

Texas Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education

Presentation for the Comprehensive System of
Personnel Development (CSPD) Leadership Council

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Fanny Caranikas-Walker, PhD
Texas Center for Educational Research

Kelly Shapley, PhD
Texas Center for Educational Research

Molly Cordeau, EdD
Region 4 Education Service Center

Texas Education Agency

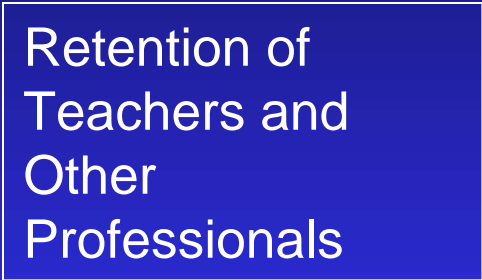
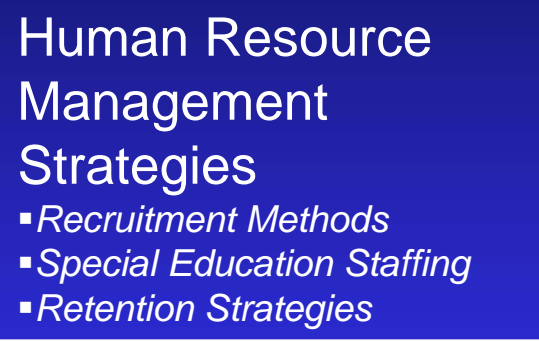
Purpose of the Study

To study special education personnel needs in Texas schools through surveys

- ◆ Inform education stakeholders and policy makers regarding phenomenon of special education teacher retention and turnover
- ◆ Address state accountability and planning provisions pursuant to recent federal legislation

Goals of the Surveys

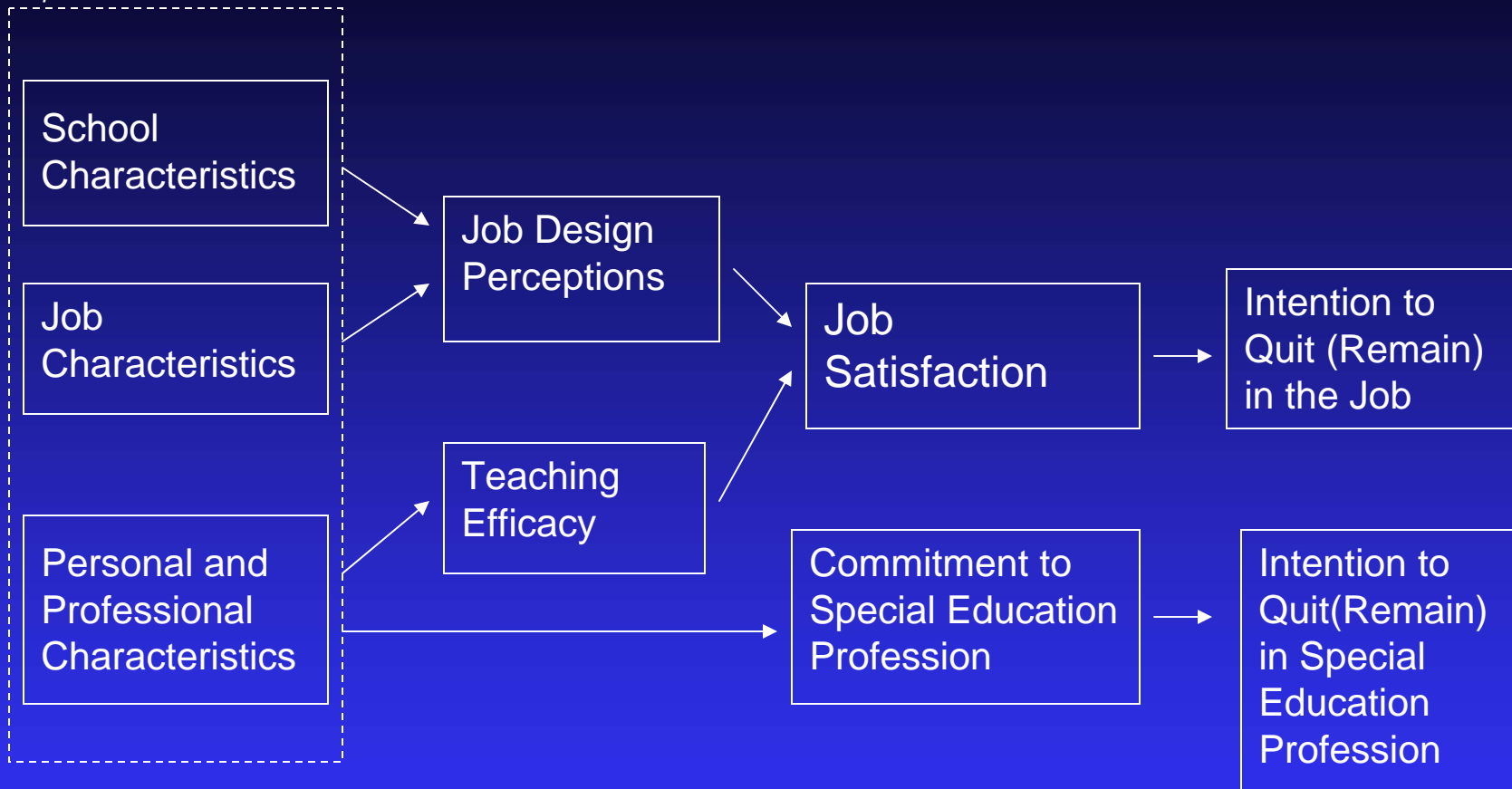
- Identify current staffing needs for special education teachers and for other special education professionals
 - ◆ Critical shortages and vacancy rates by position
- Assess status of recruitment and retention efforts for special education personnel
 - ◆ Effectiveness of current strategies
 - ◆ Barriers to recruitment and retention
- Assess the quality and availability of special education personnel
 - ◆ Preparation, experience, and workload of personnel
 - ◆ Anticipated turnover of personnel



