

SPECIAL EDUCATION CRISIS

 WHITE PAPER

As the number of special needs students in our schools grows and multiplies, special education teachers are becoming increasingly scarce — **and everyone is paying a high price**





Special Needs Teachers: A CALL TO SERVE

The number of American students with special needs grows with every year, yet the number of educators with the qualifications to teach them shrinks by the day.

What has caused this disparity in the student-teacher ratio among the special needs community in U.S. schools? As the need grows, the teacher supply shrinks due to a plethora of reasons—chief among them teacher burnout.

Special needs educators are stretched thin, many of them without the time to juggle all the government paperwork, grading, and diverse demands their work requires. As the number of teachers shrinks, the stress piles up, leaving many to abandon public education for jobs in the private sector or in non-profits.

Ironically, many of the well-meaning programs legislators and courts intended to help, such as IDEA and others, have grown bureaucratic tentacles that require teachers to put in unpaid overtime just to keep up with their paper workload—let alone teach.

A lack of training in the increasing diversity of special needs diagnoses, too, hampers many teachers. Yesterday's Asperger's is today's "high functioning autism," yet many teachers haven't kept up with even the terminology, let alone the developments in psychology and education that would give them the tools they need to tackle all of their students' growing challenges.

This crisis will continue to grow until America's schools correct the factors that have led to this teacher exodus. It will continue to grow if schools' continuing education programs don't keep pace with the developments in brain science that unlock many of the challenges they face.

In this paper, we will take a fresh look at these challenges through new insights from the worlds of education, psychology, and neurology. With these insights, we will look for the best ways to conquer these roadblocks in order to provide our special needs students with the best possible education.



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The Storm on the Educational Horizon

It's not only the special education teachers who are jumping ship. Nearly half of all America's new teachers will abandon their profession during their first five years.

Yet along with that statistic, diagnoses of special needs have grown among schools' student population. With the increase in awareness of neurological disabilities among pediatricians—and the growth of knowledge in special needs neurology, more and more students have found an explanation for their short-term memory deficit, their inability to concentrate, or their difficulty with writing down their thoughts, adding a column of figures, or figuring out how to interact with their peers.

For example, the number of people who have been diagnosed with ASD (autism spectrum disorder) has doubled over ten years—from one in 150 (2002) to one in 68 (2012). That's only one among a huge number of conditions that impact a student's ability to learn.

Special Education Regulations, Expectations Increase

To further complicate matters, a recent unanimous Supreme Court decision (*Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*), set in stone the dictum that schools must undertake an “appropriately ambitious” plan that takes into consideration each student's individual needs as they design IEPs (individualized education programs) for each student. As well they should—but therein lies the rub.

With this dictum came a requirement for increased paperwork to document each IEP. Unfortunately, that work all fell upon the teachers, who already were stretched to their limit.

The Storm Clouds Turn Ominous

An increase in special needs diagnoses and a hemorrhage in teachers qualified to teach these students creates not just a storm on the horizon for American education—but rather a perfect storm. If state and local governments, as well as the schools they administer, do nothing to correct the situation, many of the nation's most vulnerable students will fall through the cracks—exiting the system as dropouts or graduating in name only—without the skills that will equip them for success in work and life.

American Education's Greatest Challenge

The challenge, then, is to both attract and retain educators who have the knowledge and ability to teach these students. Recruitment, training, continuing education, and support will be key to attaining this goal.



6.6 million
According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 13 percent—or 6.6 million students in public schools—received special education services in the 2014-15 school year.

35%
of these children had specific learning disabilities.



49 states

report shortages in SISP and special education teachers. 82 percent of SISP and special education teachers concur, pointing out that they, too, sense a huge deficit in meeting the educational needs of students with learning disabilities.

51%

of school districts across the U.S. report that they have difficulty attracting highly qualified teachers to teach their special needs students. The number is even starker among high-poverty school districts. A huge majority—90 percent of these districts have trouble attracting special education teachers.

47%

of speech-language pathologists all over the country say that their districts have a shortage of qualified special education teachers. The news gets worse. 12.3 percent of the nation's special education teachers leave the teaching profession at a rate nearly double of their general education colleagues.

A Closer Look at the TEACHER SHORTAGE

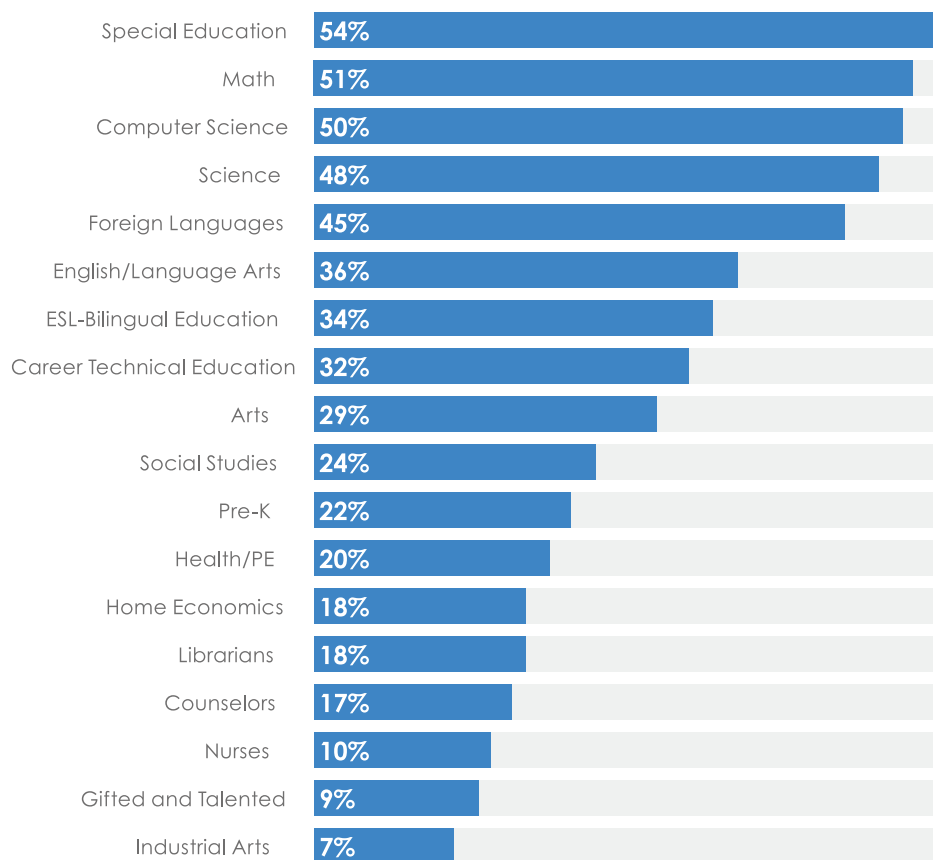
According to the National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education and Related Services, the nation's top priority in education should be educating students with special needs. With the deficit in qualified special education teachers, as well as specialized instructional support personnel (SISP), though, this lofty ideal has little chance of realization. In fact, the Bureau of Labor Statistics labels these shortages as “acute.”

