

**The Statewide
Study of
Special Education
Professionals'
Personnel Needs**

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The Statewide Study of Special Education Professionals’ Personnel Needs

Introduction

Background

In 1998, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) selected Region IV Education Service Center (ESC) to conduct an initial statewide study of special education personnel needs. TEA identified the following topics to be explored in the study: the current status of special education personnel needs, critical issues for maintaining an adequate supply of qualified special education professionals, recommendations for state action to ensure an adequate supply of special education professionals in the future, and recommendations for the creation of an annual statewide system for collecting personnel needs data.

Purpose

The two-phase study used a comprehensive needs assessment to explore special education personnel needs in Texas. Data from the first phase of this project as well as research from several other organizations, including Texas A&M University’s *Teacher Demand Study 2000-2001*, indicate that a critical personnel shortage exists in special education. The current surveys for this statewide needs assessment represent the first step in resolving barriers to ensuring Texas schools have an adequate supply of qualified personnel to serve all students with special needs. In order to attain this adequate supply, the actual extent of the shortage and the needs of current and pre-service special education professionals must be fully established. The second phase surveys addressed these issues.

In addition, survey results will provide input for the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for Texas. This system is designed to ensure the state has an adequate supply of qualified special education, general education, and related services personnel. Survey results will also assist TEA in developing an annual statewide survey to continually evaluate the supply and professional development needs of special education professionals.

Methodology

First Phase Survey Development

During the first phase of the study, Region IV ESC identified stakeholders from regional education service centers, the University Forum Planning Committee, the Continuing Advisory Committee, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education (TCASE), other professional organizations and agencies, and higher education institutions. The organizations represented in the stakeholders group are included in Appendix D. In cooperation with TEA and these statewide stakeholders, Region IV ESC prepared a draft

survey instrument and selected the Texas Center for Educational Research (TCER) to collaborate in the personnel needs assessment. Using this instrument as a guide, TCER developed pilot pencil-and-paper questionnaires and telephone survey instruments which addressed definition of the current special education professional personnel shortage, elements contributing to the shortage, effects of the shortage, strategies to decrease the shortage, and certification and training issues.

During summer 2000, TCER distributed 1,279 pilot pencil-and-paper questionnaires to the special education directors of the 20 Texas regional ESCs. TCER requested that ESC special education directors distribute questionnaires to special education coordinators, special education directors, administrators of shared services arrangements (SSAs), and charter school administrators within their region. In total, 315 individuals returned questionnaires, a response rate of 25%. TCER also identified 430 special education directors representing school districts, charter schools, and SSAs to participate in the pilot telephone survey. A total of 184 telephone surveys were completed, for a response rate of 46%. TCER summarized findings in a pilot report that was reviewed by Region IV ESC, TEA, and special education stakeholders in November 2000.

Second Phase Survey Development and Implementation

Development

After completion of the first phase, evaluators reexamined project goals in relation to the data collected during the pilot study. Several issues emerged that informed revisions of the survey instrument and methodology. First, while special education directors have extensive knowledge about the current personnel shortage and the needs of special education personnel, human resources directors also have valuable information to contribute to the understanding of personnel shortages in the state. Therefore, evaluators created an additional survey targeting these individuals. Questions and items within questions varied according to the expected knowledge of the source (special education or human resources director). Both the special education and human resources director surveys were in a paper-and-pencil format.

Second, although many questions from the pilot study remained in the second phase surveys, evaluators restructured some questions and revised some items within questions. Results from the pilot study in combination with input from Region IV ESC, TEA, and stakeholders informed most of these changes.

Third, evaluators identified the need for more information to determine the true extent of the special education personnel shortage. Questions from the Phase I telephone survey were revised to include actual full-time equivalent (FTE) information for the total number of current positions and the number of vacancies. Both the special education and human resources directors surveys requested FTE information for a number of special education teacher positions (8 categories) and other professional positions (12 categories). From these data, vacancy rates could be calculated.

Finally, while first phase surveys collected some information on professional development, data was limited on the topic. Given the importance of professional development in the delivery of quality special education services for students with special needs, an additional section was added to the special education director survey addressing this topic. Questions gauged the extent of special education professional development needs for a variety of educators (including novice and experienced general and special education teachers) and other special education professionals, as well as the most critical professional development topics for these individuals. Surveys for special education and human resources directors appear in Appendix C.

Procedures

In May 2001, TCER distributed 608 special education director surveys to all special education directors, SSA administrators, and charter school administrators in the state. A cover letter from the commissioner of education stressed the importance of the study and urged special education directors to respond. In addition, TCER distributed 1,201 human resources director surveys to all district human resources directors and charter school administrators. As with the special education director survey, the human resources survey included a cover letter from the commissioner encouraging survey response.

TCER collected surveys through June 2001. Quantitative analysis was completed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and open-ended survey items were analyzed using Atlas.ti, a qualitative analysis software package.

Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 263 individuals responded to the special education director survey, for a response rate of 44%. Respondents represent 159 single districts, 76 SSAs, 27 charter schools, and 1 charter school SSA. The 76 SSA special education directors represent 397 Texas public school districts, and the charter school SSA represents 7 charter schools. On average, SSAs include approximately 5 entities, with a range of 2 to 13. Including all local education agencies (LEAs) represented by SSAs, slightly more than half of Texas school districts are represented in the special education director survey responses. The human resources director survey had a similar response rate – 491 directors (41%) responded to the survey. In total, 131 single districts, 336 districts belonging to SSAs, and 24 charter schools returned human resources director surveys. Sixty-nine districts participating in SSAs, 65 single districts, and 7 charter schools are represented in both the special education director and human resources director survey responses.

As shown in Table 1, the sample includes responses across all student enrollment size categories. In SSAs, districts share special education personnel to deliver services to students with special needs. Typically, these districts have smaller student enrollment. Single districts, in contrast, employ their own personnel to deliver special education services. Thus, responses from single districts are more likely to come from districts with higher student enrollment rates. Overall, the sample tended to represent expected distributions of districts and SSAs across enrollment categories.

Table 1. Respondent LEAs' Student Enrollment Data

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Survey	N=157	N=76	N=24
Less than 1,000 students	18	37	24
1,000 - 2,999 students	35	37	0
3,000 - 9,999 students	67	2	0
10,000 - 24,999 students	21	0	0
25,000 or more students	16	0	0
Human Resources Survey	N=130	N=336	N=20
Less than 1,000 students	11	231	20
1,000 - 2,999 students	31	92	0
3,000 - 9,999 students	58	13	0
10,000 - 24,999 students	16	0	0
25,000 or more students	14	0	0

Note. Student enrollment data were not available for 2 districts and 3 charter schools from the special education directors survey and 1 district and 4 charter schools from the human resources director survey.

Results

Survey results are presented according to the following topic areas: positions and vacancies; recruitment, hiring, and retention; and professional development. Throughout the report, relevant findings are reported for special education directors and human resources directors. To distinguish results for the two respondent groups, each table has a data-source notation. In cases where results are duplicative, findings for human resources directors appear in Appendix B. In many instances, key findings are summarized in tabular displays within the report while complete sets of results are included in the appendix. Information on missing data appears in the Technical Appendix (Appendix A).

Positions and Vacancies

Positions

In the surveys, respondents indicated, for the 2000-01 school year, the status of their special education teacher positions and positions for other special education professionals. Special education and human resources directors responded to identical lists of positions for teachers (8 categories) and other professionals (12 categories). For each position, respondents first noted whether or not their LEA had the position. Next, directors identified the total number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions in their LEA and the number of existing FTE position vacancies. For this report, outcomes are reported only for special education directors because data quality problems emerged. Many human resources directors, especially in SSAs, reported difficulties understanding the directions for this section of the survey. In particular, directors in SSAs were uncertain about how to distinguish between special education personnel hired by the LEA and personnel hired by the SSA. Since data integrity was compromised, statistics for human resources directors are excluded.

Findings for special education directors appear in Table 2. Valid responses were used to calculate the number and percentage of single districts, SSAs, and charter schools with each special education “teacher” and “other professional” personnel category. Although items response rates vary due to missing data, responses generally represent approximately 50% of Texas school districts.

Table 2. Current Special Education Positions

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Teachers			
Ages 3-5	147 (95.5%)	65 (89.0%)	1 (4.5%)
Severe disabilities	143 (92.9%)	67 (91.8%)	3 (15.0%)
Emotional disturbance	115 (77.2%)	40 (56.3%)	6 (28.6%)
Visual impairments	109 (74.1%)	59 (81.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Auditory impairments	52 (35.6%)	23 (32.9%)	0 (0.0%)
LEP	22 (15.1%)	8 (12.3%)	4 (18.2%)
Other	144 (90.6%)	64 (84.2%)	21 (95.5%)
Other Special Education Professionals			
Speech language pathologist (SLP)	151 (99.3%)	73 (98.6%)	11 (45.8%)
Paraprofessional	153 (98.7%)	71 (97.3%)	6 (26.1%)
Educational diagnostician	149 (98.0%)	73 (97.3%)	14 (58.3%)
Occupational therapist	105 (68.6%)	58 (77.3%)	5 (22.7%)
Licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP)	96 (64.9%)	41 (56.9%)	5 (22.7%)
Physical therapist	88 (58.7%)	50 (67.6%)	3 (13.6%)
Orientation and mobility specialist	55 (38.5%)	33 (46.5%)	1 (4.5%)
Bilingual SLP	50 (36.0%)	14 (20.3%)	2 (9.1%)
Bilingual educational diagnostician	48 (33.6%)	22 (30.6%)	6 (27.3%)
Sign language interpreter	41 (29.1%)	25 (36.2%)	1 (4.5%)
Bilingual LSSP	18 (13.0%)	6 (8.5%)	1 (4.5%)
Other professional	35 (67.3%)	10 (37.0%)	1 (14.3%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses are used to calculate percentages and vary by item.

Special education teachers. Single districts and SSAs have similar kinds of special education teachers, but the types of teachers in charter schools differ. The majority of single districts and SSAs have special education teachers for children ages 3-5 (96% and 89%), as well as teachers of students with severe disabilities (93% and 92%), and visual impairments (74% and 82%). SSAs (57%), however, are less likely than single districts (77%) to have teachers for students with emotional disturbance. A small proportion of single districts and SSAs employ specialized teachers for students with auditory impairments and limited English proficiency (12% to 36%).

In charter schools, very few directors report having the listed special education teacher positions. Directors in charter schools most commonly identify “other” special education teachers (96%). This category includes special education directors, content mastery teachers, and non-specialized teachers. Single districts (91%) and SSAs (84%) also frequently mention having “other” special education teachers. Commonly mentioned positions include non-specialized or generic special education teachers, resource teachers, multi-age teachers, and adapted physical education teachers.

Other special education professionals. Like teachers, positions for other special education professionals are comparable in single districts and SSAs, while charter schools are unique. Almost all single districts and SSAs have speech language pathologists (SLPs), paraprofessionals, and educational diagnosticians (97% to 99%). Less commonly identified positions include occupational therapists, licensed specialists in school psychology (LSSPs), and physical therapists (57% to 77%). Some positions, such as orientation and mobility specialists, sign language interpreters, and various bilingual positions, are infrequently mentioned. In contrast, charter school directors most frequently report employing educational diagnosticians (58%), SLPs (46%), bilingual diagnosticians (27%), and paraprofessionals (26%).

Vacancies

The personnel needs survey sought to identify critical vacancies for special education positions. For this study, percentage vacancy rates were calculated as the number of FTE positions vacant divided by the total number of FTE positions for each personnel category. The Technical Appendix (Appendix A) provides additional information on the calculations and data issues. Data presented in Table 3 compare the vacancies in special education positions by LEA type. Vacancy rates are ordered from highest to lowest (for single districts) to call attention to important shortages. The discussion below highlights important trends for single districts and SSAs. Because the small number of positions in charter schools limits the interpretation of results, findings are discussed independently.

Special education positions serving bilingual and limited English proficient (LEP) students have the highest vacancy rates. For special education teachers, the highest vacancy rates are for teachers of students with limited English proficiency (11% to 18%). For other professionals, bilingual educational diagnosticians (10% to 12%) and bilingual SLPs (9% to 16%) have higher vacancy rates.

Vacancy rates are higher for specialized teaching positions. The highest teacher vacancy rates in single districts and SSAs are for specialized positions, including teachers of students with limited English proficiency (11%, 18%), emotional disturbance (9%, 14%), severe disabilities (7%, 17%), and, for SSAs, auditory impairments (14%).

Vacancy rates in SSAs are generally higher than for single districts. Special education teacher vacancies, with one exception, and vacancies for other special education professionals are higher in SSAs when compared to single districts. In some instances, differences in vacancies are minor (rates 1% to 3% higher) – however, large disparities are evident for specialized teaching positions, including LEP, emotional disturbance, severe disabilities, and auditory impairments (rates 5% to 12% higher).

Table 3. Vacancies in Special Education Positions

Position	Single District			SSA			Charter School		
	FTE	Vacancy		FTE	Vacancy		FTE	Vacancy	
	N	N	Rate	N	N	Rate	N	N	Rate
Special Education Teachers									
Limited English proficient (LEP)	194	22	11.4%	33	6	18.2%	4	0	0%
Emotional disturbance	1,003	88	8.7%	129	18	14.0%	5	1	20.0%
Severe disabilities	1,294	90	7.0%	277	46	16.6%	3	0	0%
Visual impairments	311	16	5.2%	64	1	1.6%	0	-	-
Ages 3-5	641	29	4.5%	179	13	7.2%	1	1	100%
Other assignments	5,651	204	3.6%	1,235	90	7.3%	44	10	22.9%
Auditory impairments	233	6	2.6%	28	4	14.3%	0	-	-
Other Special Education Professionals									
Bilingual educational diagnostician	98	10	9.7%	33	4	12.3%	4	1	25.0%
Bilingual SLP	94	9	9.1%	19	3	16.2%	2	0	0%
Educational diagnostician	1,106	86	7.8%	313	28	9.0%	12	3	24.6%
Licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP)	379	28	7.4%	81	7	8.7%	5	0	0%
Speech language pathologist (SLP)	1,299	92	7.1%	290	36	12.4%	9	1	10.8%
Physical therapist	124	6	4.4%	47	5	10.7%	1	0	0%
Sign language interpreter	251	11	4.4%	36	2	5.6%	0	-	-
Orientation and mobility specialist	167	5	3.0%	44	4	9.1%	1	0	0%
Bilingual LSSP	34	1	2.9%	5	1	20.0%	1	0	0%
Special education paraprofessional	8,270	237	2.9%	1,499	47	3.1%	8	5	66.7%
Occupational therapist	206	5	2.4%	65	5	7.7%	3	1	33.3%
Other positions	172	1	0.6%	28	0	0%	0	-	-

Source: Special Education Director Survey.