MODEL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PERSONNEL RETENTION

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*Climate that Nourishes
Special Education*



MODEL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER TURNOVER AND RETENTION

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Comprehensive Personnel Study

- 4 Surveys
 - ◆ Human Resource Administrators
 - ◆ Special Education Administrators
 - ◆ Special Education Teachers
 - ◆ Other Special Education Professionals
 - ◆ Speech language pathologists
 - ◆ Educational diagnosticians
 - ◆ Therapists, Licensed specialists in school psychology, etc.

- Multiple constituencies
 - ◆ Traditional, single districts
 - ◆ Districts participating in Special Education SSAs
 - ◆ Charter school districts

Research Methodology

- Designed and validated survey instruments
- Identified administrators, teachers, and other professionals in Texas public schools
- Conducted mailed surveys in Spring/Summer 2005
 - ◆ All Special Education Administrators
 - ◆ All Human Resource Administrators
 - ◆ Random sample of full-time Special Education Teachers and Other Professionals
- Encouraged participation in survey
 - ◆ Reminder e-mail for administrators
 - ◆ Reminder post card, and drawing for gift card for teachers and other professionals

Traditional Districts Surveyed and Response Rates

	Districts Surveyed	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Human Resource Administrator Survey			
Single Districts	344	140	40.7%
SSA Participant Districts	695	288	41.4%
SSAs	131	42	32.1%
Special Education Administrator Survey			
Single Districts	344	184	53.5%
SSAs	131	68	51.9%

Traditional Districts Surveyed and Response Rates (continued)

	Districts Surveyed	Number of Respondents	Response Rate
Special Education Teacher Survey			
Single Districts	7,821	1,530	19.6%
SSA Participant Districts	1,370	359	26.2%
Other Special Education Professionals Survey			
Single Districts	4,271	683	16.0%
SSA Participant Districts	636	123	19.3%

Administrator Surveys

Critical Shortages in Special Education Staffing

Special Education Teachers

- Teachers working with students in resource or content mastery

(Potential shortages emerging for teachers working with students who have adaptive behavior issues)

Other Special Education Professionals

- Speech language pathologists
- Educational diagnosticians

(Potential shortages emerging for bilingual speech pathologists, and bilingual specialists in school psychology)

- Special Education Paraprofessionals

Most Effective Strategies for Recruiting Special Education Teachers and Other Professionals

(ratings of 2.5 or higher on 4-pt. scale for single districts)

- Post positions on the Internet
- Attend or sponsor job fairs
- Provide supplements, stipends, or signing bonuses
- Provide attractive benefit packages
- Contact in-state colleges and universities
- Streamline the hiring process
- Offer financial incentives for becoming certified or credentialed in special education
- Send special education personnel on recruiting trips
- Contact personnel in other Texas schools and agencies

