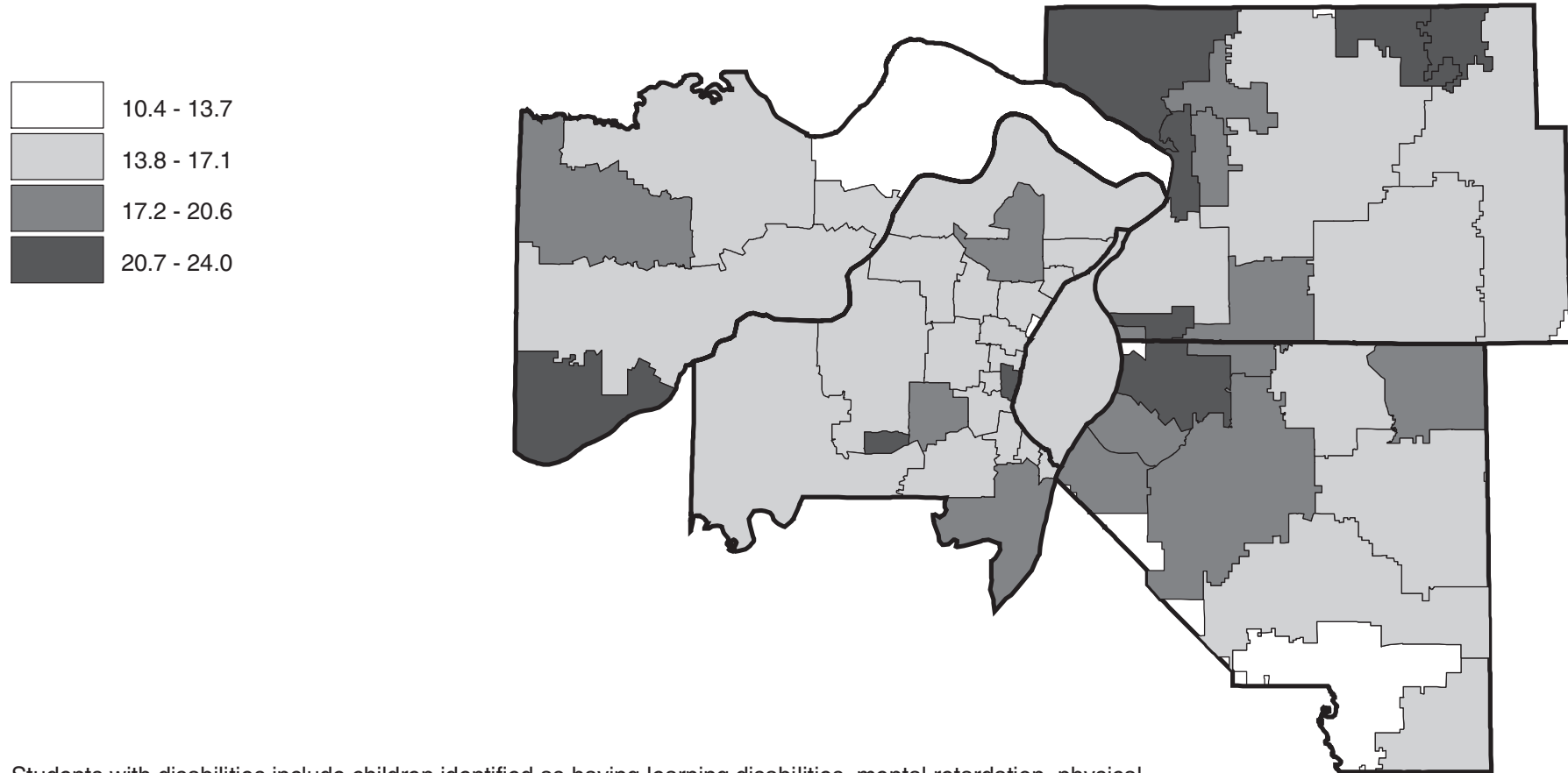


Percent of Disabled Students



Students with disabilities include children identified as having learning disabilities, mental retardation, physical limitations, and emotional disorders. Their educational rights are protected by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Increasing numbers of students with disabilities are being served predominantly in the regular classroom environment. According to the Office of Special Education Programs, from 1990 to 2000 the number of students identified as having disabilities increased 30.3%, largely due to the increased recognition and diagnosis of learning disabilities. The number of students with disabilities increased in 2000 at twice the rate of total enrollment. Disproportionate numbers of minority and low-income students are identified as disabled. In both Missouri and Illinois, students with disabilities have a substantially lower graduation rate and higher dropout rate than the total student population.