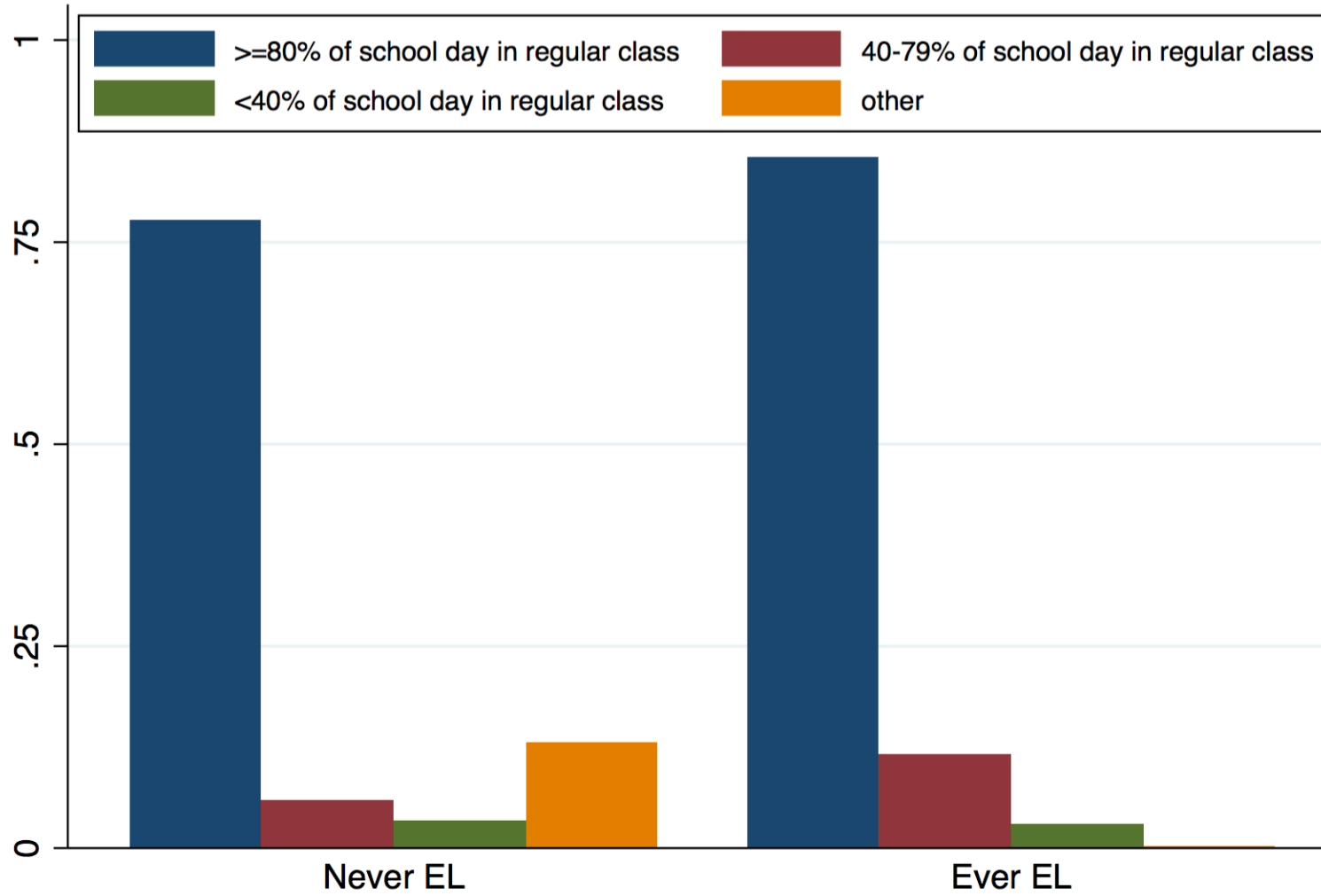
What types of services are Ever EL students with disabilities receiving? How does this compare to services for other students?

- This is preliminary!