Additional Effective Strategies for Recruiting Other Special Education Professionals (rated 2.5 or higher on 4-pt. scale for single districts)

- Contact out-of-state colleges and universities
- Target retired special education personnel

Most Effective Retention Strategies for Special Education Personnel (rating of 3.0 or greater on 4-pt. scale for single districts)

- Adequate access to instructional resources and teaching materials
- Release time for professional development
- Financial support for professional development
- Adequate classroom space and equipment
- Access to reliable computer equipment for paperwork
- Adequate support from paraprofessionals
- Support regarding legal issues
- Clerical support to assist with paperwork
- Opportunities to discuss common issues with other special education personnel in district

Special Education Teachers and Other Professionals

Respondent Demographics (single districts)

Special Education Teachers

- 85.2% female, 22.0% minority
- 45.7 years old, 17.9% over 55
- 35.2% have masters or higher

Other Special Education Professionals

- 94.6% female, 14.4% minority
- 46.1 years old, 19.3% over 55
- 86.6% have masters or higher

Teaching Preparation Programs Completed by Special Education Teachers

Teacher Preparation Program	Teachers (n=1,522)
Undergraduate teacher training	61.2%
Graduate school teacher training	25.0%
Alternative certification program	32.1%
No teacher training completed	0.7%

General Understanding of Highly Qualified

■ Elementary Level

- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, college major in subject, 1 year teaching, OR
- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, combination of college courses and professional development in subject, OR
- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, passing grade on state certification exam in subject

■ Secondary Level

- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, college major in subject, OR
- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, combination of college courses and professional development in subject, 1 year teaching subject, OR
- ◆ Bachelor's degree, Texas teaching certificate, passing grade on state certification exam in subject

Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers at Elementary Level

Core Subject	Provide Basic Instruction in Subject (n=1,522)	Bachelor's Degree, Texas Teaching Certificate, and			Highly Qualified	
		Major, 1 Year Exper.	Courses, PD	Exam		
English/ Language Arts	785	42	302	161	505	65.6%
Math	752	17	324	116	457	60.8%
Science	418	11	138	50	199	47.6%
Social Studies	422	13	141	54	208	49.3%

Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers at Secondary Level

Core Subject	Provide Basic Instruction (n=1,522)	Bachelor's Degree, Texas Teaching Certificate, and			Highly Qualified	
		Major	Courses, PD, 1 Year Exper.	Exam		
English	238	22	88	34	144	60.5%
Reading/LangArts	220	16	86	30	132	60.0%
Civics & Govt.	73	6	14	10	30	41.1%
Economics	62	4	13	4	21	33.9%
Geography	95	7	22	8	37	38.9%
History	140	15	35	17	67	47.9%
Arts	43	0	7	4	11	25.6%
Science	146	6	47	7	60	41.1%
Mathematics	224	9	103	12	124	55.4%
Foreign Lang.	24	1	3	1	5	20.8%

Work Experience of Special Education Personnel

Type of Work Experience	Special Education Teachers (n=1,438)	Other Special Education Professionals (n=652)
Average years in profession	11.0 yrs.	15.2 yrs.
Percent with 21+ yrs. in profession	25.0%	33.9%
Average years in current job	6.8 yrs.	8.5 yrs.
Percent with SpEd teaching	99.3%	46.1%

Age Groups of Students: Percent of Respondents Serving Each Age Group

Age Group of Students	Special Education Teachers % (n=1,522)	Other Special Education Professionals % (n=660)
1 – 4 years	10.7	58.9
5 – 8 years	46.5	73.0
9 – 12 years	62.6	84.1
13 – 16 years	45.1	50.9
17 – 20 years	22.1	27.0
21 years or older	8.1	15.0

Students by Primary Disability: Percent of Students Served by Respondents

Primary Disability of Student	Special Education Teachers: % Students (total=27,140)	Other Special Education Professionals: % Students (total=35,205)
Specific learning disability	57.9	36.0
Emotional disturbance	9.1	6.5
Mental retardation	7.6	5.7
Autism	4.3	5.5
Speech or language impairment	4.1	24.4
Developmental delay	1.3	4.6