Vacancy rates for other special education professionals vary by position and LEA type. Positions for educational diagnosticians, including bilingual diagnosticians, are often unfilled, especially in SSAs (8% to 12%). SLPs (including bilingual SLPs) are also in high demand, with vacancy rates of 7% to 16%. Vacancies are also frequently reported for LSSPs and bilingual LSSPs (7% to 20%). When critical shortages exist for physical therapists, they are typically in SSAs (11%).

Charter schools have critical vacancies for special education teachers, diagnosticians, and paraprofessionals. Predicated on a limited number of responses, it appears that charter schools have high vacancy rates for “other” special education teachers (23%), educational diagnosticians and bilingual diagnosticians (25%), and paraprofessionals (67%).

Based on vacancies reported by special education directors in this study, there were about 1,000 vacant special education positions, excluding paraprofessionals, for the 2000-01 school year. Since respondents represent approximately 50 percent of school districts in the state, this suggests that the number of vacant positions was probably about twice that figure.

Turnover Rates

In addition to FTE and vacancy information, human resources directors also provided an overall characterization of the turnover rates for special education teachers and other special education professionals. As shown in Table 4, the majority of directors reported turnover rates of less than 15% for both special education teachers and other professionals. This rate is near the statewide teacher turnover rate of 15%.

Table 4. Turnover Rates for Special Education Personnel

Position	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Teachers			
Less than 15%	81 (66.9%)	240 (73.6%)	14 (73.7%)
15-25%	33 (27.3%)	49 (15.0%)	1 (5.3%)
26-50%	6 (5.0%)	27 (8.3%)	1 (5.3%)
51-75%	1 (0.8%)	4 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)
More than 75%	0 (0.0%)	6 (1.8%)	3 (15.8%)
Other Special Education Professionals			
Less than 15%	83 (72.2%)	221 (79.8%)	11 (78.6%)
15-25%	26 (22.6%)	36 (13.0%)	2 (14.3%)
26-50%	5 (4.3%)	16 (5.8%)	0 (0.0%)
51-75%	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)
More than 75%	1 (0.9%)	3 (1.1%)	1 (7.1%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note: Valid responses are used to calculate percentages and vary by item.

Charter schools reported the highest turnover rates, particularly for special education teachers. While no single districts and less than 2% of SSAs noted special education

teacher turnover rates of more than 75%, approximately 15% of the charter schools responding had turnover rates exceeding 75%. However, almost three-quarters of charter schools cited turnover rates of 15% or less for special education teachers (consistent with results for responding SSAs). On the other hand, a substantial proportion of single districts and SSAs reported turnover rates for special education teachers and other professionals between 15% and 25%, with a greater percentage of single districts noting these high turnover rates compared with SSAs.

Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

Recruitment

LEAs use a variety of strategies to improve the recruitment of special education personnel. Human resources directors responded to the following question on this topic: “Which strategies does your LEA find most effective in recruiting qualified special education teachers and other special education professionals?” Table 5 presents recruitment techniques most frequently identified as effective. In recruiting special education teachers and other special education professionals, districts, SSAs, and charter schools reported posting positions on the Internet and contacting colleges and universities as most effective.

Table 5. Most Common Strategies Used in Recruiting

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Recruiting Special Education Teachers			
Post positions on Internet	108 (83.7%) ①	248 (75.6%) ①	10 (43.5%) ②
Contact colleges and universities	98 (76.0%) ②	248 (75.6%) ①	11 (47.8%) ①
Contact personnel in other LEAs	52 (40.3%) ③	190 (57.9%) ③	8 (34.8%) ③
Out-of-state recruiting	39 (30.2%) ④	24 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Increase financial incentives	29 (22.5%) ⑤	48 (14.6%) ④	7 (30.4%) ④
Incentives for becoming certified in special education	21 (16.3%)	44 (13.4%) ⑤	6 (26.1%) ⑤
Target retired special ed. personnel	13 (10.1%)	24 (7.3%)	6 (26.1%) ⑤
Recruiting Other Special Education Professionals			
Post positions on Internet	81 (79.4%) ①	132 (67.3%) ①	4 (33.3%) ①
Contact colleges and universities	65 (63.7%) ②	114 (58.2%) ②	3 (25.0%) ⑤
Contact personnel in other LEAs	43 (42.2%) ③	98 (50.0%) ③	4 (33.3%) ①
Increase financial incentives	25 (24.5%) ④	31 (15.8%) ⑤	4 (33.3%) ①
Marketing of district or community	25 (24.5%) ④	40 (20.4%) ④	1 (8.3%)
Marketing to non-working special education personnel	12 (11.8%)	10 (5.1%)	4 (33.3%) ①

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note. Numeric symbols (e.g., **①**) indicate the most frequently identified items by rank order.

It is important to note that all strategies were more commonly identified in recruiting special education teachers than other special education professionals. For instance,

although SSA human resources directors most frequently identified Internet postings as an effective recruitment strategy for both personnel groups, 76% cited this as effective for the recruitment of special education teachers, in comparison to 67% endorsing this strategy for other special education professionals.

Hiring

Filling special education personnel positions poses difficulties for the majority of LEAs. Both special education and human resources directors were asked to identify the most critical barriers to hiring special education teachers and other special education professionals. Among responding special education directors, only 12% of single districts and SSAs and 20% of charter schools reported no difficulties hiring teachers. In contrast, human resources directors in all LEA categories were more likely to cite no difficulties hiring personnel (18% to 37%), particularly directors of districts participating in SSAs. Tables 6a and 6b display common challenges in hiring personnel. In discussing barriers to hiring qualified special education teachers and other professionals, districts, SSAs, and charter schools most frequently identified

- Insufficient supply of candidates with required certification or licensure and
- Better salaries, benefits, or incentives in other LEAs.

Although not as commonly identified, insufficient stipends, better salaries and benefits in other professional settings, and geographic location also affect an LEA's ability to hire qualified special education personnel.

In discussing critical barriers to hiring special education teachers, both special education and human resources directors of single districts cited the insufficient supply of candidates as a barrier more frequently than directors of SSAs or charter schools. In addition, a larger percentage of district human resources directors noted better salaries and benefits in other LEAs and insufficient stipends as barriers in comparison to human resources directors of districts participating in SSAs.

Table 6a. Major Barriers to Hiring Special Education Teachers

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
<i>No hiring difficulties</i>	18 (12.3%)	9 (12.9%)	5 (20.0%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	109 (85.2%) ^①	46 (75.4%) ^①	12 (55.0%) ^②
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	91 (71.1%) ^②	45 (73.8%) ^②	16 (75.0%) ^①
Insufficient stipends	48 (37.5%) ^③	21 (34.4%) ^④	6 (30.0%) ^④
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (30.5%) ^④	17 (27.9%) ^⑤	6 (30.0%) ^④
Geographic location of LEA	34 (26.6%) ^⑤	25 (41.0%) ^⑥	3 (15.0%)
Characteristics of the LEA	3 (2.3%)	4 (6.6%)	9 (45.0%) ^③
Human Resources Directors			
<i>No hiring difficulties</i>	22 (17.5%)	119 (36.6%)	6 (25.0%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	87 (82.1%) ^①	159 (75.4%) ^①	12 (66.7%) ^②
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	79 (74.5%) ^②	133 (63.0%)	13 (72.2%) ^①
Insufficient stipends	40 (37.7%) ^③	49 (23.2%) ^④	6 (33.3%) ^④
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	24 (22.6%)	45 (21.3%)	7 (38.9%) ^③
Geographic location of LEA	26 (24.5%) ^④	79 (37.4%) ^⑥	1 (5.6%)

As seen in Table 6b, special education and human resources directors most commonly identified the following as barriers to hiring other special education professionals:

- Insufficient supply of candidates with required certification or licensure and
- Better salaries, benefits, or incentives available in other LEAs.

Differences also emerged in the barriers directors identified in hiring other special education professionals. Better salaries and benefits in other LEAs and other professional settings were cited as critical barriers to hiring more frequently by SSA special education directors than those of single districts or charter schools. In contrast, a higher percentage of single district human resources directors identified better salaries and benefits in other LEAs or professional settings as well as an insufficient supply of candidates.

Table 6b. Major Barriers to Hiring Other Special Education Professionals

Barriers	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
No hiring difficulties	19 (16.1%)	9 (13.8%)	2 (22.2%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	72 (72.7%) ^①	40 (71.4%) ^②	5 (71.4%) ^①
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	67 (67.7%) ^②	42 (75.0%) ^①	5 (71.4%) ^①
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (39.4%) ^③	27 (48.2%) ^③	2 (28.6%)
Insufficient stipends	34 (34.3%) ^④	17 (30.4%)	2 (28.6%)
Geographic location of LEA	22 (22.2%)	21 (37.5%) ^④	0 (0.0%)
Human Resources Directors			
No hiring difficulties	23 (20.7%)	100 (44.1%)	3 (27.3%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	61 (69.3%) ^①	76 (59.8%) ^②	3 (37.5%) ^③
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	58 (65.9%) ^②	80 (63.0%) ^①	5 (62.5%) ^①
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	36 (40.9%) ^③	38 (29.9%) ^④	4 (50.0%) ^②
Insufficient stipends	27 (30.7%) ^④	25 (19.7%)	2 (25.0%)
LEA's geographic location of	14 (15.9%)	53 (41.7%) ^③	1 (12.5%)

Strategies for Addressing Shortages

When confronted with shortages in special education positions, districts, SSAs, and charter schools use a variety of methods to address their immediate needs. As displayed in Table 7, the following are the strategies most frequently identified by special education directors in single districts and SSAs:

- Use more paraprofessionals,
- Contract for fully certified personnel,
- Use personnel working toward full credentials, and
- Use alternative certification (ACP) interns.

Similar to other LEAs, charter schools most frequently contract for personnel and use personnel working toward full credentials. However, a third of special education directors in charter schools also report the use of retired personnel and blended funding to create inclusive settings.

Human resources directors identified similar strategies to address special education personnel shortages; however, the percentages varied somewhat from those of special education directors. For example, significantly fewer single district and SSA human resources directors identified the use of paraprofessionals, and 25% fewer SSA human resources directors identified the use of ACP interns in comparison to SSA special education directors.

Table 7. Most Common Strategies Used to Address Personnel Shortages

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
Use more paraprofessionals	91 (60.3%) 1	44 (62.0%) 1	2 (7.7%)
Contract for personnel	91 (60.3%) 1	36 (50.7%) 4	19 (73.1%) 1
Use personnel working toward full credentials	81 (53.6%) 3	37 (52.1%) 3	13 (50.0%) 2
Use ACP interns	79 (52.3%) 4	41 (57.7%) 2	1 (3.8%)
Increase class size/case load	57 (37.7%) 5	27 (38.0%)	2 (7.7%)
SSAs with other LEAs	32 (21.2%)	33 (46.5%) 5	3 (11.5%)
Use retired personnel	30 (19.9%)	12 (16.9%)	8 (30.8%) 3
Use ESC staff	26 (17.2%)	13 (18.3%)	4 (15.4%) 5
Blend funding to create inclusive settings	22 (14.6%)	10 (14.1%)	8 (30.8%) 3
Human Resources Directors			
Use more paraprofessionals	46 (35.9%) 4	140 (43.3%) 3	6 (25.0%) 3
Contract for personnel	68 (53.1%) 3	157 (48.6%) 2	14 (58.3%) 1
Use personnel working toward full credentials	72 (56.3%) 1	159 (49.2%) 1	11 (45.8%) 2
Use ACP interns	72 (56.3%) 1	103 (31.9%) 4	5 (20.8%) 4
Use retired personnel	31 (24.2%) 5	39 (12.1%) 5	2 (8.3%)
Use ESC staff	12 (9.4%)	32 (9.9%)	4 (16.7%) 5

Note. The charter school SSA director identified the use of additional paraprofessionals and job sharing as the most common strategies for addressing shortages.

Retention

While filling special education positions is a difficulty for most LEAs, retention of qualified personnel also poses challenges. Special education and human resources directors provided varying characterizations of difficulties in retaining special education teachers. While 19% of single district special education directors cited no retention difficulties, more than a quarter of district human resources directors noted no difficulties retaining special education teachers. Similarly, 14% of SSA special education directors reported no retention difficulties compared with almost 50% of human resources directors of districts in SSAs. Table 8a presents the primary challenges LEAs face in retaining special education teachers.

When special education directors noted difficulties in retaining special education teachers, directors (regardless of LEA type) identified the following critical retention barriers:

- Burnout or job stress,
- Amount of paperwork, and
- Better salaries, benefits, and/or incentives in other LEAs.