Data from the U.S. Department of Education paints an equally dismal picture. Special education tops the list of greatest need at 54 percent—three percentage points higher than even mathematics teachers, who are considered the most highly prized teachers in the growing movement to prioritize STEM subjects. This data includes not only the fifty states, but also U.S. territories, such as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Palau.

The problem, therefore, is widespread—and growing--if special education teachers continue to leave at the current rate.

SPECIAL EDUCATION TOPS THE LIST FOR TEACHER SHORTAGES

STATEWIDE TEACHER SHORTAGES, BY SPECIALTY 2016 – 2018



NOTE: Data includes all 50 states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education; Education Week 4

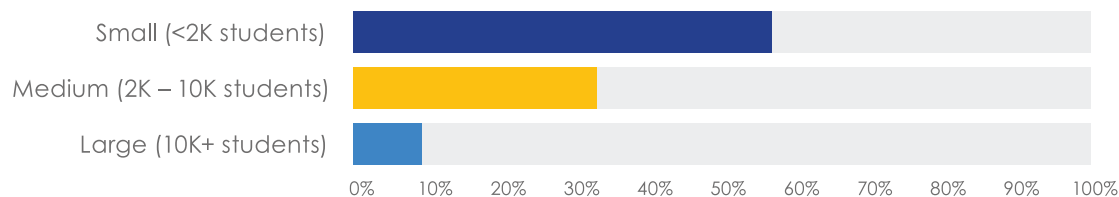
Candid Survey of Educational Professionals Confirms **SPECIAL ED CRISIS AFOOT**

A recent anonymous survey of K-12 educational professionals by the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) confirms these data have merit.

From 500 respondents, including administrators, superintendents, and special education directors, who mostly work for small-to-medium-sized districts, their candid responses reveal their greatest need: more special education teachers and substitutes.

One of the questions on the survey asked, “What is the staff makeup needed in the near future to meet the needs in special education?” Predictably, these education leaders’ overwhelming response was “more special education teachers and substitutes,” specifying that what they meant was those who are trained in special education—not those thrown willy-nilly into the job simply to fill an empty slot.

A shortage of qualified, experienced professionals in these positions means that these people are highly valuable to the nation’s school districts.



73%
of survey respondents
planned to hire more
special education staff
during the coming year.



How Will Today's Education Trends Affect **SPECIAL EDUCATION?**

Special education teachers aren't the only ones leaving the teaching profession in droves. Other teachers, too, are leaving teaching behind for other careers. Yet special education teachers top the list of those who fall by the wayside.

Inclusion

As the national trend to put students with disabilities in general education classrooms grows, many of these students are under the tutelage of teachers who lack even the most basic training in how to teach students with disabilities.

Shortages Bring Underqualified Teachers to the Classroom

When a district hasn't a qualified candidate to teach its special education students, general education teachers are often tapped to fill the void. Budgetary concerns and licensure restrictions, as well as teacher shortages, create a situation in which teachers who must take these posts come on board with little training—and no continuing education program in place to get them up to speed quickly.

Legislative Policy Demands District Accountability for Special Education

As the Center for Parent Information and Resources points out, legislators have made better education for students with disabilities a top priority nationwide. IDEA (the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), after all, is the law of the land. This landmark provision sets high standards for student achievement and sets out guidelines for schools to provide extra help and services to meet each student's needs.

These standards would present a stiff challenge even with all the nation's special education departments fully staffed. With today's teacher shortage, students won't reach the high standards the law requires. Even more importantly, many of these students will not reach their full academic potential during their school years, making it more difficult for them to succeed at the university level and in their careers.

Substandard Credentialing Hamstrings SPECIAL EDUCATION

The special education staffing crisis has led many schools to hire special education teachers with substandard credentials—or only permits—as opposed to those with full special education teaching credentials.

Only 36% of new special education teachers in the 2015-2016 school year held even a preliminary credential, according to the Learning Policy Institute. Schools filled the remaining positions with teachers who held term permits or waivers.

There is no other teaching field out there that issues most of its new credentials to woefully unprepared educators. A cause for alarm, at the very least—and one that may itself contribute to the teacher exodus in special education.

What Can End This Vicious Circle?

If school districts cannot find qualified candidates because so many teachers have fled the field, those they do hire will enter the classroom ill-equipped to handle all the challenges special education faces. Without adequate training, they, too, will burn out from all the demands—and the cycle will start again.

Professional Development Opportunities Can Help

Districts who have successful special programs have led the way, taking advantage of online training programs that do not require teachers to leave work to take the course onsite. With today's technology, professional development can occur throughout the school year.

Keeping abreast of the latest research and strategies in the field all year long through such a professional development program can have an immediate impact on their students' outcomes—as well as to keep participating teachers from the burnout that sidelines so many talented educators.

