



# Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center

U.S. Department of  
Education,  
H325A120003



# A Status Report on Special Education Teacher Licensure in the U.S

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# Disclaimer

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# Rationale

- ✧ Several CEEDAR states are engaged in the process of revising SE licensure (including CA, NH, and FL)
- ✧ We've entertained several requests for information about what other states are doing

# Purpose

- ✧ Describe current special education licensure structures
- ✧ Compare current structures with those described by Geiger, Crutchfield, & Mainzer (2003)
- ✧ Assess the impact of licensure structure on SET shortage, service delivery, and student outcomes

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



# How SE Licenses Are Differentiated

- ✧ Disability Categories
- ✧ Levels of Severity
- ✧ Grade Bands
- ✧ Absence of Differentiation:  
Generalist

# The Current Landscape of SET Licensure



# Data Gathering

- ✧ Electronic search in Google
- ✧ State Department of Education websites
  - Certification areas
  - Age and grade bands
  - Endorsement areas
- ✧ Two independent state certification databases

# Data Vetting

- ✧ Compared the independent databases
- ✧ Verified by phone and email contact with each state
- ✧ We were able to vet 47 of the 50 states

# Data Organization

- ✧ Matrix in Excel
- ✧ We coded each state by:
  - Number of certificates
  - Certification areas
  - Age and grade bands
  - Severity
  - Endorsements
- ✧ Reached inter-rater agreement

# Exclusions

- ✧ Certificates excluded from our analysis:
  - Early Childhood N= 38
  - Visually Impaired N= 44
  - Hearing Impaired N= 45
- ✧ P-12 and VI/HI endorsements

# Disability Categories

- ✧ 9 states use categories
  - Strictly categorical N= 1
  - With generalist N= 6
  - With severity N= 2
- ✧ Example: Michigan
  - Cognitive Impairment
  - Physical or Other Health Impairment
  - Emotional Impairment
  - Learning Disabilities
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder

# Grade Bands

- ✧ 19 states use grade bands
  - 2 grade bands N= 11
  - 3 grade bands N= 8
- ✧ Grade bands and generalist K-12
  - N= 10

# Generalist

- ✧ **20 States have purely non-categorical licensure structures**
  - With grade bands N= 6
  - **With no grade bands N= 14**
- ✧ **With categorical distinction**
  - With grade bands N= 5
  - With no grade bands N= 4
- ✧ **With severity distinction**
  - With grade bands N= 1
  - With no grade bands N= 2

# Examples of Generalist

- ✧ With categorical distinction: Wyoming
  - Generalist
  - Learning Disability
  - Cognitive Disability
  - Behavioral and Emotional Disability
  - Physical and Health Disability
- ✧ With severity distinction: Ohio
  - Generalist
  - Mild/Moderate
  - Moderate/Intensive



# Other Dimensions

## ✧ Curriculum

- General versus Adapted
- Special Needs Vocational

## ✧ Professional roles

- Consultant
- Strategist
- Inclusion/Collaboration

## ✧ States in which special education certificate must be added on to a general certificate N= 5

- i.e., no stand alone special education certificate

# Severity

✧ 21 states differ on the basis of severity

- With grade bands N= 9
  - Mild/Moderate only N= 7
  - Severe/Profound N= 2
- With No grade bands
  - N = 12

# Examples of Severity and Grade Bands

## ✧ Louisiana

- Mild/Moderate
  - Grades 1-5, 4-8, 6-12
- Significant Disabilities
  - Grades 1-12

## ✧ Hawaii

- Mild/Moderate
  - Grades PK-12, K-6, 6-8, 6-12, K-12
- Severe/Profound
  - Grades PK-12, K-6, 6-8, 6-12, K-12

# How Has SET Licensure Changed Since 2000?

# State Level Change

- ✧ Most states have changed licensure structure since 2000
  - Only 16 state licensure structures are unchanged or largely unchanged
- ✧ 15 states eliminated differentiation on the basis of disability category
  - One state added 3
  - Several states demoted category to endorsement