Human resources directors most frequently identified better salaries and benefits in other LEAs and in other professional settings as barriers to retaining special education teachers, and directors of single districts cited these barriers more frequently than those of SSAs.¹

Table 8a. Major Barriers to Retaining Special Education Teachers

Barriers	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
<i>No retention difficulties</i>	27 (18.6%)	10 (14.1%)	7 (29.2%)
Burnout/job stress	82 (69.5%) ^①	38 (62.3%) ^②	7 (41.2%) ^②
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	77 (65.3%) ^②	41 (67.2%) ^①	13 (76.5%) ^①
Amount of paperwork	77 (65.3%) ^②	36 (59.0%) ^③	7 (41.2%) ^②
Desire to move to educator position outside special education	52 (44.1%) ^④	23 (37.7%) ^④	5 (29.4%)
Job's legal complexities	42 (35.6%) ^⑤	18 (29.5%)	2 (11.8)
Geographic location of LEA	35 (29.7%)	22 (36.1%) ^⑤	0 (0.0%)
High case loads/class sizes	34 (28.8%)	17 (27.9%)	7 (41.2%) ^②
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	27 (22.9%)	14 (23.0%)	6 (35.3%) ^⑤
Human Resources Directors			
<i>No retention difficulties</i>	34 (26.6%)	158 (48.6%)	8 (36.4%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	70 (73.7%) ^①	133 (76.9%) ^①	14 (87.5%) ^①
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professionals settings	44 (46.3%) ^②	66 (38.2%) ^③	5 (31.3%) ^③
Geographic location of LEA	36 (37.9%) ^③	85 (49.1%) ^②	0 (0.0%)
Limited advancement opportunities	21 (22.1%)	39 (22.5%)	6 (37.5%) ^②

Note. The charter school SSA special education director identified the desire to move to an educator position outside special education as a barrier to retaining special education teachers.

As shown in Table 8b, when special education and human resources directors reported difficulties in retaining other special education professionals, better salaries and benefits in other LEAs posed the greatest challenge, regardless of LEA type. Special education directors of single districts also frequently reported that burnout or job stress and the amount of paperwork impeded retention of professionals. SSA special education directors frequently cited the amount of paperwork and better salaries and benefits in other professional settings as retention barriers.

In discussing barriers to the retention of other professionals, SSA special education directors identified the following barriers more frequently than directors of single districts: better salaries and benefits in other LEAs, amount of paperwork, and better salaries and benefits in other professional settings. However, single district human

¹ The human resources director survey did not include some barriers included in the special education director survey.

resources directors more commonly identified better salaries and benefits in other LEAs and other professional settings.

Table 8b. Major Barriers to Retaining Other Special Education Professionals

Barriers	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
<i>No retention difficulties</i>	23 (20.4%)	10 (15.2%)	2 (22.2%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	55 (61.1%) ^①	36 (64.3%) ^①	5 (71.4%) ^①
Burnout/job stress	43 (47.8%) ^②	25 (44.6%) ^④	2 (28.6%)
Amount of paperwork	42 (46.7%) ^③	29 (51.8%) ^②	2 (28.6%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (43.3%) ^④	27 (48.2%) ^③	2 (28.6%)
Job’s legal complexities	32 (35.6%) ^⑤	19 (33.9%) ^⑤	3 (42.9%) ^②
Human Resources Directors			
<i>No retention difficulties</i>	33 (30.3%)	109 (49.5%)	3 (33.3%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	57 (74.0%) ^①	86 (74.8%) ^①	4 (57.1%) ^①
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professionals settings	46 (59.7%) ^②	60 (52.2%) ^②	3 (42.9%) ^②
Geographic location of LEA	25 (32.5%) ^③	57 (49.6%) ^③	0 (0.0%)
Condition of school facilities	4 (5.2%)	5 (4.3%)	2 (28.6%)

Note. The charter school SSA special education director cited better salaries and benefits in other professional settings as a barrier to retaining other special education professionals.

To retain special education teachers and other special education professionals, LEAs commonly rely on various incentives. Human resources directors were asked, “What incentives is your LEA currently using to improve the retention of special education teachers and other professionals?” Table 9 presents the incentives LEAs most frequently use. Overall, fewer SSAs use incentives to retain qualified special education personnel. While more than 85% of single districts used incentives to retain special education teachers, only 50% of SSAs and 60% of charter schools reported using incentives for this purpose. Similar results emerge in the use of incentives to retain other special education professionals.

Single districts commonly identified funding professional development sessions and mentoring opportunities as incentives to improve the retention of special education teachers. SSAs most frequently reported the funding of professional development and improvements in salaries and/or benefits as successful incentives, and charter schools identified improvements in salaries and benefits most frequently. LEAs identified similar successful incentives to improve retention of other special education professionals.

Table 9. Incentives Used to Improve Retention

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Incentives for Special Education Teachers			
<i>Do not use incentives</i>	18 (15.7%)	136 (48.6%)	8 (38.1%)
Fund professional development sessions	56 (57.7%) ¹	63 (43.4%) ¹	2 (15.4%)
Offer mentoring for inexperienced employees	42 (43.3%) ²	37 (25.5%)	2 (15.4%)
Provide stipends	41 (42.3%) ³	45 (31.0%) ⁴	3 (23.1%) ³
Improve salaries or benefits	38 (39.2%) ⁴	63 (43.4%) ¹	10 (76.9%) ¹
Decrease case load/class size	28 (28.9%)	52 (35.9%) ³	2 (15.4%)
Fund professional development for CEU requirements	16 (16.5%)	15 (10.3%)	5 (38.5%) ²
Incentives for Other Special Education Professionals			
<i>Do not use incentives</i>	18 (17.8%)	89 (50.9%)	1 (14.3%)
Fund professional development sessions	44 (53.0%) ¹	38 (42.7%) ²	1 (16.7%) ³
Improve salaries/benefits	36 (43.4%) ²	43 (48.3%) ¹	5 (83.3%) ¹
Provide stipends	31 (37.4%) ³	22 (24.7%)	1 (16.7%) ³
Fund professional development for CEU requirements	29 (34.9%) ⁴	14 (15.7%)	3 (50.0%) ²
Decrease case load/class size	19 (22.9%)	29 (32.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Destinations upon Leaving

When special education personnel leave an LEA, they pursue a variety of options. Human resources directors were asked, “When special education personnel leave your LEA, where do they typically go?” Table 10 presents the destinations of individuals after leaving their current special education positions.

Table 10. Destination of Personnel after Leaving LEA

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special ed. position in another LEA	101 (77.7%)	251 (75.6%)	14 (70.0%)
Non-special ed. position in same LEA	54 (41.5%)	81 (24.4%)	3 (15.0%)
Family move	49 (37.7%)	101 (30.4%)	1 (5.0%)
Retire	48 (36.9%)	130 (39.2%)	2 (10.0%)
Non-special ed. position in another LEA	30 (23.1%)	74 (22.3%)	3 (15.0%)
Stay at home with children	23 (17.7%)	27 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Non-education position	21 (16.2%)	36 (10.8%)	3 (15.0%)
Other	4 (3.1%)	15 (4.5%)	7 (35.0%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Overall, human resources directors most commonly reported that special education personnel leave their LEAs primarily to take special education positions in other LEAs. When personnel leave for non-special education positions, single districts were more likely to report that these individuals remain in the same LEA, whereas in SSAs, similar percentages of directors reported that leavers either take non-special education positions in the same LEA or pursue non-special education positions in other LEAs. In addition, human resources directors face challenges related to retirement of special education personnel and family moves – nearly a third of school districts and SSAs identified retirement and family moves as a common cause of the loss of special education personnel.

Recommendations for Improving Recruitment and Retention

Special education and human resources directors had the opportunity to provide recommendations to policymakers for improving the recruitment and retention of qualified special education personnel. As shown in Table 11, comments primarily centered around four areas: financial support, non-financial support, legal issues, and teacher preparation and certification. The most frequently cited suggestions appear in Table 11.

Financial support. Overall, the greatest percentage of comments from both respondent groups focused on financial support, including increased salaries, the provision of stipends, and increased or improved benefits. Special education directors (30% of single districts and charter schools and 45% of SSAs) frequently identified the need for higher salaries to improve recruitment and retention of qualified special education teachers and other professionals. Approximately a quarter of human resources directors (regardless of LEA type) cited increased salaries as an important strategy. Respondents noted a need for “living salaries” that “are more competitive with private industry salaries.” Competition among LEAs is also a challenge – a human resources director from a single district stated, “teachers are going from district to district searching for better salaries.” In addition, respondents noted that salaries should reflect degree and certification requirements, experience, and the job requirements in order to encourage new individuals to enter special education and qualified personnel to remain in the field. Several also asserted that improved salaries would alleviate some of the stress associated with special education positions, with one SSA human resources director noting, “the stress of the job would be easier to handle just knowing the incentive was greater.”

Although not as frequently identified as improved salaries, respondents also suggested the provision of stipends to improve recruitment and retention efforts. Between 12% and 26% of special education directors and 4% to 14% of human resources directors cited the importance of stipends or bonuses. Many suggested stipends should be state supported, with one SSA human resources director stating, “many districts can’t afford a stipend. Candidates go elsewhere.” Suggestions for stipend recipients included all special education personnel, bilingual personnel, and professionals in critical needs areas, “areas requiring special expertise,” or personnel “working with high stress disabilities.”

Table 11. Advice to Improve Recruitment and Retention of Personnel

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
Support, financial			
Salary	49 (31%)	34 (45%)	8 (30%)
Stipends or bonuses	24 (15%)	9 (12%)	7 (26%)
Benefits	18 (11%)	13 (17%)	2 (7%)
Incentives	8 (5%)	1 (1%)	--
Support, non-financial			
Professional development opportunities	18 (11%)	7 (9%)	1 (4%)
Class size/case loads limits	16 (10%)	8 (11%)	6 (22%)
Recognition	4 (3%)	3 (4%)	2 (7%)
Legal issues			
Paperwork	22 (14%)	10 (13%)	9 (33%)
Special education rules and regulations	9 (6%)	2 (3%)	--
Litigation issues	7 (4%)	3 (4%)	1 (4%)
Teacher preparation and certification			
General preparation issues	8 (5%)	2 (3%)	--
Certification process and requirements	7 (4%)	5 (7%)	--
Preparation program quality	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	1 (4%)
Financial support	4 (3%)	--	1 (4%)
Human Resources Directors			
Support, financial			
Salary	33 (25%)	94 (28%)	6 (25%)
Stipends or bonuses	18 (14%)	27 (8%)	1 (4%)
Benefits	16 (12%)	55 (16%)	1 (4%)
Incentives	8 (6%)	13 (4%)	2 (8%)
Support, non-financial			
Professional development opportunities	10 (8%)	6 (2%)	
Class size/case loads limits	7 (5%)	15 (5%)	1 (4%)
Recognition	5 (4%)	6 (2%)	--
Legal issues			
Paperwork	5 (4%)	37 (11%)	2 (8%)
Special education rules and regulations	3 (2%)	14 (4%)	1 (4%)
Litigation issues	1 (1%)	8 (2%)	--
Teacher preparation and certification			
Financial support	10 (8%)	14 (4%)	--
General preparation issues	8 (6%)	12 (4%)	3 (13%)
Certification process and requirements	4 (3%)	10 (3%)	--
Preparation program quality	1 (1%)	4 (1%)	--

Similar percentages of respondents recommended increasing or improving benefits. While some respondents suggested improving benefits generally, many specifically cited needs for “affordable,” “decent,” and “comprehensive” health insurance, and most suggested state support for a health care plan. Given that the 77th Texas Legislature recently passed a school health insurance bill that requires the state to assist with the cost of health insurance coverage for all full-time district employees who are members of the Texas Retirement System (TRS), this may become a less critical issue for special and human resources directors.

Non-financial support. In addition to increased financial compensation for special education personnel, respondents also suggested other support, such as professional development, class size or case load limits, and professional recognition, to encourage recruitment and retention within the special education field. Approximately 10% of SSA and single district special education directors suggested support for professional development opportunities as a strategy for recruitment and retention; fewer charter schools and human resources directors made this recommendation. Advice concerning professional development included the provision of funding and release time to enable more personnel to participate and the provision of mentoring for novice personnel.

Similar percentages of respondents requested limits on class sizes or case loads, except that a larger percentage of charter school special education directors provided this suggestion. Directors cited overcrowding both in general education classrooms and resource room instructional arrangements. One SSA human resources director stated, “resource classes often become overcrowded and prohibit teachers from adequately meeting the needs of students. This leads to high frustration levels, and thus teachers do not want to stay in special education.” An SSA special education director characterized the benefits of reduced case loads this way: when “case loads are not so high, it leads to job satisfaction and better customer service to parents, students, and general education.”

Other support issues that emerged included recognition and improved value perceptions of special education personnel, provision of sufficient materials for the assignment, clerical and paraprofessional support for special education professionals, and the provision of release time for planning, instruction, and professional development.

Legal issues. Respondent recommendations also centered around legal issues and concerns. Overall, 13% of SSA and single district special education directors and 33% of charter school special education directors identified paperwork as a major barrier to recruitment and retention of special education personnel. Although not as frequently noted by human resources directors, between 4% and 11% cited paperwork as an issue. One SSA human resources director seemed to state the views of many in this way: the state “needs to streamline the paperwork process in special education. A lot of it is redundant, and teachers resent losing instructional time and planning time to complete it.”

Respondents also suggested that changes in special education rules and regulations are needed to improve recruitment and retention efforts. These recommendations included changes in “discipline control,” “red tape,” “confusing laws,” and ARD requirements.

The fear of litigation also impedes a LEA's ability to recruit and retain qualified personnel. One special education director of a single district noted, "it is demoralizing for professionals who work with the neediest children to be constantly under threat of litigation." Another respondent stated, "this risk of litigation... becomes so great that people considering entering the field or currently in the field choose other career paths."

Teacher preparation and certification. Overall, fewer suggestions emerged for changes in teacher preparation and certification. General comments suggested improvements in the quality of ACPs and traditional training programs, support for ACPs as an alternate means of increasing the supply of personnel, increases in the number of ACP and traditional preparation programs in the state, and the provision of special education training for all preservice teachers. A few respondents urged policymakers to review the current certification system, with most expressing a desire for more flexibility. Respondents also suggested financial support through grants or scholarships, tuition reimbursement, or loan forgiveness programs to encourage preservice teachers and other professionals to enter the profession and enable current educators to pursue additional certification or licensure in special education areas.