To help teachers, many successful districts are taking advantage of rapidly changing technology and online training opportunities that enable teachers to be exposed to the latest research and strategies throughout the school year, thereby having an immediate impact on student outcomes.

Multiple Diagnoses Complicate STUDENTS' NEEDS AND ABILITIES

As the Mayo Clinic has pointed out, many special needs students have more than one diagnosis. For example, a student with autism may also have dyslexia, while one with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder may also have a math disability. These overlapping diagnoses make developing an effective strategy for each student more complex—which is yet another reason that more training is a must for today's special education teachers to educate their students effectively.

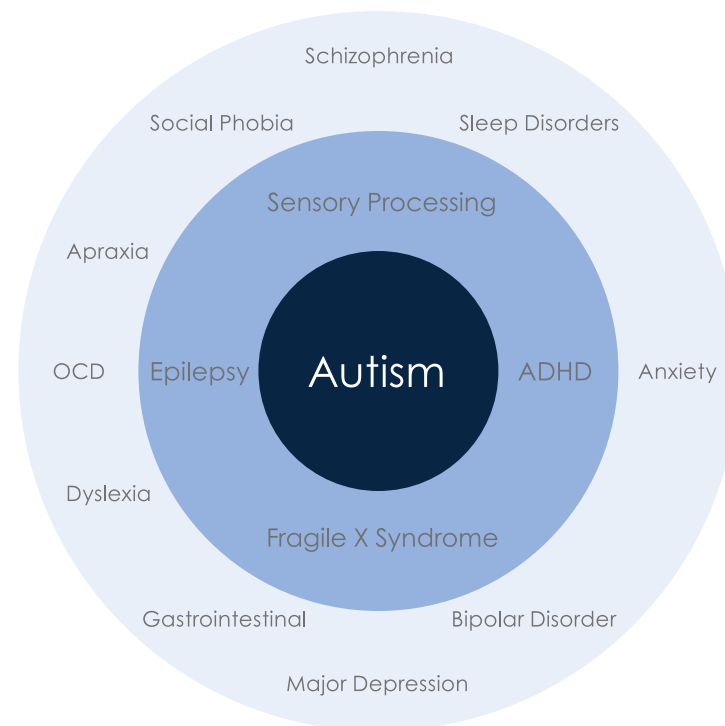
For example, more than nine percent of children have both ADHD and another disorder. Of those, a majority (52 percent) have ADHD together with some type of mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder. ADHD occurs frequently with behavior problems, anxiety, depression, autism spectrum disorder, and even Tourette syndrome.

As the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends, schools should participate in students' ADHD treatment plans, which often include special seating as well as modified homework and testing. That goes for other disorders as well.

Medication and behavior therapy, says the Academy, work best with ADHD. About 90 percent of students with ADHD have received or are receiving school support. The effectiveness of this support, though, depends on the teachers' success at delivering it.

Rising Numbers of Diagnoses Demand More Teachers

In a perfect world, the rising number of diagnoses would be met with a rising number of special education teachers entering the field. However, the opposite seems to be true. Those statistics, says the U.S. Department of Education, have exacerbated the special education teacher shortage. More teachers, unfortunately, are leaving the profession—even as their target student population rises.





Attrition Rates in New Teachers Overall a **CONTRIBUTING FACTOR**

It's not only special education teachers who leave the teaching profession at an alarming rate, though admittedly, the rate is higher among them. Teachers overall have a high attrition rate, with half of all new teachers leaving the profession during the first five years.

Pay isn't the only factor. In fact, it's not the most important one.

The main drivers of teacher attrition include:

- **Inadequate preparation**
- **Lack of support system for new teachers**
- **Difficult work conditions**
- **Long work days**
- **School budget constraints**
- **Fatigue from standardized testing**
- **Better opportunities elsewhere**

These factors complicate the already challenging work special education teachers face every day, making it even more likely they'll be a big part of the half that leaves.



Cognitive Disorders ON THE RISE

Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics show that the number of children diagnosed with a developmental disability has risen from 5.76 percent to 6.99 percent from 2014 to 2016.

While schools struggle to recruit, train, and retain special education teachers, the special education student population is growing.

The reason? Diagnoses for cognitive disorders are increasing across the U.S., as new breakthroughs in cognitive science help medical professionals recognize more subtle symptoms of various conditions, allowing more people to receive diagnoses and treatment.

- Autism diagnoses are increasing: Autism diagnoses have more than doubled over twelve years, thanks to new developments in autism research.
- ADHD diagnoses, too, have increased: According to the American Psychiatric Association, the number of children diagnosed with ADHD has risen from five percent in 2013 to its current percentage, 8.5 percent. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) statistics, however, show about 11 percent of America's children have ADHD.

ADHD SIDEBAR

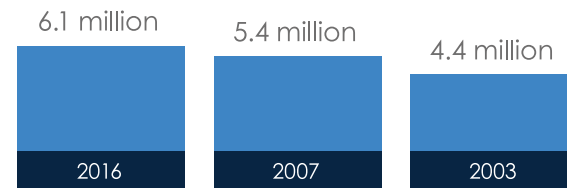
▶▶▶ The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that schools participate in any ADHD treatment plan, including preferred seating, and modified exams and homework.

HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE BEEN DIAGNOSED?

In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association stated that, at the time, five percent of U.S. children had ADHD.¹² However, more recent studies that use community samples have estimated higher rates.

ACCORDING TO A 2016 PARENT REPORT

Of children ages 2 – 17, 9.4 percent had ever been diagnosed with ADHD:



CHILDREN WITH ADHD AND ANOTHER DISORDER

ADHD often occurs with other disorders. In 2016, among U.S. children ages 2 – 17 years of age, diagnoses are as follows:

64% Any mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder

52% Behavior or conduct problem

33% Anxiety

17% Depression

14% Autism spectrum disorder

1% Tourette syndrome

BEHAVIOR THERAPY AND MEDICATION

For children six and older, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends both behavior therapy and medication as good options, preferably both together.