# General Comparisons

- ✧ 2000: Many more states used disability categories
- ✧ 2000: Many more states have generic certificate as well as categorical structure
- ✧ No substantial difference between 2000 and 2016 in use of grade bands or severity levels

# Example: New Hampshire

2000

- ✧ K-12 Licenses in
  - MR
  - ED
  - OI
  - SLD
  - Generic Special Education

2016

- ✧ K-12 Generalist License
- ✧ K-12 Endorsements in
  - EBD
  - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
  - Physical and Health Disabilities
  - SLD

# State Level Change

- ✧ 8 states added age/grade bands
  - Although 3 states eliminated them
- ✧ 5 states added differentiation on the basis of severity



# Examples

## Louisiana: Age/Grade Bands

- ✧ 2000
  - Mild/Moderate K-12
  - Severe/Profound K-12
  
- ✧ 2016
  - Significant Disabilities 1-12
  - General/Mild/Moderate 1-5
  - General/Mild/Moderate 4-8
  - General/Mild/Moderate 6-12

## Nevada: Levels of Severity

- ✧ 2000
  - 3-21 years in MR, ED, OI, A, OHI, and SLD
  - K-12 Generalist Mild/Moderate Needs (LD, ED, MR)
  
- ✧ 2016
  - Generalist Resource Room K-12
  - Intellectual Disabilities (moderate to intense) K-12
  - Autism 3-21 years (retained)

# Does Licensure Structure Make a Difference?

# Does Licensure Structure Make a Difference? (cont.)

- ✧ Three outcome measures
  - % of HQ SETs (ideadata.org)
  - Placement (ideadata.org)
  - Student outcomes (NCES, NAEP data)
- ✧ T-Test to compare:
  - Generalist Vs. Other
  - Categorical Vs. Other
  - Severity Vs. Other
- All 50 states were included

# % of Highly Qualified SETs- 2013

## GENERALIST VS OTHER

90.31

93.63

GENERALIST  
(N=19)

OTHER (N=31)

## SEVERITY VS OTHER

92.83

92.06

SEVERITY (N=20)

OTHER (N=30)

## CATEGORICAL VS OTHER

95.03

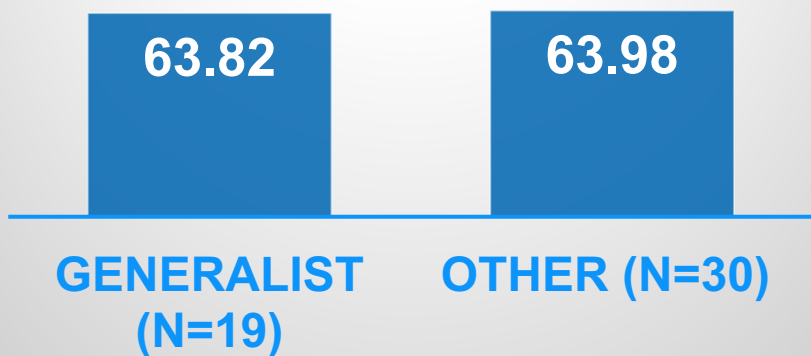
91.22

CATEGORICAL  
(N=15)

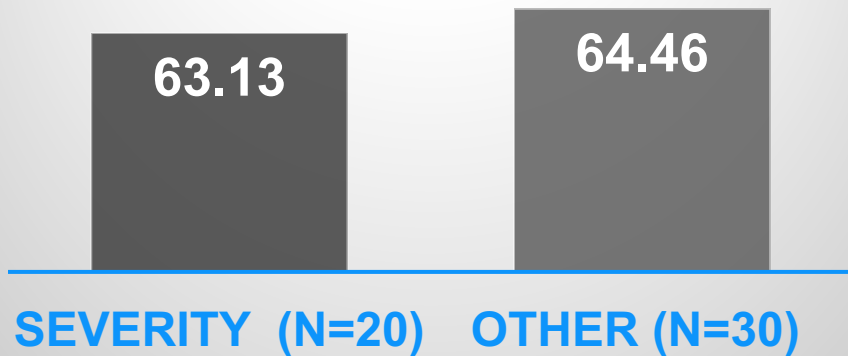
OTHER (N=35)

