Mitigating Special Education Teacher Shortages: A Multi-pronged, Strategic, Statewide Approach

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WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED?

Shortages in Special Education have been with us forever, but now they are reaching crisis proportions.
WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

• 48 states and the District of Columbia report shortages of special education teachers
• 42 states report shortages of early intervention providers

• Council for Exceptional Children Issue Brief (2018)
EQUITY ISSUES!
SOME STUDENTS ARE IMPACTED MORE THAN OTHERS

- Shortages of special educators from diverse backgrounds are the most dramatic
- Students served in special schools are more likely to have less prepared teachers

- Fall & Billingsley, 2011; Mason-Williams, Gagnon, & Bettini, 2017
ADDITIONALLY . . .

The supply of teachers is dwindling

Council for Exceptional Children (2018); Dewey et al., in press
PROBLEM WITH SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS

• They exacerbate quantity and quality shortages; creating a revolving door

Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006; Feng & Sass, 2013; Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014; Miller, Brownell
STATE RESPONSES TO SHORTAGES

- Oklahoma and California have issued more emergency certificates
- Arizona, Illinois, and Minnesota have lowered certification standards
- Arizona gave local school administrators the power to determine teacher certification
- New York has allowed charter schools to certify their own teachers with less rigorous preparation

West, J. (2018). Calling All Teachers, Flexing your Advocacy Muscles to Address Teacher Shortages. MSLD Rethinking Behavior
REALITY

- Reality is that districts are left with few choices and rely on “fast-track” and emergency certified teachers with little preparation and no classroom experience.
- Policy changes and implementation, however, take time!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
EDUCATOR TALENT MANAGEMENT

- Need a talent management framework
- Looks across the career continuum
- Considers unique contexts
- Clarifies partner roles

Educator Talent Management Framework:
Center on Great Teachers and Leaders
CEEDAR AND GTL CENTER TOOLS

• Combining short term solutions with long term strategies!
EXISTING EDUCATOR SHORTAGE RESOURCES

- **Talking About the Teacher Shortage** with specific information for special education
  - Summary of shortages in special education
- **How to Solve It** – Evidence-based policy recommendations
  - Service scholarships & student loan forgiveness
  - Effective training & support for new teachers
  - Teaching conditions & supportive leadership
  - Competitive compensation
- **Latest News From Around the Country**

https://teachershortage.solutiontoolkit.org/
Phase I: Short-Term Strategies
• Just-in-time assistance to schools and districts forced to use less-than-fully-prepared teachers in classrooms.

Note: Districts must concurrently provide intensive support to these educators to get them prepared, while laying the foundation for longer-term solutions.

Phase II: Long-Term Solutions
• Systemic approaches that are specific to local contexts without compromising quality.
• Facilitate strong networks with shared ownership, collective action, and joint accountability.
• No two shortages are created equal. Strategies must address local context and needs.
• Shortages can be addressed at any point along the educator career continuum.
PHASE I: SHORT TERM STRATEGIES

**Strategy #1**
Hiring the Best Possible Candidate

- Previous experience with children
- Previous experience with students/people with disabilities
- Experience working in schools
- Connection to the community

**Strategy #2**
Intensive Supports

- Mentoring & Induction
- Professional Development
- Pair with knowledgeable paraprofessional
Decision Guidance

Are systems of professional learning and support available to less-than-qualified teachers?

No

Establish Boot Camp Professional Development

Establish Mentoring and Induction

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How-to Guide

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<th>Role</th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Exemplars</th>
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<td>What can the school leadership do?</td>
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<td>What can the district do?</td>
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<td>What can the Educator Preparation Program do?</td>
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Strengthen collaborations across states, districts, and educator preparation programs by investing in local mentoring and induction programs that reinforce the content and skills that all teachers and leaders need to serve students with disabilities.

“A set of practices that are fundamental to support K-12 student learning, and that can be taught, learned, and implemented by those entering the profession.”

(Windschitl, Thompson, Braaten, & Stroupe, 2012, p.880)
PHASE II: COMPREHENSIVE, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

1. Combine and tailor the evidence-based strategies best suited to their own unique context to...

2. Create an aligned and coherent talent management system to...

3. Attract, support & retain a diverse, effective educator workforce for the students who need them the most.

- Identification of strategies per the development of gaps across the career continuum
- Smorgasbord/diversification of the portfolio
- Targeted strategy selection per unique contexts
PHASE II: STRATEGY SELECTION FACILITATION PROCESS

1. Authentically engage stakeholders

2. Analyze and report workforce and equity data & Uncover root causes

3. Evaluate and select evidence-based strategies

4. Infuse implementation science principles to ensure continuous improvement & Identify partners for implementation
DATA TOOL: GAP ANALYSIS

✓ Is it a production problem?
   (Attract)

✓ Is it an attrition problem?
   (Prepare and Support)

✓ Is it a distribution/equitable access problem?
   (Attract, Prepare, and Support)
• Assess where special education shortages are corresponding with the greatest “opportunity gaps” for students with disabilities (as identified by the state’s ESSA accountability metrics).

• Targeted on the schools and students that need the most help.

• Strategies tailored toward local contexts and evaluated based upon impact where needed the most.

Data Tool: Special Educator Shortages and Opportunity Gaps

Data Tool Versions
- State Version
- District and School Version
- Educator Preparation Program Version
POLL: TEXT YOUR VOTE TO 650 600 9016

Rate your response to the following: These tools could help my organization conduct data and root cause analysis to select specific strategies to address teacher shortages.

• Strongly agree: 173089
• Agree: 173090
• Disagree: 173091
• Strongly disagree: 173092
• Not applicable to my organization: 173093
MULTIPLE OPTIONS BASED UPON

- Incentives and Loan Forgiveness
- Grow Your Own Programs
- Paraprofessional Step Up Programs
- Competitive Compensation
- Teacher Leadership
- Five Year Preparation Programs with Practice-Based Opportunities
- National Board Certified Teachers
- Sign-on Bonus
- Quality Professional Learning Systems
POLL 2: TEXT YOUR VOTE TO 650 600 9016

Rate your response to the following: This presentation increased my awareness and knowledge of strategies to address shortages of special education teachers.

• Strongly agree: 173085
• Agree: 173086
• Disagree: 173087
• Strongly disagree: 173088
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