According to a 2016 parent report*, among children 2 – 17 years of age with ADHD, 77 percent were receiving treatment:

32% received both medication treatment and behavioral treatment

30% were treated with medication alone

23% were receiving neither medication treatment nor behavioral treatment

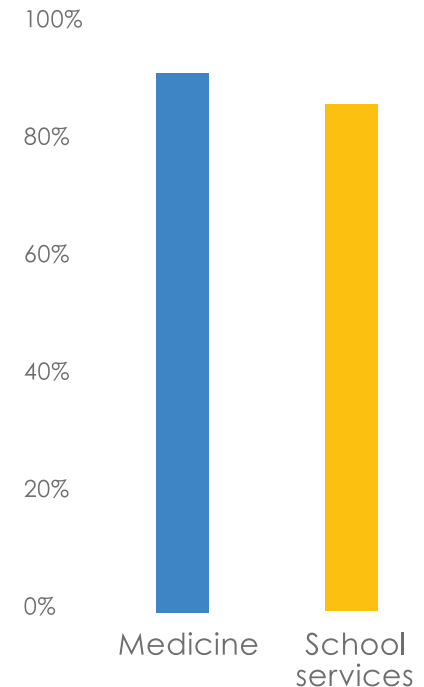
15% received behavioral treatment alone

SCHOOL SUPPORT IS RECOMMENDED, AND EXPECTED

Among children with ADHD, parents reported that roughly ninety percent of children received school support at some point in their lives, which included school accommodations and help in the classroom.

Currently, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that schools participate in any ADHD treatment plan, including support and accommodations—such as preferred seating and modified exams, homework, or school assignments. The AAP suggests treating ADHD with medicine, parent-delivered behavior therapy, and teacher-delivered behavior therapy.

PROPORTION OF CHILDREN WITH ADHD WHO RECEIVED DIFFERENT TYPES OF TREATMENTS



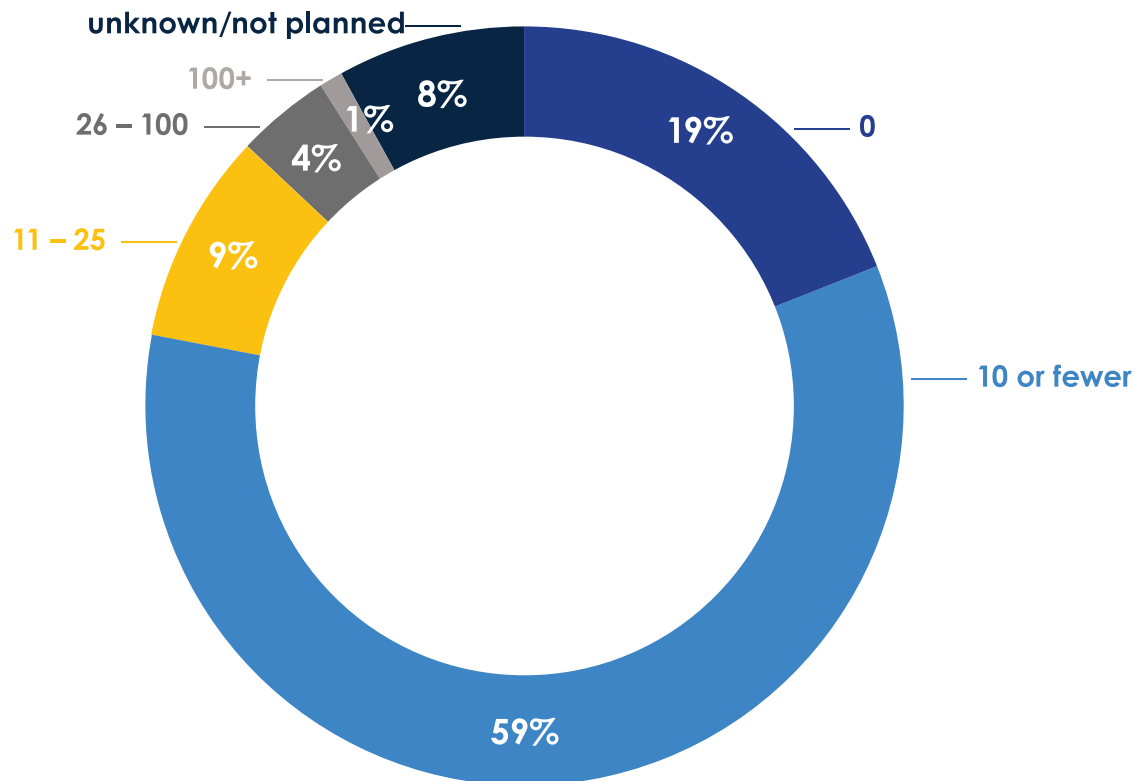
*Note: Because of an increased focus on ADHD in younger children, expanding age ranges to include children 2 – 17 years of age, recent estimates are not directly comparable with estimates based on previous data that used different methods.

Planned Special EDUCATION HIRES

Despite the teacher shortage in special education, 80 percent of school districts plan to hire special education teachers during the 2018-2019 school year. Although a majority can only hire 10 or fewer teachers, these statistics are, however, promising.

What U.S. schools need, however, is a practical, effective system to recruit, hire, train, certify, and retain quality special education teachers. With a 100 percent shortage in special education—compared to only 52 percent in advanced mathematics and about the same in many of the hard sciences, this might be an uphill battle.