Professional Development

Ensuring an adequate supply of appropriately trained and knowledgeable special education and general education teachers, instructional support specialists, and related service providers relies on opportunities for professional growth and development. To assess current state needs, one section of the special education director survey addressed professional development needs for personnel groups responsible for instructing students with disabilities. Survey developers assumed that professional development requirements would vary by educators' background, experience, and assignment—thus, directors reported on the extent of professional development need and training priorities for novice and experienced special education and general education teachers, as well as instructional support professionals and related services providers. Survey items included key professional development areas identified through stakeholder input.

Existing Special Education Positions

In the survey, special education directors noted the existence of certain teaching positions (e.g., ACP interns, first-year teachers, experienced teachers), instructional support professionals (e.g., diagnosticians, LSSPs, SLPs), and related service providers (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists). Percentages displayed in Table 12 are ordered from highest to lowest (based on single districts) to highlight the most prevalent positions in LEAs during the 2000-01 school year.

In single districts and SSAs, the vast majority of special education directors report having experienced special education and general education teachers (97% to 100%) as well as first-year special and general education teachers (92% to 97%). Charter schools, in contrast, have high percentages of experienced teachers (96% to 100%), but notably less first-year teachers (73% to 84%). All LEAs were considerably less likely to have ACP interns in special education or special education teachers trained out of state, with percentages declining sharply for charter schools.

The prevalence of positions varies greatly for instructional support professionals and related service providers. Almost all directors for single districts and SSAs report positions for SLPs, paraprofessionals, and diagnosticians (96% to 100%), and the majority have occupational therapists, physical therapists, and LSSPs (73% to 85%). Noticeably less directors cite positions for orientation and mobility specialists, sign language interpreters, and various bilingual positions (33% to 61%). For charter schools, small percentages of directors report having instructional support specialists (28% to 63%), with educational diagnosticians being the most frequently mentioned (63%). Related service providers were scarce (24% to 36%).

Table 12. LEAs with Special Education Positions in the 2000-01 School Year

Have this Position	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Teachers			
Experienced special education teachers	99.3%	98.6%	96.2%
Experienced general education teachers	99.3%	97.2%	100.0%
First-year general education teachers	96.6%	91.5%	84.0%
First-year special education teachers	94.2%	97.2%	73.1%
Special education teachers trained out of state	85.6%	78.6%	48.0%
ACP intern in special education	84.1%	81.2%	56.0%
Instructional Support Professionals			
Speech language pathologist (SLP)	98.7%	98.7%	52.1%
Special education paraprofessional	98.0%	100.0%	48.0%
Educational diagnostician	96.1%	100.0%	62.5%
Licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP)	73.2%	73.7%	41.7%
Bilingual SLP	52.1%	41.8%	36.4%
Bilingual educational diagnostician	51.4%	49.3%	43.4%
Bilingual LSSP	35.4%	32.8%	28.0%
Related Service Providers			
Occupational therapist	83.2%	84.7%	36.0%
Physical therapist	78.0%	78.9%	32.0%
Orientation and mobility specialist	57.9%	60.9%	24.0%
Sign language interpreter	41.3%	48.6%	24.0%

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

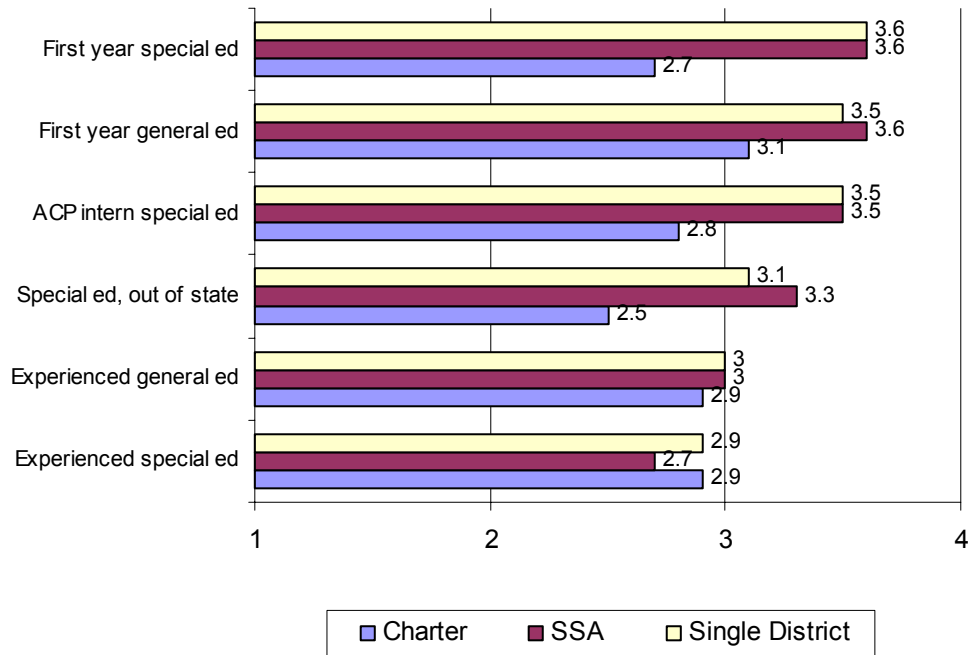
Need for Special Education Professional Development

Directors were asked to think about their special education personnel for the 2000-01 school year and determine, “To what extent is special education professional development needed for these positions?” Respondents had two options. They could either rate the need for special education professional development on a four-point scale, including 1 (not at all), 2 (small extent), 3 (moderate extent), or 4 (great extent), or they could note that “no position” existed.

Mean ratings for the extent of special education professional development need are compared in Figure 1 by teaching position. Special education directors’ perceptions of training needs differ by LEA type. In single districts and SSAs, ratings reveal a greater need for professional development for novice teachers, both special and general education, ACP interns, and teachers with out-of state certification. Directors assign high mean ratings, indicating a greater extent of need, for first-year special education teachers (3.6), first-year general education teachers (3.5 to 3.6), ACP interns in special education (3.5), and special education teachers trained out of state (3.1 to 3.3). For experienced special education and general education teachers, mean ratings show a moderate need for professional development (2.7 to 3.0).

In most cases, directors in charter schools assign lower mean professional development need ratings compared with their traditional public school counterparts. Directors report a moderate need for special education professional development for first-year general education teachers (3.1), experienced general education teachers (2.9), and experienced special education teachers (2.9).

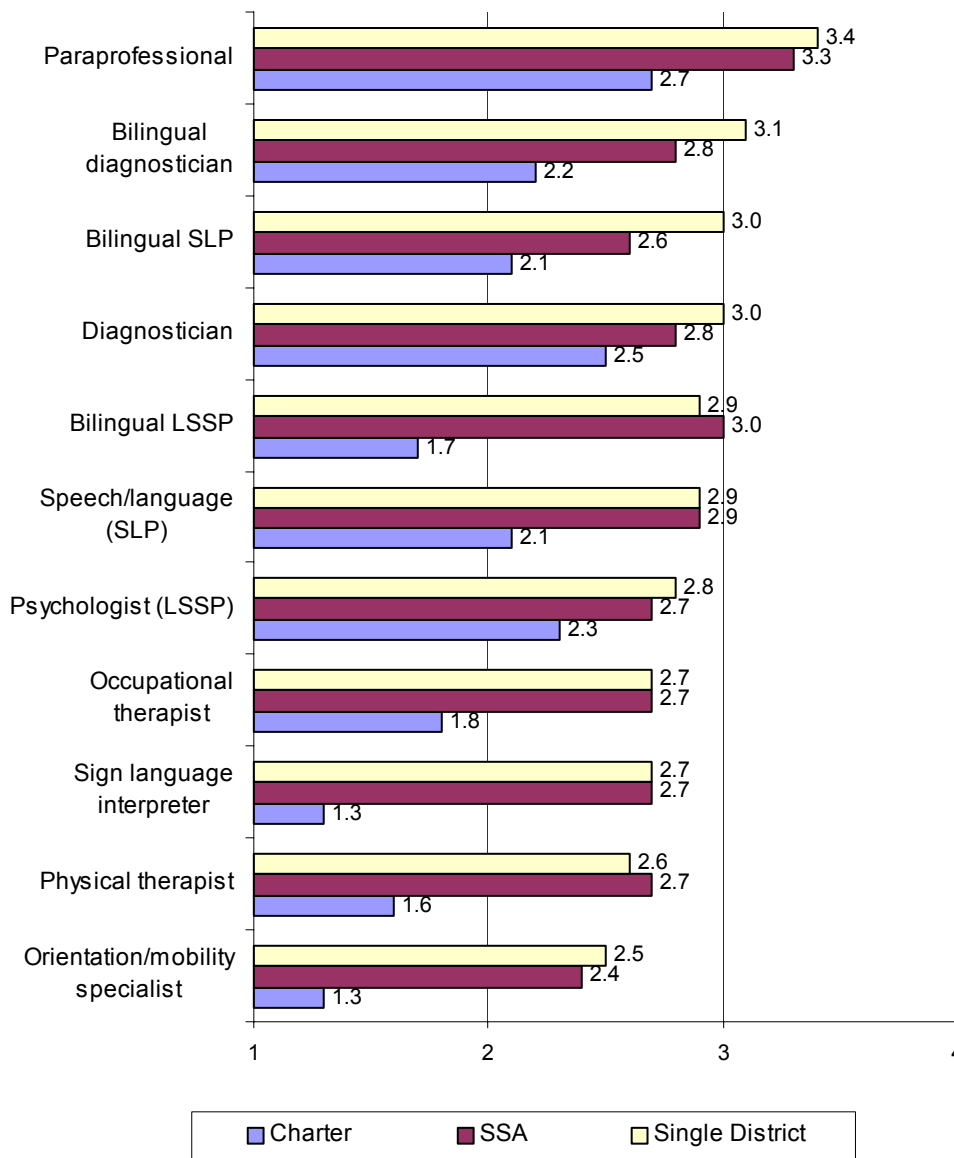
Figure 1. Need for Special Education Professional Development, Mean Ratings by Teaching Position



As illustrated in Figure 2, mean special education professional development need ratings for instructional support professionals and related service providers were generally lower compared to teaching positions, except for special education paraprofessionals. High mean ratings for paraprofessionals by directors in single districts (3.4), SSAs (3.3), and charter schools (2.7) suggest a greater extent of professional development need for instructional aides working with students with disabilities.

For the remaining positions, priorities varied by LEA. In single districts, directors assign moderate professional development need mean ratings for instructional support professionals, such as diagnosticians and SLPs, as well as bilingual diagnosticians, SLPs, and LSSPs (2.9 to 3.1). Likewise, directors in SSAs assign moderate professional development need ratings for bilingual LSSPs and SLPs, as well as diagnosticians and bilingual diagnosticians (2.8 to 3.0). Charter schools, as stated previously, seldom have positions for instructional support professionals and related service providers—consequently, directors see only a small need for professional development for those special education professionals (1.3 to 2.5).

Figure 2. Need for Special Education Professional Development, Mean Ratings for Instructional Support Professionals and Related Service Providers



Special education directors in single districts, SSAs, and charter schools assign lower mean professional development need ratings to related service providers who offer very specialized services, such as occupational therapists, sign language interpreters, physical therapists, and orientation and mobility specialists. This may be because there are a limited number of such positions within the LEA, so they do not represent an extensive commitment of professional development resources compared to the degree of support needed for special education and general education teachers. In general, the need for

professional development was positively related to educators' direct responsibility for instructing students with disabilities.

Most Needed Professional Development Areas for Teachers

To establish professional growth priorities, special education directors were asked to select the five most important professional development areas for special education teachers (ACP interns, first-year, and experienced) and general education teachers (first-year and experienced). Complete findings are presented in Appendix B. Tables 13 and 14 to follow summarize the most frequently mentioned categories by the extent of teacher experience.

Novice teachers. Findings for novice teachers, including first-year special education and general education teachers and ACP interns in special education, shown in Table 13 reveal both common and unique needs across personnel groups. Special education directors in single districts and SSAs identify the following areas as among the top professional development priorities for all novice teachers:

- General knowledge and skills in teaching students with various disabilities, such as disability characteristics, instructional/behavior strategies;
- Specialized knowledge and skills in teaching students with specific types of disabilities, such as emotional disturbance, autism;
- Research-based, positive behavioral intervention strategies; and
- ARD committee process, such as legal requirements, roles, and responsibilities.

Results also pointed to the unique needs of specific kinds of novice teachers, as identified by directors in single districts and SSAs. IEP development, implementation, and evaluation and TEKS scope and sequence are priorities for first-year special education teachers and ACP interns in special education. A training priority for first-year general education teachers was federal and state laws and regulations.

As mentioned previously, charter schools employ few ACP interns and first-year special education teachers, and accordingly, directors' place a lower priority on professional development for those personnel groups. In contrast, directors in charter schools, like their counterparts in other LEAs, are very concerned with the professional development needs of first-year general education teachers. They place a high priority on the four previously cited common areas (general knowledge, positive behavioral intervention, ARD committee process, and specialized knowledge) as well as TEKS scope and sequence. Across all LEA types, general knowledge and skills was the highest professional development priority for first-year general education teachers (76% to 90%).