### Learning Disabilities



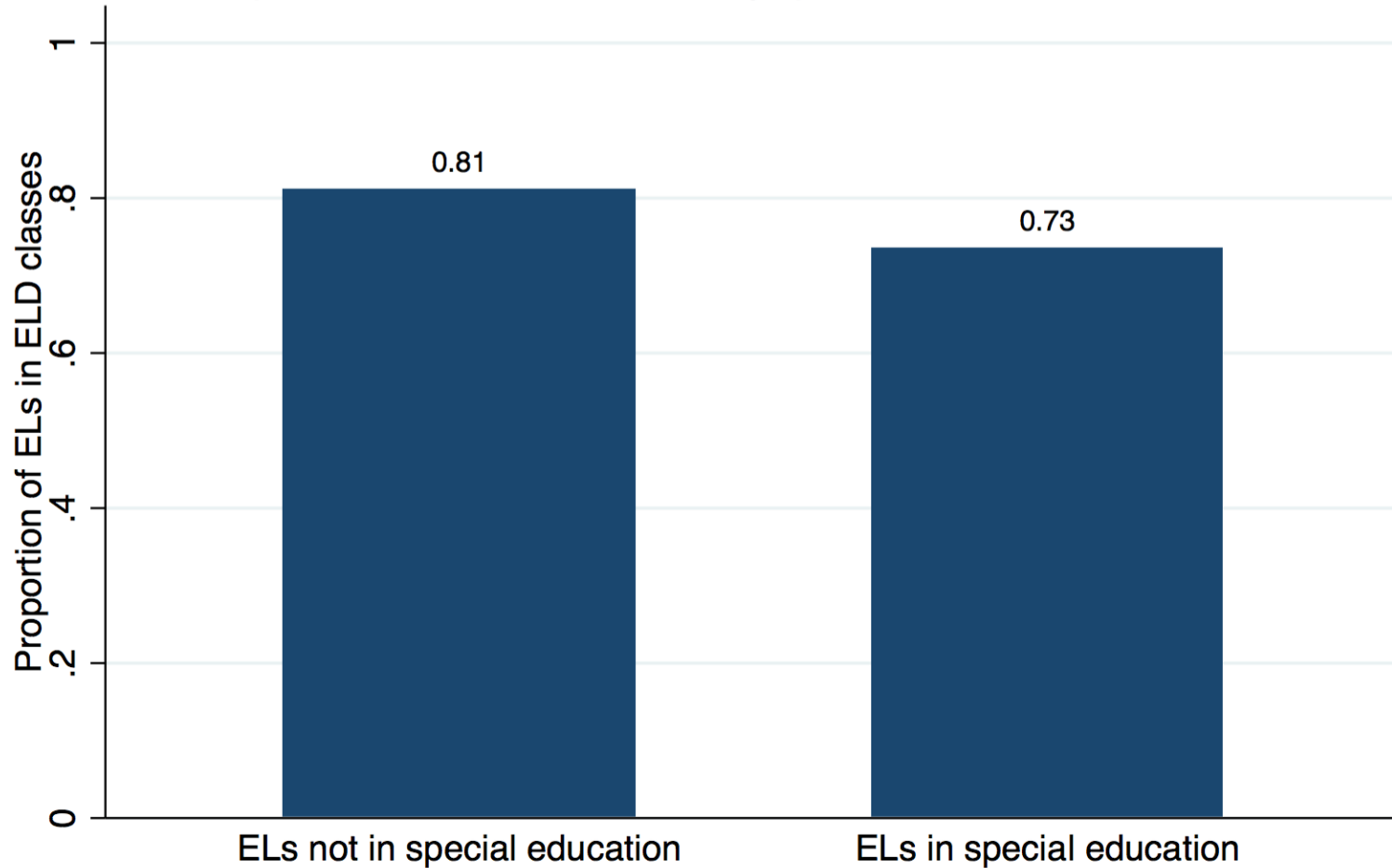
### Communication Disorder



## Preliminary: As with identification, it's a complicated picture

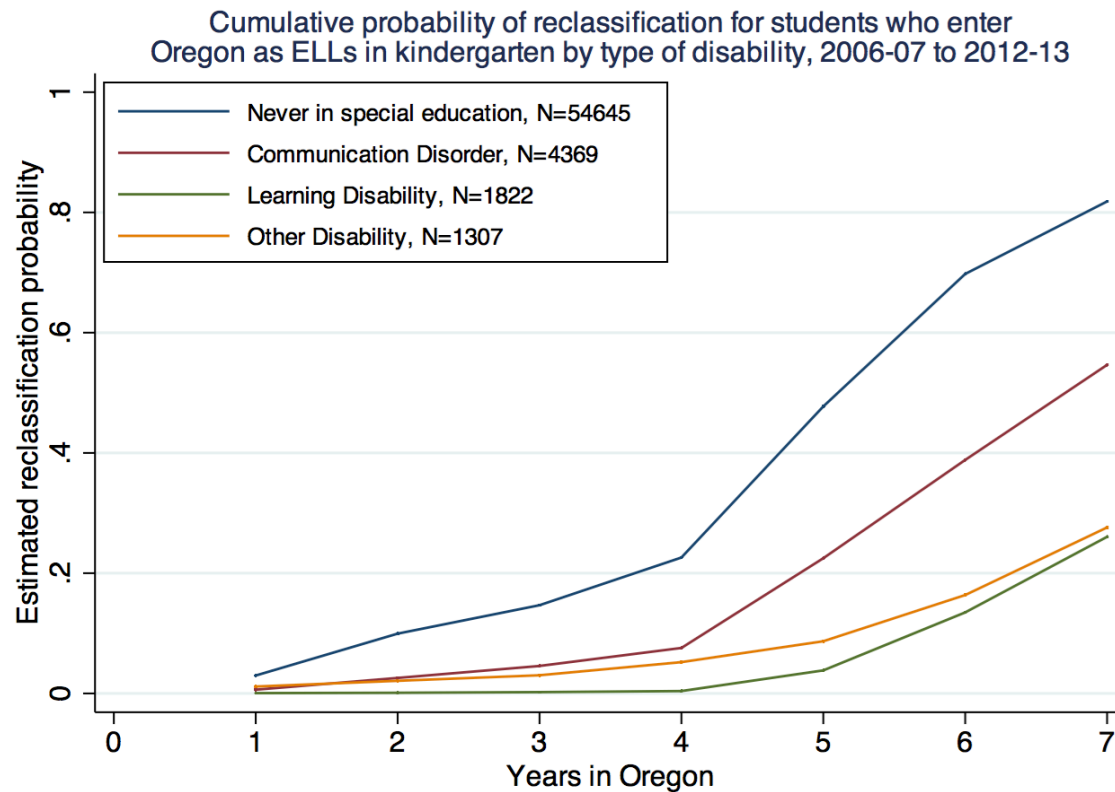
- Ever ELs with learning disabilities appear less likely to spend 80% or more of their time in a regular classroom.
- However, if you compare Ever ELs and Never ELs with learning disabilities who do not differ by economic disadvantage, grade, gender, or standardized test scores, then there is no significant difference between Ever ELs and Never ELs in likelihood of spending 80% or more of their time in a regular classroom.

Proportion of ELs in ELD classes by special education status, 2013-14



Only includes ELs in grades 6 and above who have not waived EL services. This difference remains statistically significant after controlling for gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and grade.

# Regardless of over or under identification



## What we're hearing

*High school ELL specialist:* I've got a little over 80 active students on my caseload, and a little over 50% are dual qualified, which is way off what it's supposed to be. ... Because they can't pass the test. So the poor kids are stuck. Potentially in a pull out class. And at the high school level, it's really hard because they've been ESL lifers, per se, and they've been 10, 11, 12 years in an ELD class. And they want to take electives. They want to take something that's more geared to their career. And we totally get it, but we're stuck because they can't pass this test. ... And it's disheartening for the kid and it's disheartening for the kid who is just a standard ELL and needs ELD to move forward, and the difference between the language they need and the language a student with disabilities needs, they really need two different things, and to have to mesh them into the same class, it really doesn't work.

# Table talk

- What is a key takeaway for you?
- What questions do you have?
- What are your school and/or district's greatest needs related to English learner students with disabilities?



# A few thoughts

- There is not a simple story about whether Ever ELs are over- or under-identified for special education.
  - The answer can vary depending on disability type, local context (district/school), and who they are being compared to.
- The large proportions of ELs identified with disabilities in secondary schools seems more related to the fact that ELSWDs have difficulty meeting exit criteria than with rampant over-identification for special education (though over-identification may occur in some contexts).
- Particularly for disabilities in which there is a medical component, consider whether Ever ELs and their families have adequate access to health care and have the same opportunities for identification as other students.

# Moving forward

- Ongoing statewide data analysis (for example, looking at course-taking more closely)
- Partnering with districts to design, pilot, and revise tools for English learner students with disabilities
- Hosting gatherings on this topic
- Learning together!