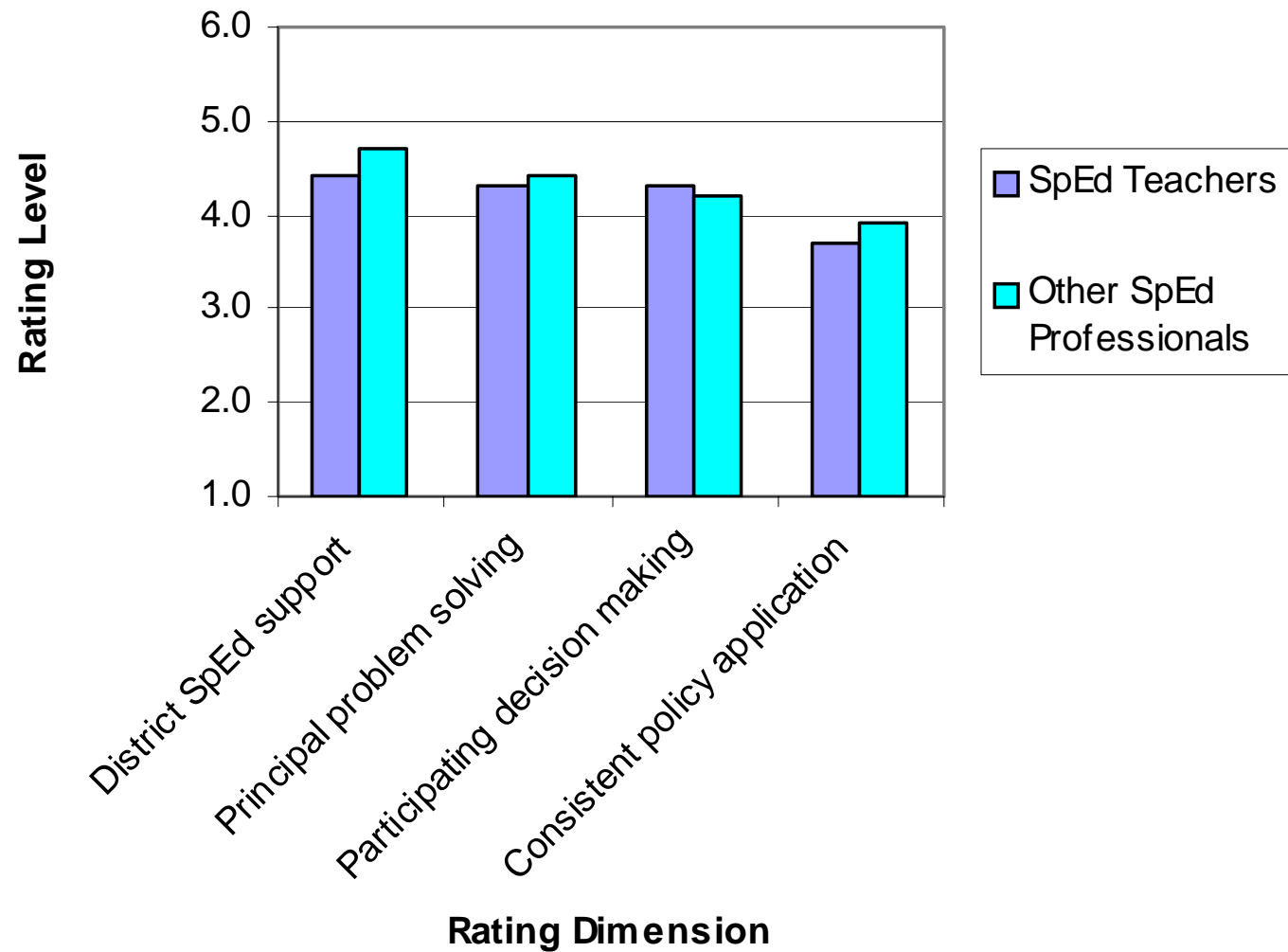
Student or Case Load: Percent of Respondents with Student or Case Load

Student/Case Load (Number of Students Served)	Special Education Teachers % (n=1,102)	Other Special Education Professionals % (n=598)
1 – 10	33.9	22.7
11 – 20	28.2	13.2
21 – 30	15.2	10.0
31 – 40	7.1	9.4
41 – 50	5.2	15.2
51 – 60	3.8	15.2
61 – 100	4.4	13.2
101 or more	2.1	1.0
Avg. No. Students	25 Students	37 Students