# Placement

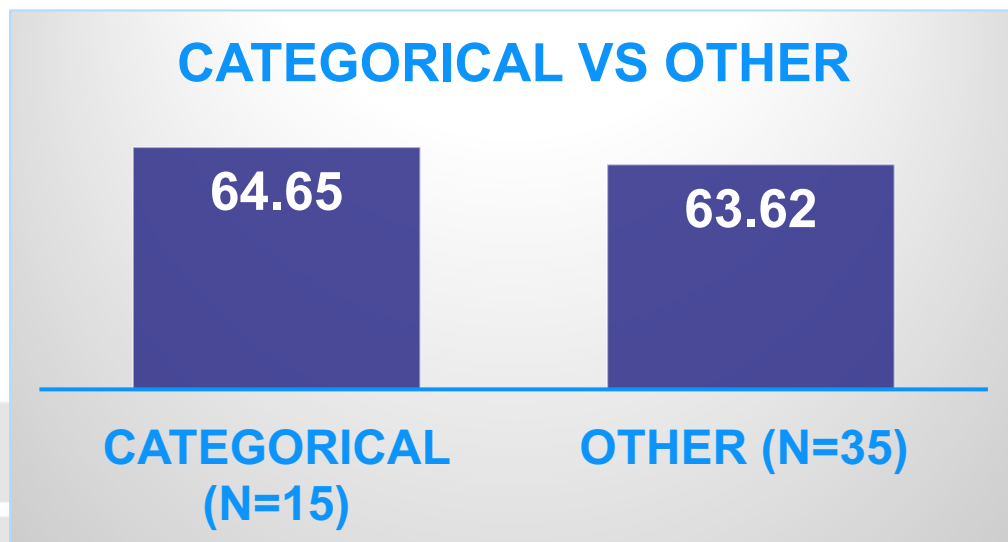
## Generalist Vs Other



## Severity Vs Other



## CATEGORICAL VS OTHER



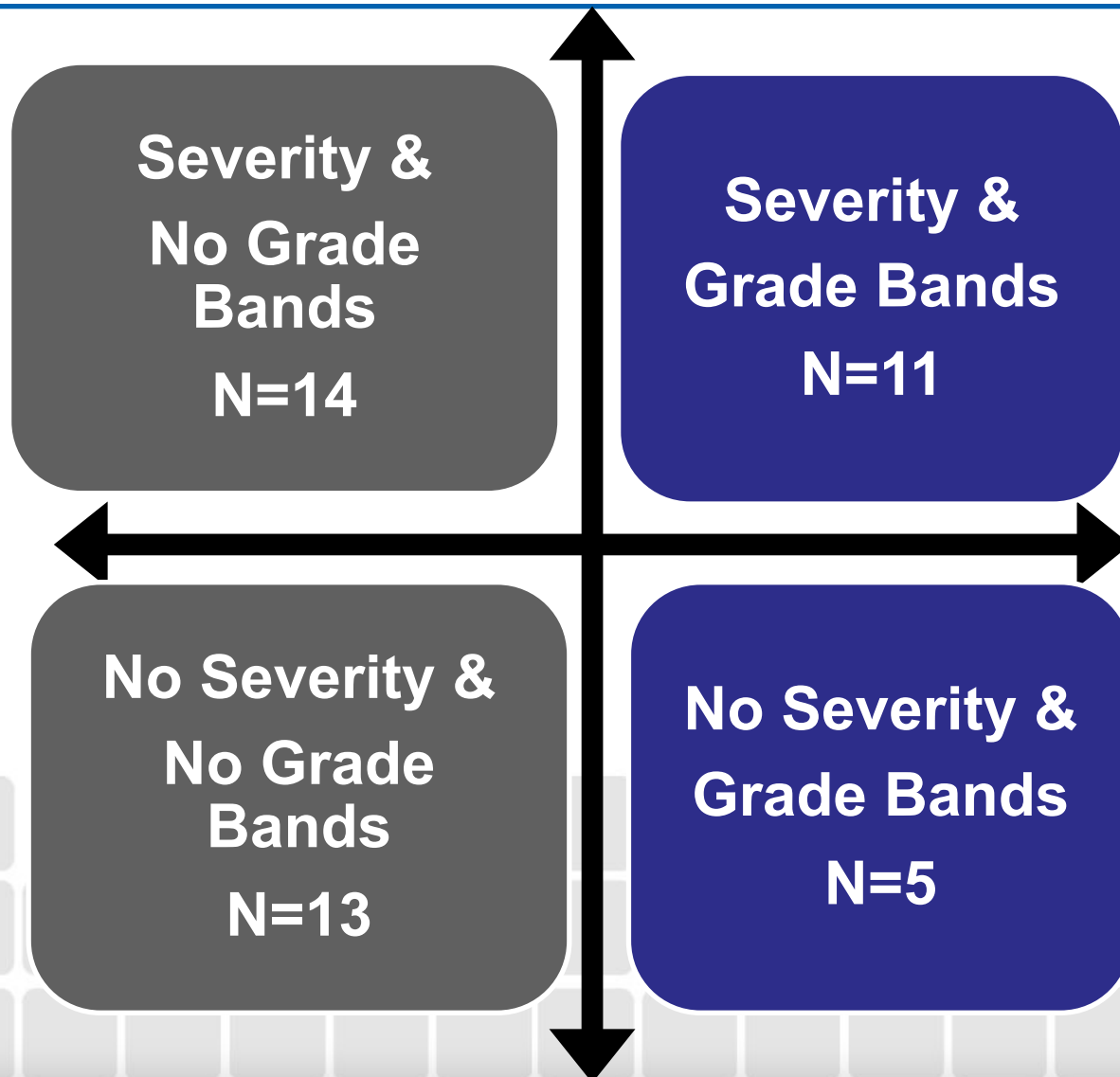
# T-Test Reading & Math NAEP

- ✧ No significant difference between the groups on Grade 8 Math, Grade 4 Math and Grade 4 Reading NAEP Scores
- ✧ Significant difference in mean on Reading Grade 8 ( $p < .05$ ) in favor of states that have Categorical licenses.
  - Interpret with caution

# Data Analysis Methods- Severity

- Two-Way ANOVA
  - Main Effects for Severity and Grade Bands
  - Interaction Effects: Severity by Grade Bands
- 43 states were included