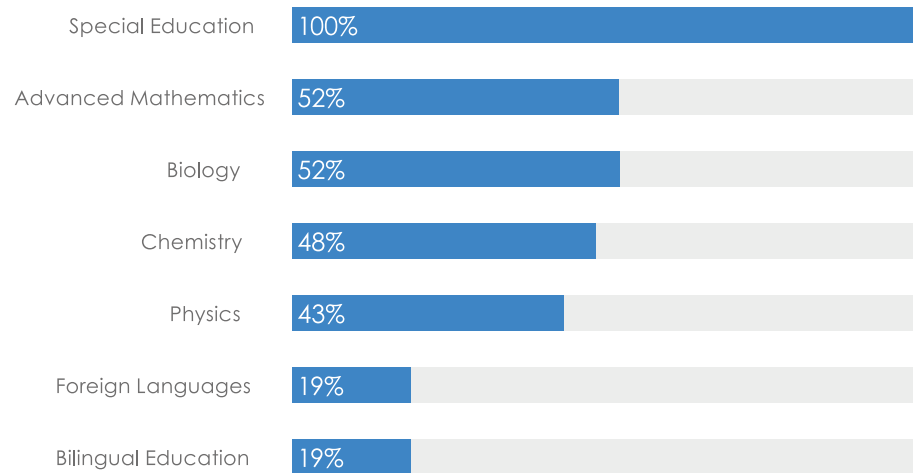
Yet we can do it. We must—for the sake of the growing number of special education students.



TEACHER SHORTAGES

TEACHER SHORTAGES IN SAMPLE LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs)

BY SUBJECT AREA





Training and Certification IS THE KEY

Less-than-adequate preparation and lack of training are two main reasons why teachers leave their profession within their first five years. In special education classrooms, those two factors play an even larger role, since their students' educational needs, learning styles, and abilities differ widely from those in general education programs.

School Districts Need to Provide Annual Training

Though each state has its own minimum continuing education requirements, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, a nationwide industry leader, recommends at least 14 to 21 hours of annual training for each teacher. Most school districts, though, fall woefully short of even that minimum requirement. Over 55 percent of district survey respondents provide fewer than six hours of training for their teachers.

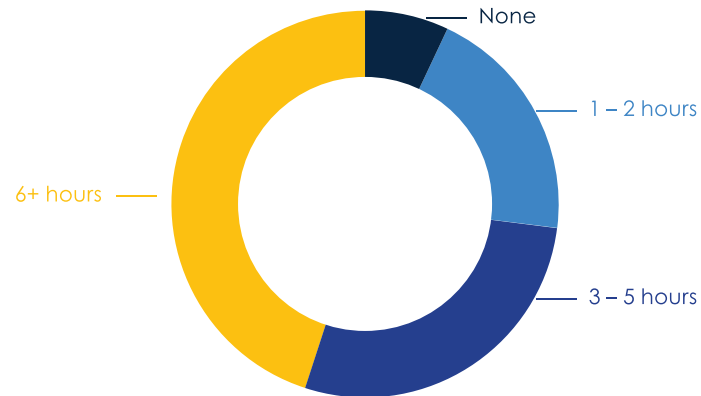
With financial resources and time already stretched to the limit in most school districts, administrators cannot afford to give teachers that much time to attend costly in-person training. The double whammy of paying for the training and for substitutes to cover for the teachers while they attend the courses is a challenge most districts cannot meet.

When teachers do receive training, the majority of their coursework involves classroom management and legal requirements. Topics specific to special education, such as autism, ADHD, and IEP planning aren't covered in nearly the depth needed to create a deep understanding among teachers.

Without well-prepared teachers, special education students cannot achieve the outcomes they need to achieve success both academically and in their future careers.

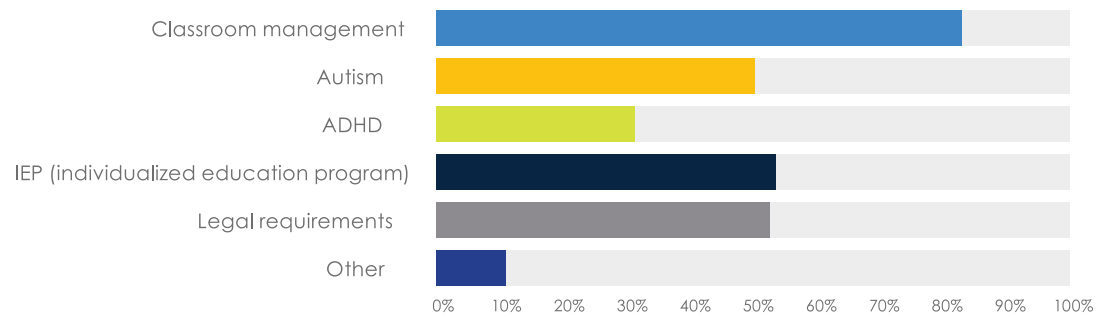
Preparation and TRAINING

TRAINING PROVIDED ANNUALLY BY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS



INADEQUATE PREPARATION IS NOT JUST A PAIN POINT FOR EDUCATORS, IT ALSO GREATLY IMPACTS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, SUCCESS, AND OUTCOMES.

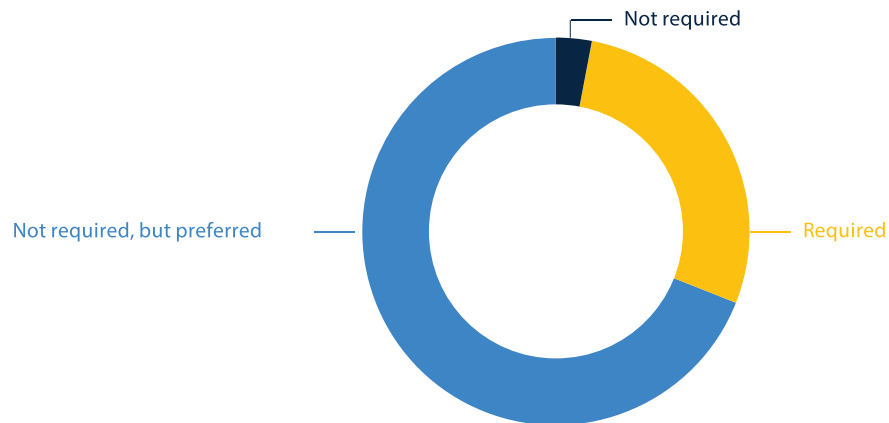
TRAINING TOPICS NOTED, BY IMPORTANCE



Most School Districts PREFER CERTIFICATION

Though many school districts don't have the luxury to require certification for their special education teachers, they certainly prefer it—by a huge majority. Certification, after all, validates a teacher's training and measures their skills. Having those classroom skills produces better outcomes for their students, more effective classroom management, and a higher rate of teacher retention.