Table 13. Novice Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

Area	Single District	SSA	Charter School
First-Year Special Education Teachers			
Specialized knowledge and skills	85 (68.0%) ①	43 (66.2%) ①	4 (40.0%) ⑤
Positive behavioral interventions	78 (62.4%) ②	37 (56.9%) ②	3 (30.0%)
IEP development and evaluation	74 (59.2%) ③	36 (55.4%) ③	4 (40.0%) ⑤
ARD committee process	67 (53.6%) ④	34 (52.3%) ④	3 (30.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	58 (46.4%) ⑤	25 (38.5%) ⑥	5 (50.0%) ②
General knowledge and skills	57 (45.6%) ⑥	29 (44.6%) ⑤	6 (60.0%) ①
Classroom-based assessment	42 (33.6%)	10 (15.4%)	6 (60.0%) ①
Federal/state laws and regulations	42 (33.6%)	23 (35.4%)	5 (50.0%) ②
First-Year General Education Teachers			
General knowledge and skills	104 (75.9%) ①	52 (77.6%) ①	18 (90.0%) ①
Positive behavioral interventions	88 (64.2%) ②	40 (59.7%) ④	9 (45.0%) ②
ARD committee process	83 (60.6%) ③	46 (68.7%) ②	7 (35.0%) ⑤
Specialized knowledge and skills	74 (54.0%) ④	44 (65.7%) ③	9 (45.0%) ②
Using special education professionals to support students	53 (38.7%) ⑤	26 (38.8%) ⑥	6 (30.0%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	49 (35.8%) ⑥	30 (44.8%) ⑤	6 (30.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	39 (28.5%)	6 (9.0%)	9 (45.0%) ②
IEP development and evaluation	38 (27.7%)	26 (38.8%) ⑥	7 (35.0%) ⑤
ACP Interns in Special Education			
IEP development and evaluation	59 (60.8%) ①	24 (55.8%) ④	1 (50.0%) ①
Specialized knowledge and skills	56 (57.7%) ②	30 (69.8%) ①	1 (50.0%) ①
Positive behavioral interventions	55 (56.7%) ③	27 (62.8%) ③	1 (50.0%) ①
General knowledge and skills	52 (53.6%) ④	28 (65.1%) ②	1 (50.0%) ①
ARD committee process	50 (51.5%) ⑤	21 (48.8%) ⑤	0 (0.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	46 (47.4%) ⑥	14 (32.6%) ⑥	1 (50.0%) ①
Federal/state laws and regulations	37 (38.1%)	14 (32.6%) ⑥	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Numeric symbols (e.g., **①**) indicate the most frequently identified items by rank order.

Experienced teachers. As shown in Table 14, experienced special education and general education teachers, like novice teachers, have shared professional development needs as well as areas that are unique to their teaching circumstances. Special education directors in single districts, SSAs, and charter schools identify the following areas as among the most important professional development areas shared by all experienced teachers:

- Research-based, positive behavioral intervention strategies;
- Specialized knowledge and skills in teaching students with specific types of disabilities, such as emotional disturbance, autism; and
- Federal and state special education laws and regulations.

Table 14. Experienced Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

Area	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Experienced Special Education Teachers			
Specialized knowledge and skills	90 (62.5%) 1	42 (60.0%) 1	6 (26.1%) 6
Positive behavioral interventions	88 (61.1%) 2	36 (51.4%) 2	9 (39.1%) 4
TEKS scope and sequence	69 (47.9%) 3	25 (35.7%) 4	11 (47.8%) 2
IEP development and evaluation	59 (41.0%) 4	27 (38.6%) 3	11 (47.8%) 2
Federal/state laws and regulations	53 (36.8%) 5	22 (31.4%) 5	14 (60.9%) 1
Classroom-based assessment	44 (30.6%) 6	11 (15.7%)	3 (13.0%)
Research-based instruct strategies	42 (29.2%)	22 (31.4%) 5	3 (13.0%)
Teaming and problem-solving	41 (28.5%)	20 (28.6%)	6 (26.1%) 6
ARD committee process	35 (24.3%)	19 (27.1%)	8 (34.8%) 5
Experienced General Education Teachers			
General knowledge and skills	93 (63.7%) 1	42 (59.2%) 2	17 (73.9%) 1
Positive behavioral interventions	89 (61.0%) 2	42 (59.2%) 2	11 (47.8%) 2
Specialized knowledge and skills	85 (58.2%) 3	50 (70.4%) 1	10 (43.5%) 3
ARD committee process	73 (50.0%) 4	36 (50.7%) 4	5 (21.7%) 6
Using special education professionals to support students	56 (38.4%) 5	26 (36.6%) 6	5 (21.7%) 6
Federal/state laws and regulations	52 (35.6%) 6	31 (43.7%) 5	10 (43.5%) 3
IEP development and evaluation	43 (29.5%)	22 (31.0%)	9 (39.1%) 5

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Results also reveal distinctive professional development needs for experienced special education and general education teachers. Directors from all LEAs place a high priority on professional development related to these areas for experienced special education teachers:

- TEKS scope and sequence and
- IEP development, implementation, and evaluation.

Other high priority areas for experienced teachers vary by LEA type. For example, charter school directors report that experienced special education teachers need training in the ARD committee process, whereas this area is a lower priority for single districts and SSAs.

Experienced general education teachers also have unique professional development needs, with directors in single districts and SSAs generally agreeing on priorities. Training priorities for general education teachers identified by those LEAs include:

- General knowledge and skills in teaching students with various disabilities, such as disability characteristics, instructional/behavioral strategies;
- ARD committee process, such as legal requirements, roles, and responsibilities; and
- Knowledge of how to use special education professionals to support students.

Directors in charter schools, like their counterparts, assign a high priority to professional development for experienced general education teachers on general knowledge and skills. However, IEP development, implementation, and evaluation is more important for experienced general teachers in charter schools compared to other LEAs.

Most Needed Professional Development Areas for Other Professionals

Special education directors also designated areas in which the LEAs' other special education professionals most need professional development. Directors could select the most important areas for instructional support professionals, such as diagnosticians, LSSPs, and SLPs, and for related service providers, such as occupational therapists and physical therapists. Professional development items included topics considered important by special education stakeholder specialists in related fields.

Findings presented in Table 15 suggest that training priorities for instructional support professionals differ by LEA, whereas related service providers in single districts and SSAs share common professional development needs. Results for charter schools were inconclusive due to the low percentages of areas selected.

For instructional support professionals, the importance of topics varies by LEA type, with commonalities and differences emerging. In both single districts and SSAs, special education directors place a high priority on the following professional development areas for instructional support professionals:

- Federal and state special education laws and regulations;
- Specialized knowledge and skills in teaching students with various disabilities, such as disability characteristic, instructional/behavioral strategies; and
- IEP development, implementation, and evaluation.

Additional important professional development areas noted by directors in single districts include, strategies for providing services in inclusive settings, ARD committee process,” and general knowledge and skills. In contrast, directors in SSAs place a higher priority on professional development related to evaluation and assessment procedures for determining student eligibility, TEKS scope and sequence, and assistive technology. Special education directors in charter schools assign the highest importance to federal and state laws and regulations, strategies for services in inclusive settings, and determination of student eligibility.

Table 15. Other Professionals’ Most Needed Professional Development

Area	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Instructional Support Professionals			
Federal and state laws and regulations	84 (56.0%) ^①	42 (57.5%) ^①	8 (57.1%) ^①
Specialized knowledge and skills	62 (41.3%) ^②	34 (46.6%) ^②	3 (21.4%)
Strategies for services in inclusive settings	56 (37.3%) ^③	16 (21.9%)	6 (42.9%) ^②
ARD committee process	47 (31.3%) ^④	16 (21.9%)	3 (21.4%)
General knowledge and skills	45 (30.0%) ^⑤	13 (17.8%)	4 (28.6%) ^⑤
IEP development and evaluation	44 (29.3%) ^⑥	18 (24.7%) ^⑤	2 (14.3%)
Determination of student eligibility	42 (28.0%)	26 (35.6%) ^③	6 (42.9%) ^②
TEKS scope and sequence	41 (27.3%)	19 (26.0%) ^④	4 (28.6%) ^⑤
Assistive technology	36 (24.0%)	18 (24.7%) ^⑤	5 (35.7%) ^④
Related Service Providers			
Federal and state laws and regulations	71 (51.1%) ^①	34 (46.6%) ^①	6 (54.5%) ^①
Strategies for services in inclusive settings	60 (43.2%) ^②	21 (28.8%) ^⑥	3 (27.3%) ^③
IEP development and evaluation	55 (39.6%) ^③	28 (38.4%) ^②	1 (9.1%)
ARD committee process	52 (37.4%) ^④	26 (35.6%) ^③	3 (27.3%) ^③
Specialized knowledge and skills	45 (32.4%) ^⑤	21 (28.8%) ^⑥	0 (0.0%)
Knowledge about educational system	43 (30.9%) ^⑥	23 (31.5%) ^⑤	2 (18.2%) ^⑤
Determination of student eligibility	41 (29.5%)	26 (35.6%) ^③	2 (18.2%) ^⑤
Assistive technology	38 (27.3%)	15 (20.5%)	5 (45.5%) ^②
Training to meet CEU requirements	38 (27.3%)	18 (24.7%)	2 (18.2%) ^⑤

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Professional development priorities identified by special education directors in both single districts and SSAs reveal common areas of need for related service providers. Directors identify the following areas as among most important for professional development:

- Federal and state special education laws and regulations;
- Strategies for providing services in inclusive settings;
- IEP development, implementation, and evaluation;
- ARD committee process, such as legal requirements, roles, and responsibilities;
- Specialized knowledge and skills in teaching students with specific types of disabilities, such as emotional disturbance, autism; and
- General knowledge about the educational system, such as school organization, general education and special education procedures.

For SSAs, training on procedures for determining student eligibility was also important. As stated above, small percentages of charter school directors selected professional development areas. Still, based on findings, training on federal and state laws and regulations and assistive technology were important.

In summary, special education directors may consider at least two factors (professional position and institutional requirements) when gauging professional development needs and priorities. On one level, directors think about the nature of the professional development requirements for particular positions. For example, the professional development needs for first-year special education teachers differ from experienced special education teachers. On another level, directors seem to prioritize need in relation to their staffing levels and the resources required to meet that professional development need. Charter schools, for example, probably expressed a small need for training for other professionals because only a few positions exist. When institutional requirements are extensive, professional development receives a higher priority because it represents a compelling institutional need.

The professional development needs for all personnel groups are summarized in Table 16 by the most important areas identified for each position. This summary provides a comprehensive planning guide to inform educators and policymakers with responsibility for designing training and development for special education.

Table 16. Summary of Most Needed Special Education Professional Development by Position

Area	Novice Teachers			Experienced Teachers		Other Professionals	
	Sp. Ed.	Gen. Ed.	ACP Intern	Sp. Ed.	Gen. Ed.	Instruc. Support	Related Service
Specialized knowledge and skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
General knowledge and skills	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Positive behavioral interventions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
IEP development and evaluation	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
ARD committee process	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
TEKS scope and sequence	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Federal/state laws and regulations		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Using special education professionals to support students	-		-	-	✓	-	-
Strategies for inclusive settings	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Determining student eligibility	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Assistive technology knowledge	-	-	-	-	-	✓	
Knowledge about ed. system	-	-	-	-	-		✓

Note. Professional development priorities for instructional support professionals vary for single districts, SSAs, and charter schools. “✓” denotes priorities. “-” indicates the area was not included on the survey for the position.

Advice on Improving Special Education Professional Development

Special education and human resources directors had the opportunity to provide recommendations to policymakers for improving special education professional development. As shown in Table 17, special education directors’ comments primarily

centered around three areas: quality and scope of inservice professional development, nature and quality of preservice training, and important professional development topics. The most frequently cited suggestions appear in the table. Comments from human resources directors appear in Appendix B.

Table 17. Advice on Improving Special Education Professional Development

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Quality and Scope of Inservice Professional Development			
Training design	16 (10%)	10 (13%)	4 (15%)
Provide release time	16 (10%)	7 (9%)	--
Target general educators	16 (10%)	5 (7%)	2 (7%)
Require special education inservice	14 (9%)	6 (8%)	--
Target specific personnel	5 (3%)	--	--
Support training through ESCs	2 (1%)	4 (5%)	--
Nature and Quality of Preservice Training			
Quality of preservice training	12 (8%)	1 (1%)	1 (4%)
Internships	7 (4%)	2 (3%)	1 (4%)
Require special education training	5 (3%)	2 (3%)	--
ACP issues	--	--	1 (4%)
Important Professional Development Topics			
Instructional issues	6 (4%)	3 (4%)	2 (7%)
Behavior and classroom management	6 (4%)	1 (1%)	--
Laws and legal issues	5 (3%)	6 (8%)	--
Inclusion issues	4 (3%)	2 (3%)	1 (4%)
Specific disabilities	4 (3%)	1 (1%)	1 (4%)
IEPs	3 (2%)	--	--
ARD committee process	2 (1%)	--	--

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Inservice training. Overall, the greatest percentage of directors' comments focused on the quality and scope of inservice professional development. Between 10% and 15% of special education directors offered suggestions for the design and delivery of special education professional development activities. They identified a need for training that was more "practical," "relevant," "hands-on," and of high quality. They suggested professional development sessions be facilitated by experienced special education teachers and other professionals currently in the field, and several encouraged districts and ESCs to provide professional development opportunities that are responsive to the needs and interests of special education personnel. Directors expressed concern that special education personnel are "trapped in staff development that is not useful" and cited a need for "tailored professional development activities to meet [their LEA's] own diverse needs."

In addition, approximately 10% of single district and SSA special education directors identified the need for release time to enable personnel to attend professional

development and collaborate. Special education personnel often lack time to attend training during the school year and must use personal time to participate in professional development activities. Directors also reported a need for time for special education and general education personnel to collaborate and share knowledge.

Special education directors also recommended special education training for general educators. Directors believed that training in areas such as inclusion, modifications, rules and regulations, and general special education issues would “facilitate the efforts of the special education department.” As one SSA director noted, “with the move to inclusion, all teachers are special education teachers.” Single district and SSA special education directors (8% to 9%) also suggested that an annual minimum number of hours of special education training be mandatory. Some directors recommended annual training be required for all educators, while others noted mandatory requirements should only be instituted for special education personnel.

Preservice training. Although not as common, special education directors also commented upon the nature and quality of preservice training. Directors of single districts particularly stressed a desire for improved training at the university level, citing the need for more accountability and standards in preparation programs to better prepare future special education personnel. As one director noted, “teachers come out of university programs with no idea of what to expect, so they leave the profession because they are overwhelmed.” Other suggestions related to preservice training included requiring special education training for all preservice teachers and instituting internship requirements for special education preservice teachers and other professional to ensure actual classroom experience prior to entry into the special education field.