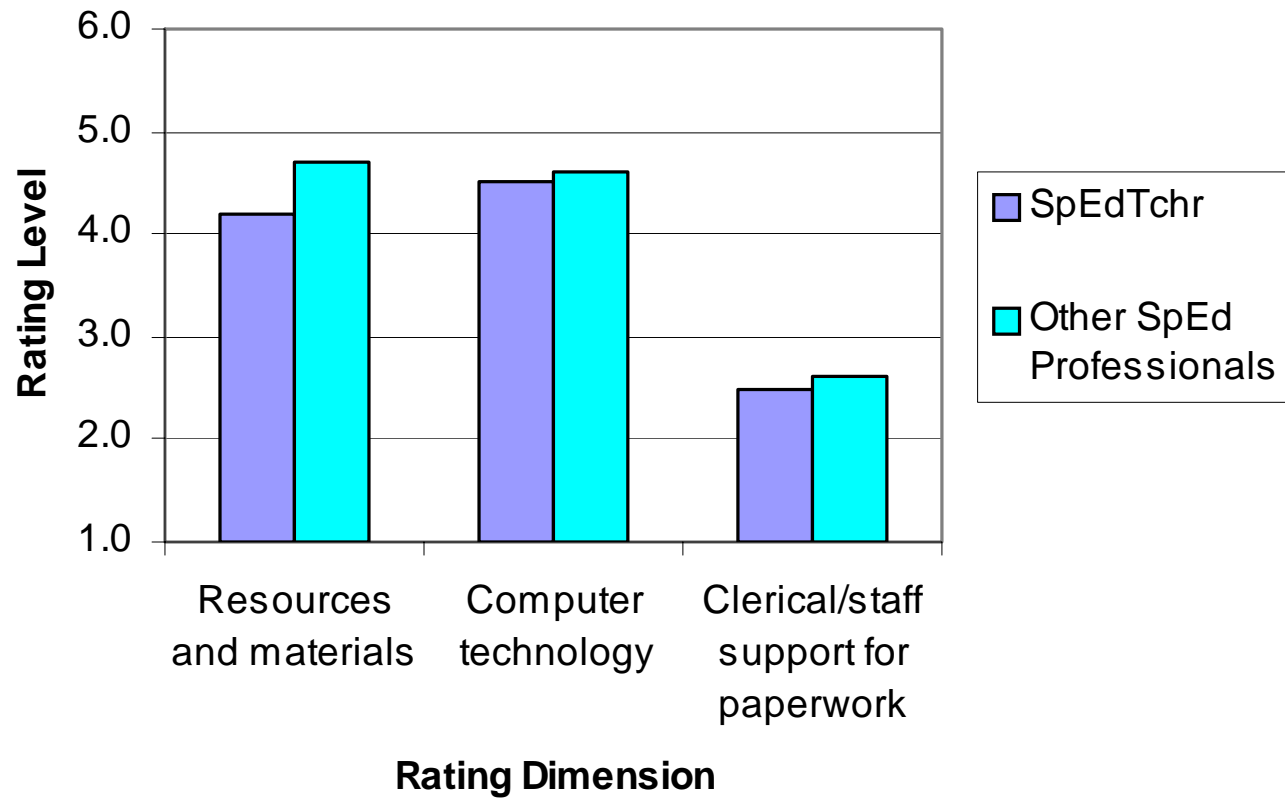
Monthly Indirect Student Services Workload for Special Education Personnel: Average hours per month

Non-Instructional Tasks	Teachers Avg.Hrs.	Other Professionals Avg.Hrs.
Planning	18.6	17.2
Paperwork	16.9	42.1
ARD committees	7.3	23.8
Meeting with Special Education Teachers	4.4	6.7
Meeting with General Education Teachers	4.3	4.3
School committees	3.0	2.3
SpEd dept. meetings	2.6	4.0
Contact with community	2.2	1.4
Provide in-service	1.0	1.1
Total hrs. for tasks	57.9	103.0