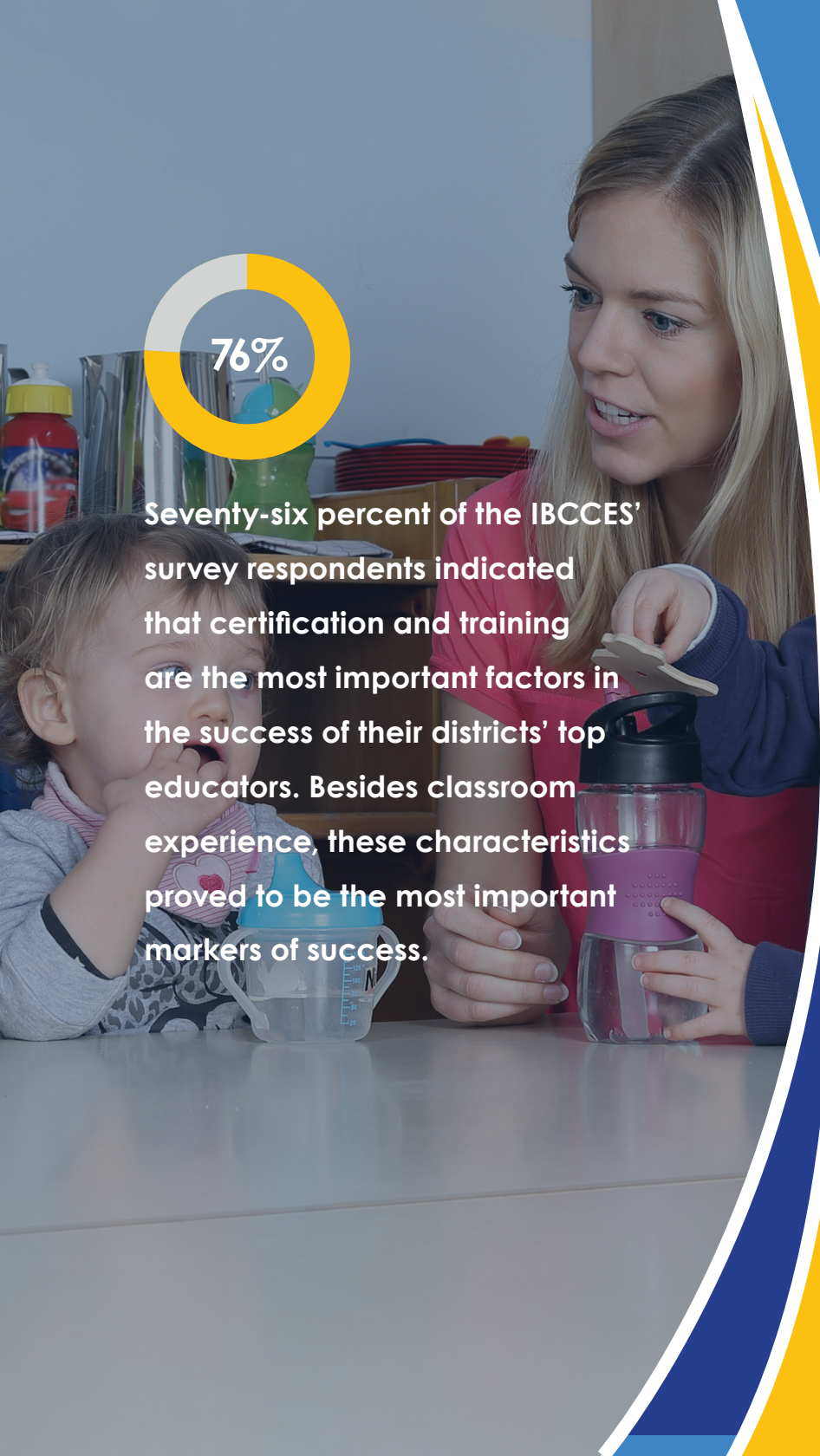
CERTIFICATION REQUIRED



What Factors Influence Special Education PROFESSIONALS' SUCCESS?



76%



Seventy-six percent of the IBCCES' survey respondents indicated that certification and training are the most important factors in the success of their districts' top educators. Besides classroom experience, these characteristics proved to be the most important markers of success.

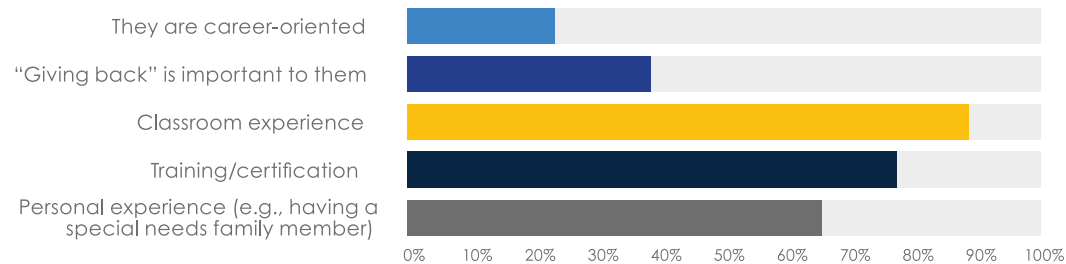
Yet these administrators—by a large majority—indicated that online training and certification was one of their most-preferred methods to provide staff training. No longer do they see the need to send teachers away for costly in-person training.