Important topics. Special education directors provided a variety of suggestions on important professional development topics. The most frequently identified topics included instructional issues (including effective strategies, learning styles, and content area training), behavior and classroom management, laws and legal issues, inclusion issues (including modifications and transition issues), and information on specific disabilities.

Recommendations and Policy Implications

Recommendations and policy implications are based on study findings as well as input from special education stakeholders and Texas Education Agency staff.

Adequate Supply of Special Education Professionals

Ensuring an adequate supply of special education personnel depends on attracting a larger pool of candidates, offering financial incentives, improving job conditions, promoting professional rewards and recognition, and addressing certification issues.

Special Education Candidates

- Enhance recruitment of secondary students and career changers through exposure campaigns, information dissemination, and financial incentives, such as grants, scholarships, tuition reimbursement, and loan forgiveness
- Attract minority candidates to meet increasing bilingual demands by providing financial incentives and academic support
- Promote special education as a desirable career choice by exposing potential candidates to special education experiences, such as tutoring, service learning projects, or dual credit courses related to special education
- Conduct campaigns to disseminate educational and employment information widely through job fairs, the Internet, and college and university contacts

Financial Incentives

- Seek legislative support to ensure teacher salaries are competitive and reflect degree and certification requirements
- Provide signing bonuses and annual stipends for educators serving in critical special education shortage areas
- Promote business partnerships, (e.g., home mortgage assistance) to provide financial support for teachers working in rural areas
- Develop stipend and bonus plans to recognize advanced degrees, additional certifications or credentials, and professional development achievements
- Offer attractive benefit packages, including comprehensive health care benefits, flexible spending accounts, and district-supported child care facilities

Job Conditions

- Address legal complexities by supporting federal- and state-level initiatives to streamline rules and regulations
- Provide clerical support for targeted paperwork responsibilities
- Purchase computers and software management programs to streamline paperwork requirements and provide technology training to support use
- Provide adequate classroom space, textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment
- Support collaborative and individual planning time as part of the regular school schedule

- Provide mentoring programs for novice teachers and support peer coaching programs for experienced teachers
- Match assigned roles and responsibilities to teacher qualifications

Professional Rewards and Recognition

- Provide career-path options that enable teachers to move into leadership or master teacher positions
- Increase overt district and campus recognition and support for special education services and personnel

Certification Issues

- Promote uniform state-to-state certification standards
- Develop different types of certifications for defined job roles and responsibilities (i.e., categorical, multicategorical, generic; preschool, elementary, and secondary)

Professional Development

Ensuring appropriately trained and knowledgeable special education personnel relies on altering teacher preparation programs, improving inservice professional development, and utilizing existing organizational structures to deliver training based on identified needs.

Teacher Preparation Programs

- Infuse field-based experiences into teacher preparation programs
- Increase university support for field-based internships and promote strategic partnerships with LEAs to build field-based experiences that prepare special education teachers for real-world classroom needs and demands
- Revise preservice course requirements to reflect current classroom needs for positive behavior intervention, specialized knowledge and skills, IEP development and evaluation, and the ARD committee process
- Explore implications of generic certification given the identified need for specialized training and skills and the highly complex, diverse needs of students with disabilities in Texas public schools
- Provide financial resources to assist in attracting a qualified pool of candidates
- Require special education training for general education candidates in research-based practices and collaboration to support students with disabilities in inclusive settings

Inservice Professional Development

- Provide funding for research-based professional development and require schools to document implementation results
- Provide personnel with financial support and incentives for professional development, additional special education certifications, or advanced degrees
- Ensure release time for professional development with adequate campus-level support and provide mentors to support implementation of new practices

- Design or provide access to traditional and non-traditional professional development activities to meet particular campus, classroom, or professional needs
- Develop collaborative partnerships with ESCs and higher education institutions to support distance learning and online courses in addition to traditional staff development programs
- Utilize existing TEA decentralized functions in a planning and capacity-building role to address identified professional development needs statewide (i.e., ESC capacity building to build capacity at the district, campus, and individual levels)

Professional Development Design and Delivery

- Incorporate identified statewide professional development needs into the Texas Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) to ensure that the state has qualified and appropriately trained professionals and paraprofessionals
- Provide professional development opportunities based on identified priorities—specialized knowledge and skills, positive behavior intervention strategies, IEP development and evaluation, legal requirements including the ARD committee process, and general skills pertaining to educating students with disabilities
- Develop and implement statewide collaborative communication systems between higher education, TEA, and ESCs to disseminate information on research-based practices to LEAs

Annual Statewide Personnel Needs Data System

Maintaining an adequate supply of well-qualified special education personnel will require ongoing monitoring through an annual statewide survey of personnel needs.

Survey of Personnel Needs, Shortages, and Professional Development Needs

- Conduct an annual statewide survey of special education directors and human resources directors to gather information on personnel needs, to determine critical shortage areas, to assess current professional development needs, and to assess progress toward meeting previously identified needs
- Conduct the survey annually in February to establish continuity and improve response rates
- Design specific surveys for single districts, SSAs, and charter schools to capture the unique personnel configurations and resulting personnel needs for each LEA
- Include TEA decentralized functions in the needs assessment process
- Address professional development needs for paraprofessionals

Dissemination of Survey Results

- Provide timely feedback on survey findings and recommendations to survey respondents and stakeholders
- Provide data for the CSPD and TEA decentralized functions with leadership responsibility for identified needs

Appendix A

Technical Appendix

Valid Responses

Valid responses are used to calculate percentages in several of tables in the text of the report. Valid responses typically varied by item. Tables with this type of data are identified below along with the range of valid responses.

Table	Range of Valid Responses		
	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Table 2 – Teachers	145-154	64-73	20-22
Table 2 – Other professionals	86-155	27-75	7-24
Table 4	115-121	277-326	14-19
Table 13	146-155	73-75	26-27
Table 14	146-155	73-75	26-27
Table 15	155	75	26-27
Figure 1	122-151	55-70	12-25
Figure 2	51-150	23-74	6-15

Invalid Data

Several survey questions requested that respondents select a limited number of common or important items (i.e., select the three most common or select the five most successful). Evaluators identified all cases in which the respondents identified more items than the question requested. For cases that exceeded the limit by more than one item, the response for the question was labeled invalid, and all data for the question was deleted.

Table	Respondents with Invalid Data		
	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Table 6 – Special ed directors	6	5	0
Table 6 – HR directors	1	1	0
Table 7	1	0	0
Table 8a – Special ed directors	6	0	1
Table 8a – HR directors	2	2	0
Table 8b – Special ed directors	3	1	0
Table 9a – Special ed directors	6	1	0
Table 9b – Special ed directors	3	1	0
Table 10 – Teachers	4	1	0
Table 10 – Other professionals	1	1	0

Vacancy Data

If the respondent noted the number of FTE positions but left the field for FTE vacancies blank, evaluators assumed no (zero) FTE vacancies.

In cases where the respondent noted “no position” but provided FTE position or vacancy information, it was assumed the respondent had the position.

In cases in which the respondent noted zero FTE positions and zero vacancies, data was not entered, and the respondent was determined to not have the position.

In some cases, respondents noted a greater number of FTE vacancies than FTE positions. In this case, position information was deleted, and the aggregate replacement method was utilized to replace the FTE position data. In addition, some respondents provided the FTE vacancies but no FTE position information. In this case, the aggregate replacement method was also utilized to complete the FTE position data.

Aggregate Replacement Method:

1. Valid FTE position and FTE vacancy data were aggregated by LEA type (charter school, SSA, or single district) and LEA student enrollment size category (less than 1,000; 1,000-2,999; 3,000-9,999; 10,000-24,999; 25,000 or more). This resulted in nine primary categories:
 - Charter school – less than 1,000 students
 - SSA – less than 1,000 students
 - SSA – 1,000-2,999 students
 - SSA – 3,000-9,999 students
 - Single district – less than 1,000 students
 - Single district – 1,000-2,999 students
 - Single district – 3,000-9,999 students
 - Single district – 10,000-24,999 students
 - Single district – 25,000 or more students
2. A mean vacancy percentage was calculated for each position based on the valid FTE position and FTE vacancy data.
3. The mean vacancy percentage was used to compute FTE position results where FTE vacancy data was available.
 - If the vacancy percentage for the aggregate category was zero, FTE position data could not be computed; therefore, FTE vacancy data was removed from the database for that case.
 - When vacancy percentages were greater than zero, for each case, resulting FTE position data was compared to the range of FTE positions for the appropriate aggregate category (determined by LEA type and size category). If the FTE position data was within the range, it was assumed valid and remained in the database. However, if the FTE position data was outside the range, both the FTE vacancy data and the calculated FTE position data were deleted for the case.

Appendix B

Data Tables

Table B.1. Respondent LEAs' Student Demographics (Means)

	Single District	SSA	Charter School	Charter SSA	State Average
Special Education Directors					
Student enrollment	9,372	1,116	246	90	
White	51.7%	64.0%	39.1%	90.0%	43%
African American	11.3%	7.5%	21.5%	2.2%	14%
Hispanic	35.3%	27.8%	37.8%	7.8%	40%
Other	1.7%	0.7%	1.7%	0.0%	3%
Economically disadvantaged	45.5%	47.7%	48.5%	0.0%	49%
Special education	12.6%	14.9%	12.5%	8.9%	12%
Human Resources Directors					
Student enrollment	10,736	910	224	--	
White	51.8%	68.5%	26.3%	--	43%
African American	11.8%	5.5%	38.5%	--	14%
Hispanic	34.6%	25.3%	34.6%	--	40%
Other	1.8%	0.7%	0.6%	--	3%
Economically disadvantaged	46.7%	46.5%	51.5%	--	49%
Special education	12.5%	15.2%	17.3%	--	12%

Source. Texas Education Agency AEIS reports. Available: www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis

Table B.2. Response Rates by Education Service Center (ESC) Region

ESC	Single District	SSA	Charter School
1	9 (37.5%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)
2	9 (47.4%)	2 (40.0%)	2 (28.6%)
3	0 (0.0%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)
4	27 (64.3%)	1 (50.0%)	7 (16.3%)
5	4 (36.4%)	2 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)
6	8 (53.3%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (20.0%)
7	13 (50.0%)	10 (71.4%)	2 (40.0%)
8	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)	0 (0.0%)
9	2 (66.7%)	4 (57.1%)	1 (100.0%)
10	12 (40.0%)	6 (85.7%)	2 (7.7%)
11	15 (53.6%)	4 (50.0%)	3 (50.0%)
12	10 (66.7%)	4 (44.4%)	1 (14.3%)
13	12 (50.0%)	7 (70.0%)	2 (25.0%)
14	1 (50.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)
15	1 (25.0%)	2 (40.0%)	0 (0.0%)
16	5 (55.6%)	5 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)
17	3 (60.0%)	6 (54.6%)	2 (50.0%)
18	8 (88.9%)	2 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)
19	7 (58.3%)	--	1 (33.3%)
20	10 (40.0%)	4 (57.1%)	3 (16.7%)
Total	159 (50.2%)	76 (55.9%)	27 (17.7%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note: Response rate calculated by dividing number of surveys received by number of surveys distributed.

Table B.3. Response Rates by Education Service Center (ESC) Region

ESC	Single District	SSA	Charter School
1	9 (36.0%)	7 (53.8%)	0 (0.0%)
2	6 (31.6%)	11 (52.4%)	1 (14.3%)
3	1 (50.0%)	18 (47.4%)	0 (0.0%)
4	19 (44.2%)	2 (16.7%)	11 (25.6%)
5	7 (63.6%)	10 (52.6%)	0 (0.0%)
6	8 (53.3%)	15 (35.7%)	0 (0.0%)
7	11 (40.7%)	34 (49.3%)	0 (0.0%)
8	4 (50.0%)	19 (47.5%)	0 (0.0%)
9	0 (0.0%)	19 (51.4%)	0 (0.0%)
10	15 (50.0%)	24 (47.1%)	2 (7.7%)
11	9 (30.0%)	17 (36.2%)	1 (16.7%)
12	6 (35.3%)	29 (46.8%)	2 (28.6%)
13	7 (30.4%)	18 (45.0%)	3 (33.3%)
14	0 (0.0%)	22 (53.7%)	0 (0.0%)
15	1 (25.0%)	13 (34.2%)	0 (0.0%)
16	4 (44.4%)	25 (45.5%)	0 (0.0%)
17	2 (40.0%)	26 (49.1%)	0 (0.0%)
18	4 (44.4%)	13 (56.5%)	0 (0.0%)
19	7 (53.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
20	11 (44.4%)	14 (53.8%)	4 (22.2%)
Total	131 (40.9%)	336 (48.8%)	24 (15.6%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note: Response rate calculated by dividing number of surveys received by number of surveys distributed.