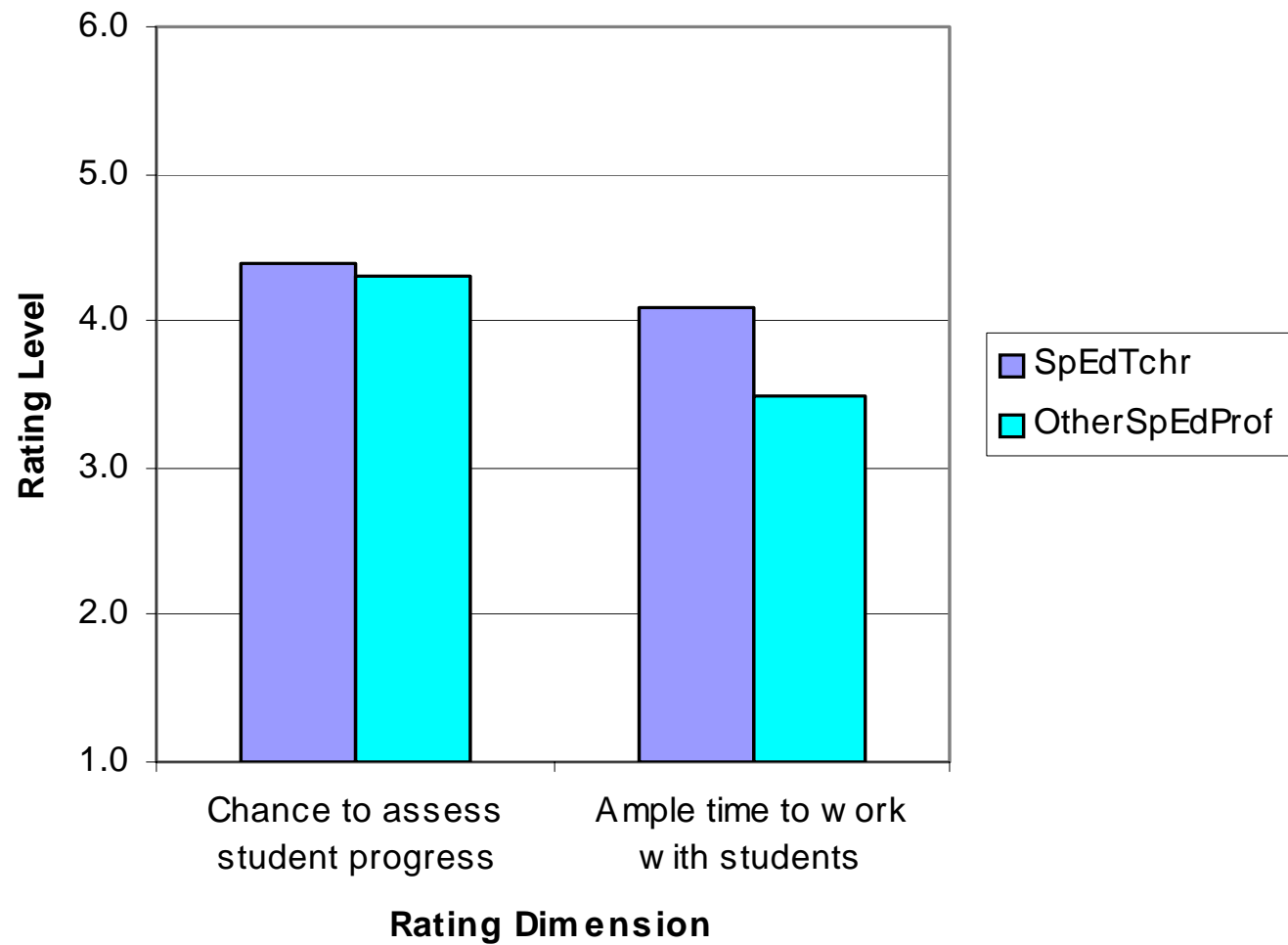
Ratings of Work Conditions: Supervision