# Severity by Grade Bands Distribution

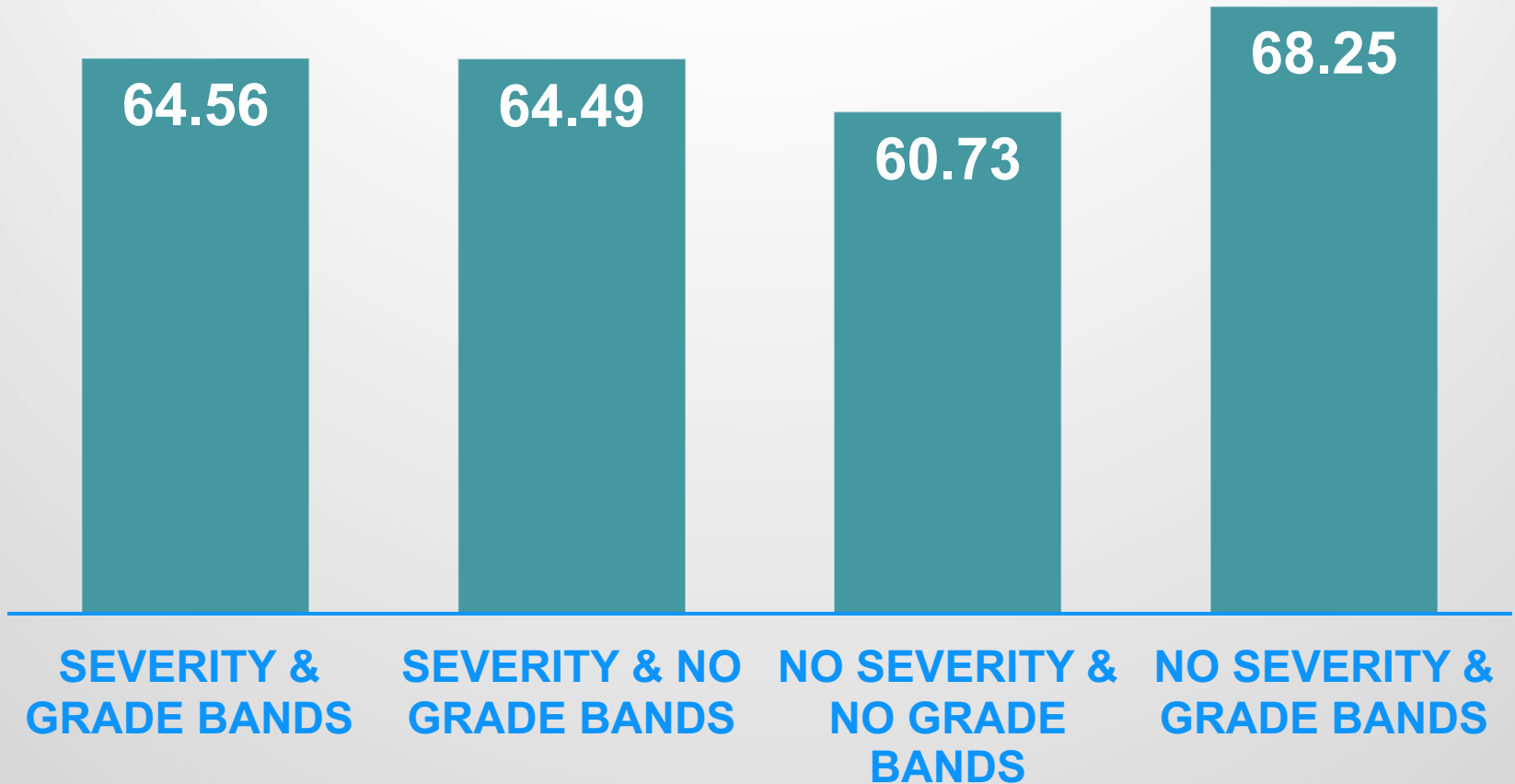




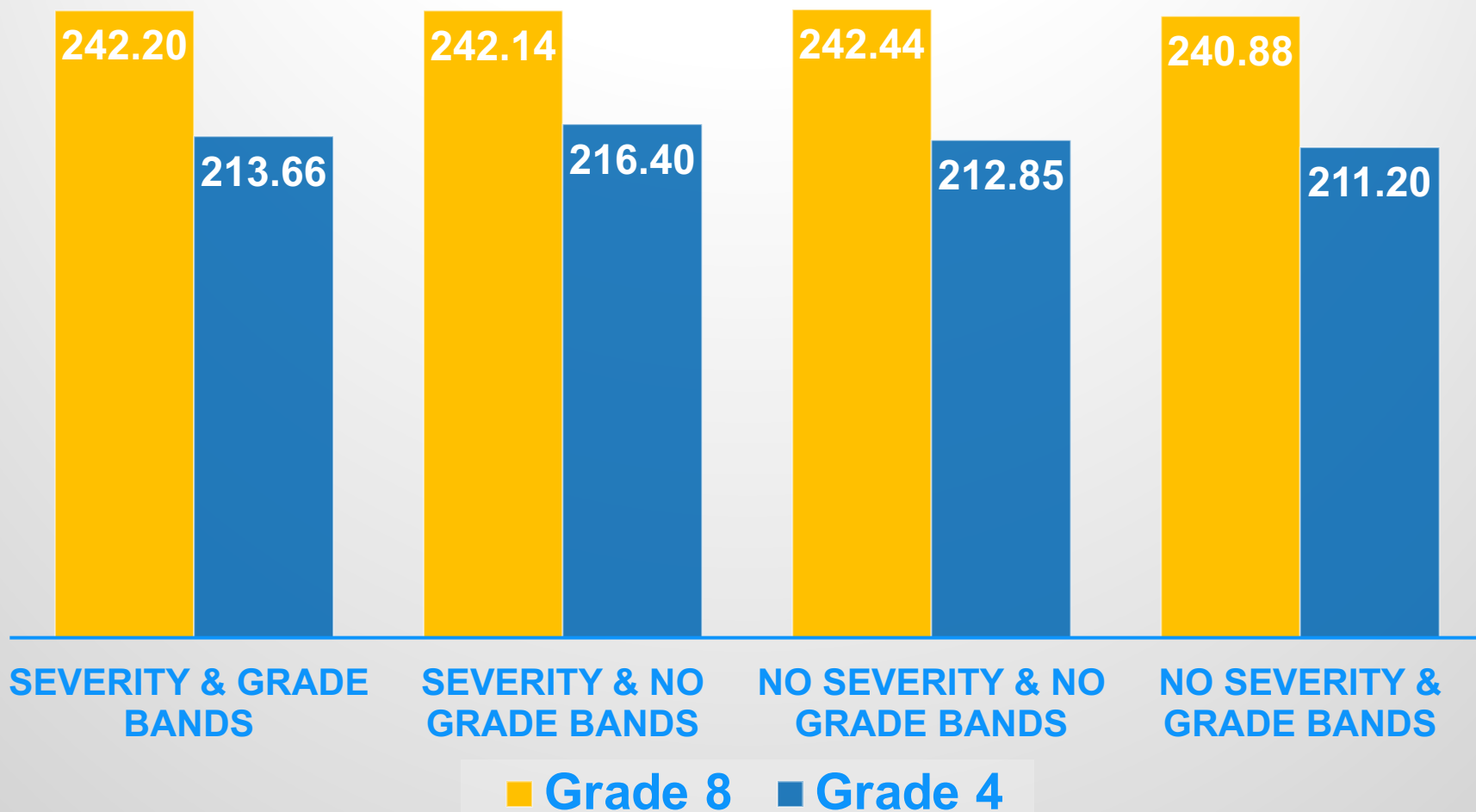
# Average % of Highly Qualified SETs



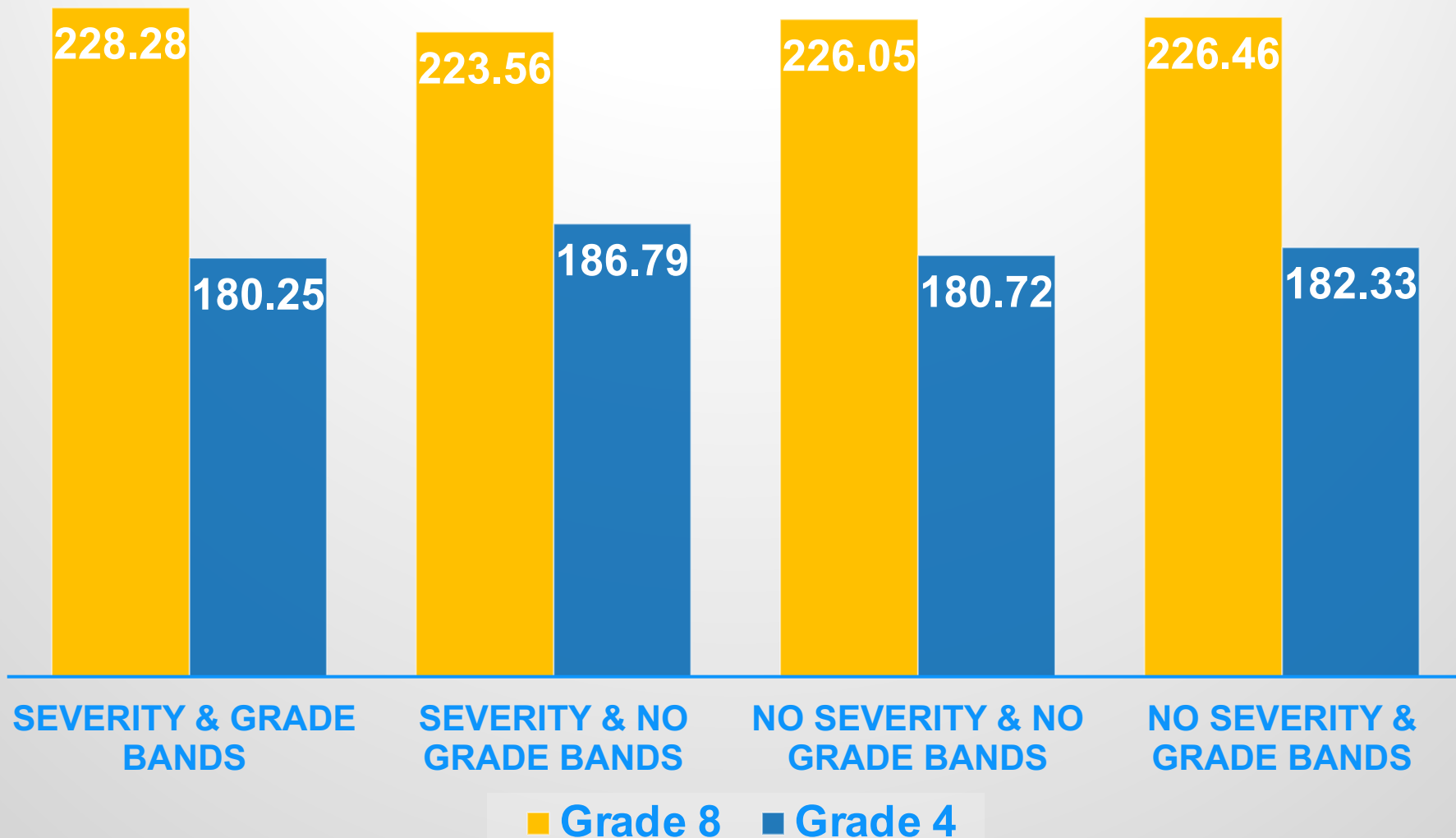
# Average % of SWDs Fully Included



# AVERAGE NAEP MATH SCORES 2015



# AVERAGE NAEP READING SCORES 2015



# Key Findings

- ✧ No significant main effect for:
  - Severity on all outcomes
  - Grade bands on all outcomes
- ✧ No significant interaction effects on all outcomes

# How Do “Effective” States License SETs?

# Procedures

- ✧ Ranked states on three criteria
  - % SETs HQ (ideadata.org, 2013)
  - % of SWDs in inclusive placements (ideadata.org, 2013)
  - NAEP 8th grade reading (NCES)
- ✧ Identified states that ranked in the top 10 in at least two categories and no lower than top 20 in the third
- ✧ Examined SE licensure structure and asked: Are they licensing SETs in the same way?

# Effective States

✧ Small, New England:  
Generalist with  
categorical  
endorsements

- Generalist K-12
- 4 Categorical Endorsements, K-12

✧ Northern Prairie:  
Gen Ed Anchor,  
SE Endorsements

- ED, ID, SLD, and Strategist endorsements to...
- early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary education license



# Effective States (cont.)

- ✧ Great Plains State:
  - Generalist with Age/grade band
    - Generalist K-12
    - Generalist K-6
    - Generalist 7-12
    - Also: functionally defined endorsements

- ✧ Southern State:
  - Severity only
    - Learning and Behavior Disorders K-12
    - Moderate and Severe Disabilities K-12

# Concluding Thoughts

- ✧ There are several ways of licensing SETs to produce...
  - Low % of out-of-field teachers
  - High % of inclusive placements for SWDs
  - High performance on NAEP assessments
- ✧ If your state is undergoing licensure reform...
  - Don't let shortage drive the conversation
  - Advocate for the important distinctions you see a need for from your perspective as a teacher educator