Table B.4. Current Special Education Positions

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Teachers			
Ages 3-5	121 (94.5%)	178 (58.4%)	4 (20.0%)
Severe disabilities	115 (92.0%)	138 (47.4%)	2 (11.1%)
Emotional disturbance	91 (74.6%)	93 (32.4%)	4 (22.2%)
Visual impairments	86 (69.9%)	53 (19.2%)	0 (0.0%)
Auditory impairments	47 (38.8%)	36 (13.0%)	0 (0.0%)
LEP	18 (15.4%)	51 (18.5%)	3 (15.8%)
Other	101 (83.5%)	248 (81.0%)	16 (72.7%)
Other Special Education Professionals			
Educational diagnostician	124 (95.4%)	182 (61.5%)	12 (54.5%)
Bilingual educational diagnostician	41 (34.2%)	30 (11.2%)	5 (27.8%)
Speech language pathologist (SLP)	124 (96.9%)	177 (60.0%)	7 (35.0%)
Bilingual SLP	33 (28.7%)	16 (6.2%)	1 (5.9%)
Licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP)	78 (64.5%)	59 (21.8%)	5 (29.4%)
Bilingual LSSP	12 (10.4%)	9 (3.5%)	1 (5.9%)
Occupational therapist	79 (63.7%)	83 (30.1%)	1 (5.9%)
Physical therapist	70 (56.5%)	73 (26.8%)	1 (5.9%)
Special education paraprofessional	122 (97.6%)	244 (81.1%)	5 (27.8%)
Orientation and mobility specialist	39 (31.7%)	29 (11.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Sign language interpreter	45 (37.2%)	32 (12.1%)	1 (5.9%)
Other	32 (55.2%)	38 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses are used to calculate percentages and vary by item (teachers: single district 117-128, SSA 276-306, charter school 18-22; other professionals: single district 58-130; SSA 171-301; charter school 12-22)

Table B.5a. Most Common Strategies Used to Address Personnel Shortages

Strategy	Single District N=151	SSA N=71	Charter School N=26
Use more paraprofessionals	91 (60.3%)	44 (62.0%)	2 (7.7%)
Contract for personnel	91 (60.3%)	36 (50.7%)	19 (73.1%)
Use personnel working toward full credentials	81 (53.6%)	37 (52.1%)	13 (50.0%)
Use ACP interns	79 (52.3%)	41 (57.7%)	1 (3.8%)
Increase class size/case load	57 (37.7%)	27 (38.0%)	2 (7.7%)
Use long-term certified substitutes	43 (28.5%)	11 (15.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Use long-term uncertified substitutes	35 (23.2%)	4 (5.6%)	1 (3.8%)
SSAs with other LEAs	32 (21.2%)	33 (46.5%)	3 (11.5%)
Use retired personnel	30 (19.9%)	12 (16.9%)	8 (30.8%)
Use ESC staff	26 (17.2%)	13 (18.3%)	4 (15.4%)
Blend funding to create inclusive settings	22 (14.6%)	10 (14.1%)	8 (30.8%)
Consolidate instructional arrangements	20 (13.2%)	13 (18.3%)	1 (3.8%)
Send students to LEAs where services available	18 (11.9%)	9 (12.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Allow job sharing	10 (6.6%)	2 (2.8%)	3 (11.5%)
Other	6 (4.0%)	1 (1.4%)	2 (7.7%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Surveys from 8 single districts, 5 SSAs, and 1 CS did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.5b. Most Common Strategies Used to Address Personnel Shortages

Strategies	Single District N=128	SSA N=323	Charter School N=24
Use personnel working toward full credentials	72 (56.3%)	159 (49.2%)	11 (45.8%)
Use ACP interns	72 (56.3%)	103 (31.9%)	5 (20.8%)
Contract for personnel	68 (53.1%)	157 (48.6%)	14 (58.3%)
Use more paraprofessionals	46 (35.9%)	140 (43.3%)	6 (25.0%)
Use retired personnel	31 (24.2%)	39 (12.1%)	2 (8.3%)
Use long-term certified substitutes	23 (18.0%)	20 (6.2%)	1 (4.2%)
Use long-term uncertified substitutes	17 (13.3%)	19 (5.9%)	2 (8.3%)
Use ESC staff	12 (9.4%)	32 (9.9%)	4 (16.7%)
Allow job sharing	9 (7.0%)	24 (7.4%)	4 (16.7%)
Other	2 (1.6%)	42 (13.0%)	7 (29.2%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note. Surveys from 1 single district and 1 SSA did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.6. Most Common Strategies Used in Recruiting

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Strategies for Recruiting Special Education Teachers			
Post positions on Internet	108 (83.7%)	248 (75.6%)	10 (43.5%)
Contact colleges and universities	98 (76.0%)	248 (75.6%)	11 (47.8%)
Contact personnel in other LEAs	52 (40.3%)	190 (57.9%)	8 (34.8%)
Out-of-state recruiting	39 (30.2%)	24 (7.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Increase financial incentives	29 (22.5%)	48 (14.6%)	7 (30.4%)
Marketing of LEA/community	23 (17.8%)	35 (10.7%)	2 (8.7%)
Incentives for becoming certified in special education	21 (16.3%)	44 (13.4%)	6 (26.1%)
Streamline hiring process	18 (14.0%)	25 (7.6%)	3 (13.0%)
Marketing to non-working special education personnel	15 (11.6%)	14 (4.3%)	7 (30.4%)
Target retired special ed personnel	13 (10.1%)	24 (7.3%)	6 (26.1%)
Contact credentialing or licensing agencies	11 (8.5%)	33 (10.1%)	3 (13.0%)
Market to non-traditional groups	11 (8.5%)	15 (4.6%)	2 (8.7%)
Other	9 (7.0%)	25 (7.6%)	3 (13.0%)
Strategies for Recruiting Other Special Education Professionals			
Post positions on Internet	81 (79.4%)	132 (67.3%)	4 (33.3%)
Contact colleges and universities	65 (63.7%)	114 (58.2%)	3 (25.0%)
Contact personnel in other LEAs	43 (42.2%)	98 (50.0%)	4 (33.3%)
Out-of-state recruiting	23 (22.5%)	13 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Increase financial incentives	25 (24.5%)	31 (15.8%)	4 (33.3%)
Marketing of LEA/community	25 (24.5%)	40 (20.4%)	1 (8.3%)
Incentives for becoming certified in special education	12 (11.8%)	22 (11.2%)	2 (16.7%)
Streamline hiring process	15 (14.7%)	17 (8.7%)	1 (8.3%)
Marketing to non-working special education personnel	12 (11.8%)	10 (5.1%)	4 (33.3%)
Target retired special ed personnel	11 (10.8%)	17 (8.7%)	2 (16.7%)
Contact credentialing or licensing agencies	21 (20.6%)	16 (8.2%)	2 (16.7%)
Market to non-traditional groups	6 (5.9%)	7 (3.6%)	2 (16.7%)
Other	6 (5.9%)	18 (6.6%)	1 (8.3%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note. A survey from 1 single district did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.7a. Major Barriers to Hiring Special Education Teachers

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
No hiring difficulties	18 (12.3%)	9 (12.9%)	5 (20.0%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	109 (85.2%)	46 (75.4%)	12 (55.0%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	91 (71.1%)	45 (73.8%)	16 (75.0%)
Insufficient stipends	48 (37.3%)	21 (33.4%)	6 (30.0%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (30.5%)	17 (27.9%)	6 (30.0%)
LEA's geographic location	34 (26.6%)	25 (41.0%)	3 (15.0%)
Timing of job openings	19 (14.8%)	6 (9.8%)	4 (20.0%)
Characteristics of the LEA	3 (2.3%)	4 (6.6%)	9 (45.0%)
Condition of school facilities	1 (0.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.0%)
Other	1 (0.8%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Human Resources Directors			
No hiring difficulties	22 (17.5%)	119 (36.6%)	6 (25.0%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	87 (82.1%)	159 (75.4%)	12 (66.7%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	79 (74.5%)	133 (63.0%)	13 (72.2%)
Insufficient stipends	40 (37.7%)	49 (23.2%)	6 (33.3%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	24 (22.6%)	45 (21.3%)	7 (38.9%)
LEA's geographic location of	26 (24.5%)	79 (37.4%)	1 (5.6%)
Timing of job openings	16 (15.1%)	23 (10.9%)	4 (22.2%)
Characteristics of the LEA	3 (2.8%)	11 (5.2%)	1 (5.6%)
Condition of school facilities	1 (0.9%)	6 (2.8%)	1 (5.6%)
Other	2 (1.9%)	6 (2.8%)	1 (5.6%)

Note. Special education director surveys for 6 single districts and 1 charter school did not include valid information for this question. Human resources director surveys from 2 single districts and 2 SSAs did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.7b. Major Barriers to Hiring Other Special Education Professionals

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
No hiring difficulties	19 (16.1%)	9 (13.8%)	2 (22.2%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	72 (72.7%)	40 (71.4%)	5 (71.4%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	67 (67.7%)	42 (75.0%)	5 (71.4%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (39.4%)	27 (48.2%)	2 (28.6%)
Insufficient stipends	34 (34.3%)	17 (30.4%)	2 (28.6%)
LEA's geographic location	22 (22.2%)	21 (37.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Timing of job openings	12 (12.1%)	4 (7.1%)	2 (28.6%)
Characteristics of the LEA	2 (2.0%)	3 (5.4%)	1 (14.3%)
Condition of school facilities	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Human Resources Directors			
No hiring difficulties	23 (20.7%)	100 (44.1%)	3 (27.3%)
Insufficient supply of candidates	61 (69.3%)	76 (59.8%)	3 (37.5%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	58 (65.9%)	80 (63.0%)	5 (62.5%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	36 (40.9%)	38 (29.9%)	4 (50.0%)
Insufficient stipends	27 (30.7%)	25 (19.7%)	2 (25.0%)
LEA's geographic location of	14 (15.9%)	53 (41.7%)	1 (12.5%)
Timing of job openings	10 (11.4%)	14 (11.0%)	1 (12.5%)
Characteristics of the LEA	3 (3.4%)	5 (3.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Condition of school facilities	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	1 (12.5%)
Other	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Note. Special education director surveys from 3 single districts and 1 SSA did not include valid information for this question. Human resources director surveys for 2 SSAs did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.8a. Major Barriers to Retaining Special Education Teachers

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
No retention difficulties	27 (18.6%)	10 (14.1%)	7 (29.2%)
Burnout/job stress	82 (69.5%)	38 (62.3%)	7 (41.2%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	77 (65.3%)	41 (67.2%)	13 (76.5%)
Amount of paperwork	77 (65.3%)	36 (59.0%)	7 (41.2%)
Desire to move to educator position outside special ed	52 (44.1%)	23 (37.7%)	5 (29.4%)
Job's legal complexities	42 (35.6%)	18 (29.5%)	2 (11.8%)
Geographic location of LEA	35 (29.7%)	22 (36.1%)	0 (0.0%)
High case loads/class sizes	34 (28.8%)	17 (27.9%)	7 (41.2%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	27 (22.9%)	14 (23.0%)	6 (35.3%)
Insufficient preservice training	19 (16.1%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Dissatisfaction with assignment	15 (12.7%)	9 (14.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Additional assigned duties	10 (8.5%)	4 (6.6%)	3 (17.6%)
Amount of administrative support	7 (5.9%)	3 (4.9%)	3 (17.6%)
Professional isolation	7 (5.9%)	8 (13.1%)	1 (5.9%)
Concern for school safety	6 (5.1%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (5.9%)
Insufficient inservice training	6 (5.1%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (11.8%)
Insufficient instructional materials	4 (3.4%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Multiple campus assignments	4 (3.4%)	5 (8.2%)	1 (5.9%)
Limited advancement opportunities	3 (2.5%)	1 (1.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Condition of school facilities	1 (0.8%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (11.8%)
Other	7 (5.9%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (5.9%)
Human Resources Directors			
No retention difficulties	34 (26.6%)	158 (48.6%)	8 (36.4%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	70 (73.7%)	133 (76.9%)	14 (87.5%)
Geographic location of LEA	36 (37.9%)	85 (49.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professionals settings	44 (46.3%)	66 (38.2%)	5 (31.3%)
Limited advancement opportunities	21 (22.1%)	39 (22.5%)	6 (37.5%)
Condition of school facilities	3 (3.2%)	12 (6.9%)	2 (12.5%)
In-state personnel unable to pass ExCET	21 (22.1%)	25 (14.5%)	4 (25.0%)
Out-of-state personnel unable to pass ExCET	11 (11.6%)	3 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	11 (11.6%)	11 (6.4%)	0 (0.0%)

Note. Special education director surveys from 14 single districts, 5 SSAs, and 3 charter schools did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.8b. Major Barriers to Retaining Other Special Education Professionals

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Special Education Directors			
No retention difficulties	23 (20.4%)	10 (15.2%)	2 (22.2%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	55 (61.1%)	36 (64.3%)	5 (71.4%)
Burnout/job stress	43 (47.8%)	25 (44.6%)	2 (28.6%)
Amount of paperwork	42 (46.7%)	29 (51.8%)	2 (28.6%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professional settings	39 (43.3%)	27 (48.2%)	2 (28.6%)
Job's legal complexities	32 (35.6%)	19 (33.9%)	3 (42.9%)
Geographic location of LEA	26 (28.9%)	18 (32.1%)	0 (0.0%)
High case loads/class sizes	20 (22.2%)	16 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)
Multiple campus assignments	17 (18.9%)	15 (26.8%)	1 (14.3%)
Desire to move to educator position outside special ed	12 (13.3%)	3 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Limited advancement opportunities	8 (8.9%)	4 (7.1%)	1 (14.3%)
Dissatisfaction with assignment	7 (7.8%)	3 (5.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Insufficient inservice training	7 (7.8%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Additional assigned duties	6 (6.7%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Insufficient preservice training	6 (6.7%)	1 (1.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Concern for school safety	4 (4.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Professional isolation	4 (4.4%)	6 (10.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Amount of administrative support	3 (3.3%)	4 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Condition of school facilities	2 (2.2%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Insufficient instructional materials	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	6 (6.7%)	2 (3.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Human Resources Directors			
No retention difficulties	33 (30.3%)	109 (49.5%)	3 (33.3%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other LEAs	57 (74.0%)	86 (74.8%)	4 (57.1%)
Better salary/benefits/incentives in other professionals settings	46 (59.7%)	60 (52.2%)	3 (42.9%)
Geographic location of LEA	25 (32.5%)	57 (49.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Limited advancement opportunities	17 (22.1%)	20 (17.4)	1 (14.3%)
Condition of school facilities	4 (5.2%)	5 (4.3%)	2 (28.6%)
Out-of-state personnel unable to pass ExCET	4 (5.2%)	2 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
In-state personnel unable to pass ExCET	3 (3.9%)	7 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Other	7 (9.1%)	4 (3.5%)	0 (0.0%)

Note. Special education director surveys from 46 single districts, 10 SSAs, and 18 charter schools did not include valid information for this question.