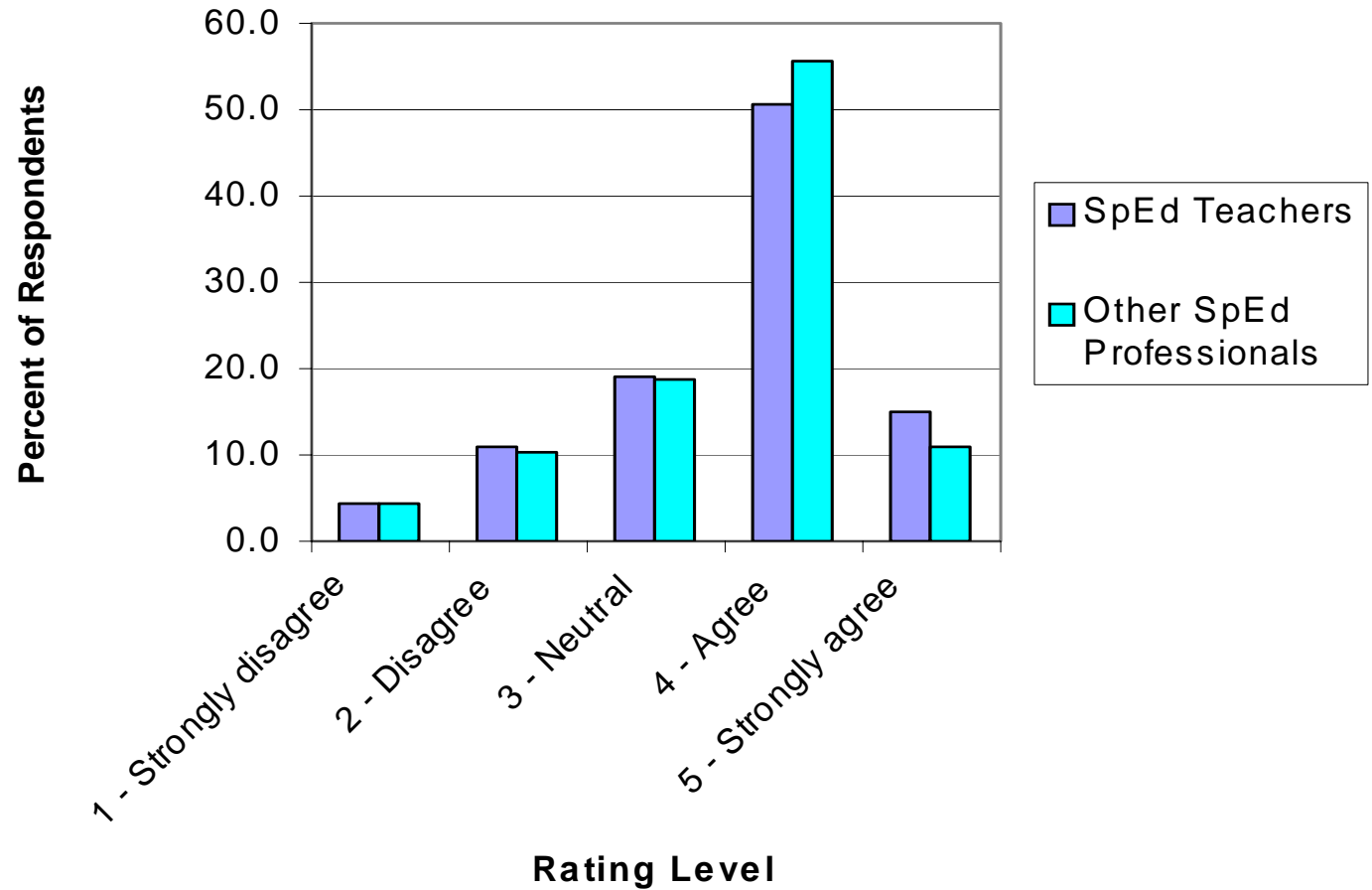
Ratings of Work Conditions: Access to Resources