Although many school districts must hire special education teachers from the ranks of general education teachers, they nevertheless realize the importance of providing them with adequate training to meet the challenges they will face in the special education classroom. Factors that predict success for these teachers include

- A commitment to their career
- A need to give back to the community for the help they once received
- Personal experience with a special needs person, such as a family member or close friend
- Classroom experience
- Training and certification

Choosing the right teachers to put into these positions—those with the first four characteristics—is indeed important, but also providing them with adequate training and certification to help them achieve success in the special education classroom can make the difference between retaining them and losing them to other career fields.

INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL SPECIAL EDUCATION EDUCATOR



Qualitative responses indicated that management-level staff are creating their own "experts" due to the lack of trained and qualified candidates available for hire. Many respondents spend additional time and resources attempting to "grow from within" their organization—training internally to fill the knowledge gaps, which could be a costly solution.

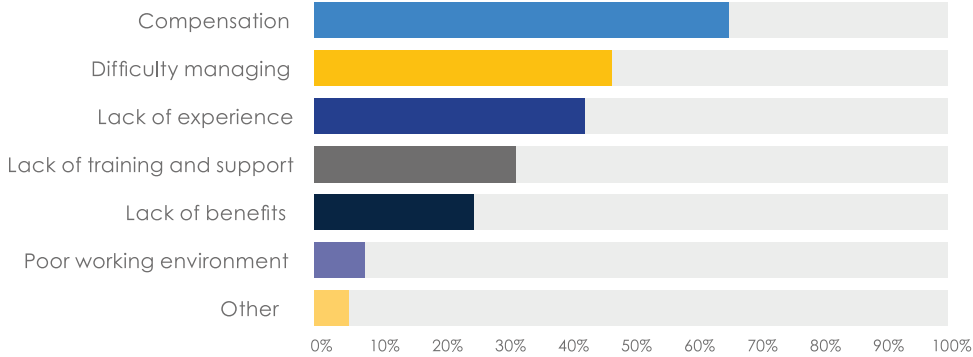


Training and Certification Can Help Reduce Special EDUCATION TURNOVER

According to the special education-focused organization [SpecialEdShortages.org](https://www.special-ed-shortages.org/), the unique challenges that contribute to high turnover among special education professionals and paraprofessionals include

- Lack of support, excessive paperwork, professional isolation, excessive workloads, and inadequate working conditions
- A lack of qualified teachers in the district caused by teachers' unwillingness to work in high-poverty, high-crime, or rural districts
- Few financial incentives or loan forgiveness programs for graduate students in the field
- Barriers that limit opportunities for teachers to earn credentials for special education, such as re-licensure or alternative routes to licensure

TOP REASONS FOR TURNOVER





Complex Licensure Issues Complicate

SPECIAL EDUCATION SHORTAGE

General Education Teachers with Conditional Licensure

The stopgap solution many districts try—using teachers with only general education experience and conditional licensure to fill vacancies in their special education departments—further complicates the shortage. According to a 2016 article, “Five trending issues in special education,” in the Edmentum™ blog, this approach often leads to burnout, since all too often, these teachers receive little or no training when they fill these positions.

Categorical Licensure Debate Complicates Issue

Many education professionals contend that teachers must have a license for each disability category. In an ideal world, this argument has merit—since many of these disabilities have differing characteristics.

Yet in a world in which the special education teacher supply is already tight, others argue, non-categorical licensure is the better way to go, ensuring that teachers have the training to handle a diversity of disabilities and learning differences.

For Certification and Licensure, Balance is the Key

Clearly, licensure and certification must be robust enough to provide schools with educators who are prepared to succeed in the special education classroom, but not so stringent that it discourages teachers and potential teachers from pursuing a career in special education.



The High Cost of Teacher Recruiting and Its Impact on **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Although important, licensure and certification mean little if schools cannot afford the time or money to recruit special education teachers in the first place.

Many districts don't even track the costs they sustain to find and recruit educators for their schools' special education programs. It takes time—and they have little of that. Furthermore, they lack the resources to compete for qualified candidates, let alone retain them over the years.

Yet the costs are relevant. Recruiting and retaining are different sides of the same coin. Those districts who do track the recruitment cost for each hire estimate their costs to fall within the following estimates:

- For a paraprofessional: **\$20,000**
- For a teacher: **\$50,000**

Other sources, such as the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, report the cost to be much lower--\$10,000 for each hire.

None of these estimates, however, take into consideration the costs of multiple turnovers for a given position over the year or the costs of lost productivity from such turnovers. Certainly, with the burnout rate as high as it is, these costs would prove to be quite hefty—even at the lower figure of \$10,000 per teacher.

Candidate Sourcing CHALLENGES

Candidate Search

16

In today's job market, to find one excellent candidate to fill a vacancy, it takes at least 16 people to respond to the job posting, on average. To receive these responses, even more people must see the posting.

4

For those 16 ad respondents, only one-fourth of them will respond to further queries.

3

Out of those four, only three are likely to have the proper qualifications.

2

Out of those, only two will likely make the cut for an interview.

Every district must ask itself,

“How can we put ourselves at a place in which we can attract the talent we need?”

Turnover Costs Hamper Schools

- **Gallup estimate:** Polling and survey company Gallup provides a more realistic estimate for the hidden costs of turnover. They estimate that cost to fall between one-half to five times the position's annual salary. That cost varies by the impact turnover has on team morale, student achievement, and student relationships.
- **U.S. Department of Labor estimate:** Government statistics estimate that attrition costs number about 30 percent of the salary of the departing employee. In districts in which turnover is high, this cost can add up quickly.

Not only must schools measure teacher turnover in dollars, but they must also factor in the disruption teacher turnover makes in the classroom. For many special education students, especially those with autism, change is a huge roadblock to success, since routine is important.