Table B.9. Incentives Used to Improve Retention

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Incentives for Special Education Teachers			
Do not use incentives	18 (15.7%)	136 (48.6%)	8 (38.1%)
Fund professional development sessions	56 (57.7%)	63 (43.4%)	2 (15.4%)
Offer mentoring for inexperienced employees	42 (43.3%)	37 (25.5%)	2 (15.4%)
Provide stipends	41 (42.3%)	45 (31.0%)	3 (23.1%)
Improve salaries/benefits	38 (39.2%)	63 (43.4%)	10 (76.9%)
Decrease case load/class size	28 (28.9%)	52 (35.9%)	2 (15.4%)
Limit multiple campus assignments	18 (18.6%)	27 (18.6%)	1 (7.7%)
Fund professional development for CEU requirements	16 (16.5%)	15 (10.3%)	5 (38.5%)
Provide opportunities to pursue advanced degrees	13 (13.4%)	11 (7.6%)	2 (15.4%)
Limit additional duties	11 (11.3%)	23 (15.9%)	2 (15.4%)
Provide additional planning time	6 (6.2%)	21 (14.5%)	2 (15.4%)
Other	2 (2.1%)	5 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Incentives for Other Special Education Professionals			
Do not use incentives	18 (17.8%)	89 (50.9%)	1 (14.3%)
Fund professional development sessions	44 (53.0%)	38 (42.7%)	1 (16.7%)
Offer mentoring for inexperienced employees	20 (24.1%)	18 (20.2%)	1 (16.7%)
Provide stipends	31 (37.3%)	22 (24.7%)	1 (16.7%)
Improve salaries/benefits	36 (43.4%)	43 (48.3%)	5 (83.3%)
Decrease case load/class size	19 (22.9%)	29 (32.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Limit multiple campus assignments	15 (18.1%)	16 (18.0%)	1 (16.7%)
Fund professional development for CEU requirements	29 (34.9%)	14 (15.7%)	3 (50.0%)
Provide opportunities to pursue advanced degrees	10 (12.0%)	5 (5.6%)	1 (16.7%)
Limit additional duties	6 (7.2%)	16 (18.0%)	1 (16.7%)
Provide additional planning time	4 (4.8%)	9 (10.1%)	1 (16.7%)
Other	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Note. Surveys from 4 single districts and 1 SSA did not include valid information for teachers. Surveys from 1 single district and 1 SSA did not include valid information for other professionals.

Table B.10a. ACP Interns' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

	Single District N=97	SSA N=65	Charter School N=10
IEP development and evaluation	59 (60.8%)	24 (55.8%)	1 (50.0%)
Specialized knowledge and skills	56 (57.7%)	30 (69.8%)	1 (50.0%)
Positive behavioral interventions	55 (56.7%)	27 (62.8%)	1 (50.0%)
General knowledge and skills	52 (53.6%)	28 (65.1%)	1 (50.0%)
ARD committee process	50 (51.5%)	21 (48.8%)	0 (0.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	46 (47.4%)	14 (32.6%)	1 (50.0%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	37 (38.1%)	14 (32.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Classroom-based assessment	28 (28.9%)	6 (14.0%)	2 (100.0%)
Research-based instruct strategies	24 (24.7)	9 (20.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Observe model programs	12 (12.4%)	8 (18.6%)	0 (0.0%)
Technology utilization	11 (11.3%)	9 (20.9%)	1 (50.0%)
Assistive technology	11 (11.3%)	5 (11.6%)	0 (0.0%)
ExCET preparation assistance	11 (11.3%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)
Teaming and problem-solving	8 (8.2%)	2 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 146-153; SSA 73-74; and charter school 26).

Table B.10b. First-Year Special Education Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

	Single District N=125	SSA N=65	Charter School N=10
Specialized knowledge and skills	85 (68.0%)	43 (66.2%)	4 (40.0%)
Positive behavioral interventions	78 (62.4%)	37 (56.9%)	3 (30.0%)
IEP development and evaluation	74 (59.2%)	36 (55.4%)	4 (40.0%)
ARD committee process	67 (53.6%)	34 (52.3%)	3 (30.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	58 (46.4%)	25 (38.5%)	5 (50.0%)
General knowledge and skills	57 (45.6%)	29 (44.6%)	6 (60.0%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	42 (33.6%)	23 (35.4%)	5 (50.0%)
Classroom-based assessment	42 (33.6%)	10 (15.4%)	6 (60.0%)
Research-based instruct strategies	31 (24.8%)	12 (18.5%)	1 (10.0%)
Assistive technology	20 (16.0%)	5 (7.7%)	1 (10.0%)
Teaming and problem-solving	16 (12.8%)	8 (12.3%)	1 (10.0%)
Observe model programs	12 (9.6%)	14 (21.5%)	2 (20.0%)
Technology utilization	12 (9.6%)	11 (16.9%)	1 (10.0%)
ExCET preparation assistance	4 (3.2%)	3 (4.6%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 146-153; SSA 73-74; and charter school 26).

Table B.10c. First-Year General Education Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

	Single District N=137	SSA N=67	Charter School N=20
General knowledge and skills	104 (75.9%)	52 (77.6%)	18 (90.0%)
Positive behavioral interventions	88 (64.2%)	40 (59.7%)	9 (45.0%)
ARD committee process	83 (60.6%)	46 (68.7%)	7 (35.0%)
Specialized knowledge and skills	74 (54.0%)	44 (65.7%)	9 (45.0%)
Using special education professionals to support students	53 (38.7%)	26 (38.8%)	6 (30.0%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	49 (35.8%)	30 (44.8%)	6 (30.0%)
TEKS scope and sequence	39 (28.5%)	6 (9.0%)	9 (45.0%)
IEP development and evaluation	38 (27.7%)	26 (38.8%)	7 (35.0%)
Research-based instruct strategies	32 (23.4%)	11 (16.4%)	5 (25.0%)
Classroom-based assessment	31 (22.6%)	10 (14.9%)	7 (35.0%)
Teaming and problem-solving	23 (16.8%)	10 (14.9%)	0 (0.0%)
Technology utilization	11 (8.0%)	4 (6.0%)	2 (10.0%)
Assistive technology	15 (10.9%)	6 (9.0%)	1 (5.0%)
Observe model programs	9 (6.6%)	5 (7.5%)	5 (25.0%)
Other	2 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 146-153; SSA 73-74; and charter school 26).

Table B.11a. Experienced Special Education Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

	Single District N=144	SSA N=70	Charter School N=23
Specialized knowledge and skills	90 (62.5%)	42 (60.0%)	6 (26.1%)
Positive behavioral interventions	88 (61.1%)	36 (51.4%)	9 (39.1%)
TEKS scope and sequence	69 (47.9%)	25 (35.7%)	11 (47.8%)
IEP development and evaluation	59 (41.0%)	27 (38.6%)	11 (47.8%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	53 (36.8%)	22 (31.4%)	14 (60.9%)
Classroom-based assessment	44 (30.6%)	11 (15.7%)	3 (13.0%)
Assistive technology	43 (29.9%)	13 (18.6%)	5 (21.7%)
Research-based instruct strategies	42 (29.2%)	22 (31.4%)	3 (13.0%)
Teaming and problem-solving	41 (28.5%)	20 (28.6%)	6 (26.1%)
ARD committee process	35 (24.3%)	19 (27.1%)	8 (34.8%)
Technology utilization	32 (22.2%)	20 (28.6%)	9 (39.1%)
General knowledge and skills	26 (18.1%)	16 (22.9%)	5 (21.7%)
Observe model programs	20 (13.9%)	14 (20.0%)	5 (21.7%)
ExCET preparation assistance	1 (0.7%)	1 (1.4%)	1 (4.3%)
Other	2 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 151-155; SSA 74-75; and charter school 26-27).

Table B.11b. Experienced General Education Teachers' Most Needed Professional Development Areas

	Single District N=146	SSA N=71	Charter School N=23
General knowledge and skills	93 (63.7%)	42 (59.2%)	17 (73.9%)
Positive behavioral interventions	89 (61.0%)	42 (59.2%)	11 (47.8%)
Specialized knowledge and skills	85 (58.2%)	50 (70.4%)	10 (43.5%)
ARD committee process	73 (50.0%)	36 (50.7%)	5 (21.7%)
Using special education professionals to support students	56 (38.4%)	26 (36.6%)	5 (21.7%)
Federal/state laws and regulations	52 (35.6%)	31 (43.7%)	10 (43.5%)
IEP development and evaluation	43 (29.5%)	22 (31.0%)	9 (39.1%)
Teaming and problem-solving	38 (26.0%)	14 (19.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Research-based instruct strategies	37 (25.3%)	12 (16.9%)	4 (17.4%)
Classroom-based assessment	30 (20.5%)	12 (16.9%)	5 (21.7%)
TEKS scope and sequence	25 (17.1%)	5 (7.0%)	11 (47.8%)
Technology utilization	23 (15.8%)	6 (8.5%)	6 (26.1%)
Assistive technology	18 (12.3%)	12 (16.9%)	1 (4.3%)
Observe model programs	11 (7.5%)	8 (11.3%)	4 (17.4%)
Other	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 151-155; SSA 74-75; and charter school 26-27).

Table B.12. Other Professionals’ Most Needed Professional Development

	Single District N=139	SSA N=73	Charter School N=11
Related Service Providers			
Federal and state laws and regulations	71 (51.1%)	34 (46.6%)	6 (54.5%)
Strategies for services in inclusive settings	60 (43.2%)	21 (28.8%)	3 (27.3%)
IEP development and evaluation	55 (39.6%)	28 (38.4%)	1 (9.1%)
ARD committee process	52 (37.4%)	26 (35.6%)	3 (27.3%)
Specialized knowledge and skills	45 (32.4%)	21 (28.8%)	0 (0.0%)
Knowledge about educational system	43 (30.9%)	23 (31.5%)	2 (18.2%)
Determination of student eligibility	41 (29.5%)	26 (35.6%)	2 (18.2%)
Assistive technology	38 (27.3%)	15 (20.5%)	5 (45.5%)
Training to meet CEU requirements	38 (27.3%)	18 (24.7%)	2 (18.2%)
TEKS scope and sequence	33 (23.7%)	11 (15.1%)	2 (18.2%)
Research-based service provision models	24 (17.3%)	12 (16.4%)	0 (0.0%)
General knowledge and skills	21 (15.1%)	7 (9.6%)	3 (27.3%)
Skills in providing training for others	21 (15.1%)	17 (23.3%)	1 (9.1%)
Research-based instructional strategies	20 (14.4%)	12 (16.4%)	2 (18.2%)
Technology utilization	15 (10.8%)	15 (20.5%)	2 (18.2%)
Opportunities to observe model programs	6 (4.3%)	8 (11.0%)	3 (27.3%)
Other	2 (1.4%)	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)
Instructional Support Professionals			
	N=150	N=73	N=14
Federal and state laws and regulations	84 (56.0%)	42 (57.5%)	8 (57.1%)
Specialized knowledge and skills	62 (41.3%)	34 (46.6%)	3 (21.4%)
Strategies for services in inclusive settings	56 (37.3%)	16 (21.9%)	6 (42.9%)
ARD committee process	47 (31.3%)	16 (21.9%)	3 (21.4%)
General knowledge and skills	45 (30.0%)	13 (17.8%)	4 (28.6%)
IEP development and evaluation	44 (29.3%)	18 (24.7%)	2 (14.3%)
Determination of student eligibility	42 (28.0%)	26 (35.6%)	6 (42.9%)
TEKS scope and sequence	41 (27.3%)	19 (26.0%)	4 (28.6%)
Knowledge about educational system	38 (25.3%)	10 (13.7%)	3 (21.4%)
Assistive technology	36 (24.0%)	18 (24.7%)	5 (35.7%)
Research-based instructional strategies	32 (21.3%)	18 (24.7%)	5 (35.7%)
Technology utilization	31 (20.7%)	14 (19.2%)	5 (35.7%)
Skills in providing training for others	25 (16.7%)	17 (23.3%)	1 (7.1%)
Research-based service provision models	24 (16.0%)	9 (12.3%)	1 (7.1%)
Training to meet CEU requirements	23 (15.3%)	14 (19.2%)	3 (21.4%)
Opportunities to observe model programs	12 (8.0%)	11 (15.1%)	4 (28.6%)
Other	3 (2.0%)	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)

Source. Special Education Director Survey.

Note. Valid responses vary by item (single district 155; SSA 75; and charter school 26-27).

Table B.13. Advice on Improving Special Education Professional Development

	Single District	SSA	Charter School
Quality and scope of inservice professional development			
Training design	10 (8%)	17 (5%)	--
Require special education inservice	8 (6%)	8 (2%)	--
Provide release time	5 (4%)	8 (2%)	--
Target general educators	4 (3%)	5 (2%)	1 (4%)
Support training through ESCs	--	13 (4%)	1 (4%)
Target specific personnel	--	2 (1%)	1 (4%)
Nature and quality of preservice training			
Internships	5 (4%)	9 (3%)	--
Quality of preservice training	5 (4%)	3 (1%)	--
Require special education training	5 (4%)	1 (<1%)	--
ACP issues	1 (1%)	3 (1%)	3 (13%)
Important professional development topics			
Laws and legal issues	4 (3%)	13 (4%)	--
Instructional issues	4 (3%)	13 (4%)	--
Specific disabilities	4 (3%)	2 (1%)	1 (4%)
Inclusion issues	3 (2%)	12 (4%)	1 (4%)
Behavior and classroom management	3 (2%)	7 (2%)	2 (8%)
IEPs	2 (2%)	1 (<1%)	--
ARD committee process	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	--

Source. Human Resources Director Survey.

Appendix C

Survey Instruments

Appendix D

Organizations in Stakeholders Group

Stakeholder Group Representation

Alternative Certification Program of Texas A&M International

Abilene Christian University

Collaborative Professional Preparation Project in Visual Impairments

Continuing Advisory Committee (CAC)

Family to Family Network

Regional Day School Program (RDSPD)

State OT/PT Board Examiners

Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA)

Texas Association of School Psychologists (TASP)

Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP)

Texas Council for Exceptional Children (TCEC)

Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education (TCASE)

Texas Educational Diagnosticians Association (TEDA)

Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association (TEPSA)

Texas School Alliance

Texas Speech and Hearing Association (TSHA)