No Two Shortages Are The Same: Using Educator Data To Target Efforts

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Objectives

Participants in this session will:

• Discuss strategies for a comprehensive, multi-prong approach to resolving teacher shortages.

• Explore the CEEDAR/GTL shortage toolkit and reflect on how the resources can be used in their local context to increase equitable access to excellent educators for students with disabilities.

• Learn how a state director of special education is engaging stakeholders to examine data, explore root causes, and select strategies to address shortages based on local context.
Why Should We Be Concerned?

• 48 states and the District of Columbia report shortages of special education teachers.
• 42 states report a shortage of early intervention providers.
• Special education teachers leave the profession at nearly twice the rate of general education teachers.
• Enrollment in teacher preparation programs is down 35% over the last 5 years.

Equity Issues

• 90% of high-poverty school districts report difficulty attracting qualified special education teachers.

• There are severe and persistent shortages of special educators from diverse backgrounds.

Source: Council for Exceptional Children, 2018; Fall & Billingsley, 2011.
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.

The Challenge

• Districts are left with few choices and often rely on “fast-track” and emergency-certified teachers with little preparation and no classroom experience to fill positions.

• Short-term solutions exacerbate quantity and quality issues and create a revolving door.

• Long-term solutions like policy change take time!

The Solution

We need a comprehensive educator talent management framework that:

• Looks across the entire career continuum
• Considers unique local contexts
• Clarifies partner roles
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**
A Multi-Prong Approach

Phase I: Short-Term Strategies

• Just-in-time assistance to schools and districts forced to use less-than-fully-prepared teachers in classrooms.
• 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.
Toolkit Demonstration!

EDUCATOR SHORTAGES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Toolkit for Developing Targeted, Local Strategies
State Example: Indiana

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.**
Strategy Selection 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
Role Alike Discussion

• What questions do you have about the toolkit?
• What data are available in your context that could be used to examine special education shortages? What data are missing?
• What data are available to supplement the categories included in the Excel-based tools to create a more comprehensive picture of root causes of shortages?
Mixed Group Discussion

• How can state education agencies, local education agencies, and educator preparation programs collaborate in this work? What are the roles of each partner?

• How can states authentically engage stakeholders in the process of examining special education shortage data, analyzing root causes, and selecting strategies? Who needs to be at the table?

• How will this work support the state’s educator talent management vision and framework?
References


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