What Specific Causes Create Special Education Teacher Turnover?

In addition to the aforementioned reasons for turnover among all teachers, special education teachers report the following factors in their decision to leave a position:

- **Difficulty managing**
- **Not enough experience**
- **Lack of training and support**
- **Lack of benefits**
- **Poor working environment**
- **Miscellaneous causes**

To Overcome Hiring Challenges, FIND AN EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

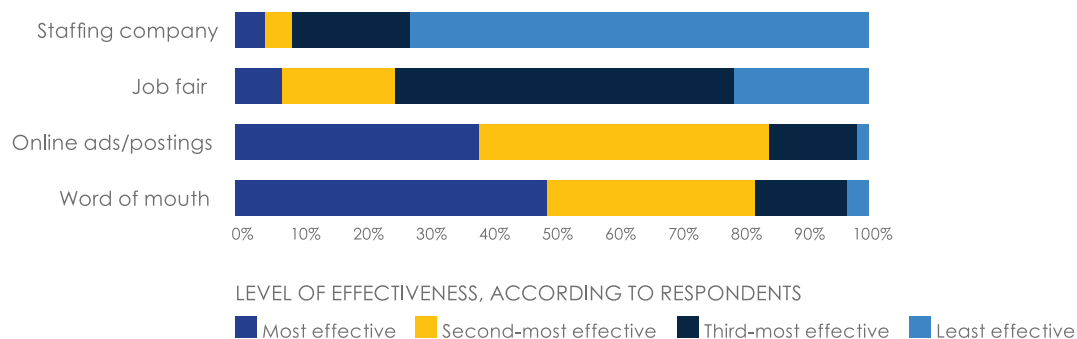
Recruiting teachers who will stay is the key to overcoming turnover and other hiring challenges. What are the best strategies for finding teachers who will be effective in the classroom and stay with the profession?

A majority of education administrators find word-of-mouth advertising to be most helpful when they are looking for teachers. Online job boards, too, are effective tools to find teachers, say administrators.

What frustrates administrators, though, is these methods' lack of screening and teacher preparation. If only these sources would provide screening as well as names, say the administrators, their job would grow easier.

Furthermore, if these candidate staffing methods would also provide some type of preparation for potential special education teachers, it would be the ideal solution. To find a partner who can recruit, screen, and prepare educators to fill special education vacancies would provide a lasting solution, say most IBCCES survey respondents.

RECRUITING STRATEGIES THAT WORK, ranked by effectiveness





Keep Teachers in the Classroom with

EFFECTIVE RETENTION STRATEGIES

Recruiting top prospects is only half the battle to fill America's special education classrooms with qualified, effective special education teachers. Keeping them in the classroom can be even more of a challenge. These strategies can create a huge uptick in a school district's teacher retention.

1. Support from Principals

Studies show that there is a positive correlation between a principal's support and a teacher's decision to stay in the special education field. Principals who use the following strategies increase teacher retention and effectiveness:

- **Prioritizing collaboration:** Teachers vary in gifts and in their knowledge of students' disabilities. When they collaborate with each other, they can realize the benefit of both people's strengths.
- **Personal support:** Knowing that they have support from the principal empowers special education teachers to use all the resources they can access to provide a better education for their students.
- **Handpicking mentors:** A new special education teacher can certainly benefit from a mentoring relationship with a more experienced teacher in the field. Principals who involve themselves in the process to create a good match between mentor and mentee will experience better results than those who choose mentors randomly.
- **Stressing the importance of continuing education:** Principals who promote continuing education for special education teachers and find a way to help those teachers receive the proper training will find themselves with a core group of teachers with career-long loyalty.

2. Early Identification and Support for Students

School districts that place a premium on identifying and supporting students with learning disabilities do not only the students a favor, but their teachers as well. With early identification, teachers have a better chance to create learning strategies that emphasize strengths, empower each student, and result in more retention of the material. That, in turn, makes a teacher's job more gratifying, encouraging them to stay in the profession.

3. An Ongoing Professional Development Program

School districts who provide special education teachers with ongoing training in brain science, disability-specific teaching techniques, and teaching core competencies that their students' future employers will need can equip their teachers with success. With the advent of online learning programs, teachers never need to take time off from teaching to undergo training. Online programs are cost-effective and offer cutting-edge training in issues that can make a difference in the special education classroom.



Answer the Call for **BETTER SPECIAL EDUCATION**

With inclusion and mainstreaming at the forefront of many schools' policies, general education teachers, too, need specialized training in teaching students with disabilities. Those school systems with the foresight to offer such training to all its teachers will create a better learning environment for all its students. Such training, too, can inspire teachers already in the system to consider taking extra training to become certified in special education, thereby helping to fulfill the nation's need for more special education teachers.

School districts must also be proactive in their efforts to recruit new teachers for their special education departments. Providing incentives for new teachers who enter the field may encourage more university students to consider a career in special education. Providing support and continuing education for the district's existing special education teachers will help keep these gifted educators in the field. Ultimately, a district who answers the call for more teachers with effective action will reap untold rewards for years to come as their students go out into the world as successful, productive members of society.

IBCCES

About IBCCES

A company of passionate believers. The International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards meets the credentialing needs of professionals who work with people who have special needs and cognitive disorders. In 2001, IBCCES identified a need for standardization within healthcare and education to meet the growing demands of care required for those with cognitive disorders. They assembled a board of experts to address this growing international need. They established their globally recognized certification program to set the industry standard and to create a worldwide community of competent, knowledgeable professionals. As the impact of cognitive disorders now reaches one in four people, the IBCCES team continues to grow and expand its reach to ensure professionals in these industries have access to the latest research and applications. IBCCES adheres to international standards for boards that grant professional credentials. The IBCCES certification procedures and content undergo various reviews and validation, pursuant to the professions that are eligible for certification, as well as standards established by content experts in each field.



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