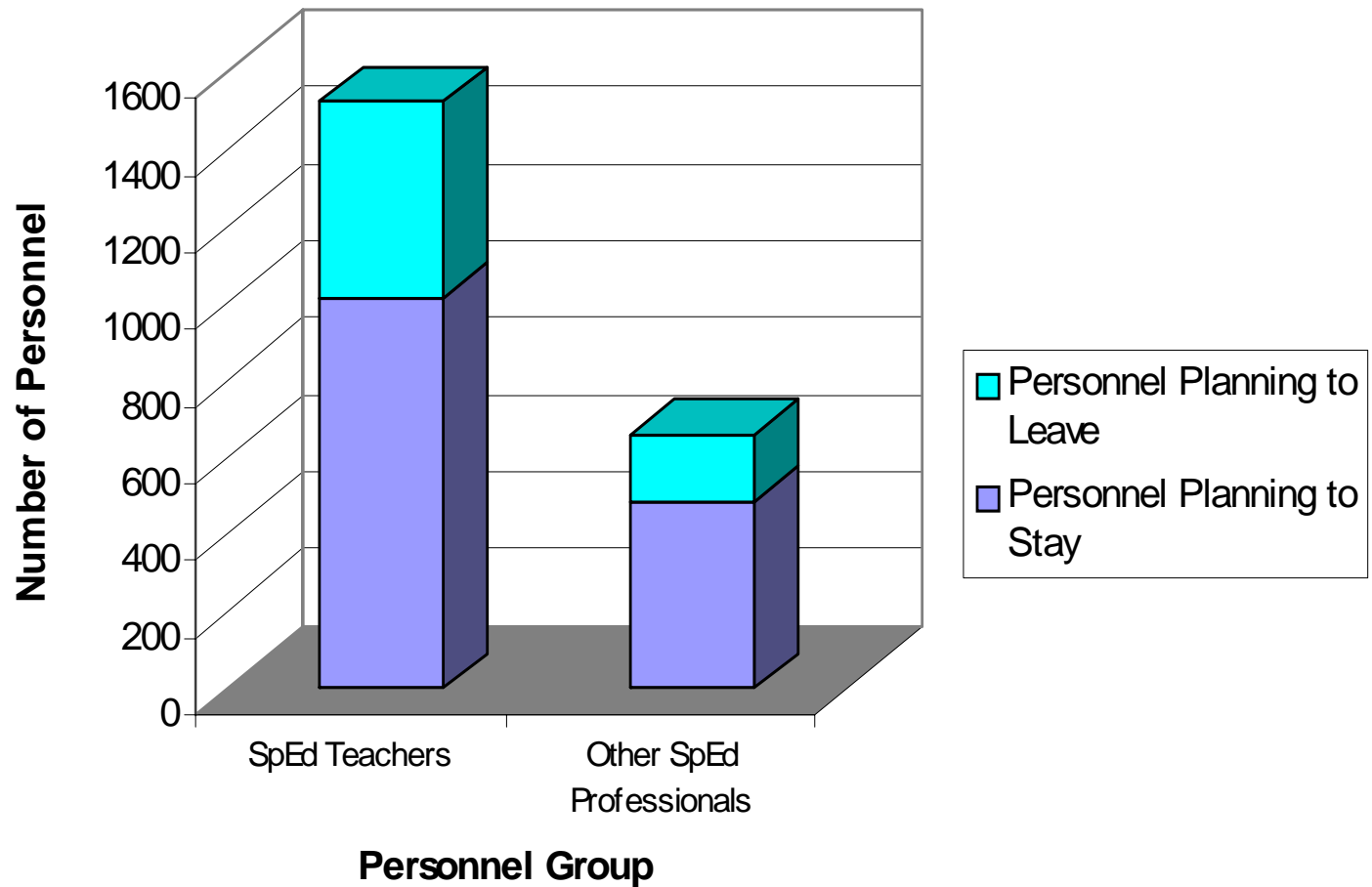
Work Conditions: Working with Students



Job Satisfaction of Special Education Personnel



Special Education Personnel and Plans to Stay or Leave



Plans for Next Year: Percent of Leavers with Destination

Destination of Leavers	SpEd Teachers (n=507)	Other SpEd Professionals (n=175)
SpEd position in another district	19.1	11.4
SpEd position in agency or hospital	2.8	13.7
Non-SpEd teaching in another district	5.3	---
Non-SpEd teaching in current district	12.4	---
Administration in current district	14.0	12.0
Administration in another district	2.8	2.9
Outside education	8.7	12.6
Retirement	10.7	18.9
Other	24.3	25.7

Conclusions

Special Education Teachers

- Highly qualified with extensive experience
- Majority of students served have specific learning disabilities
- Spend 1.4 weeks each month on non-instructional tasks
- Generally are satisfied with their jobs, but one-third have plans to leave the following year
- Leavers likely to
 - teach special education in another district
 - teach general education
 - take an administrative position

Conclusions (continued)

Other Special Educational Professionals

- 76% have master's degree; extensive experience
- 46% have taught special education
- 36% of students served have specific learning disability; 24% have speech or language impairment
- On average, serve 37 students
- Spend 2.6 weeks each month on non-direct service tasks
- Generally satisfied with their jobs, but one-fourth plan to leave the following year
- Leavers likely to
 - take position in a public or private agency or hospital, or in another district
 - retire
 - take administrative position

Report Jigsaw Assignments

1. Chapter 4, pages 48-50
2. Chapter 5, pages 60-62
3. Chapter 6, pages 87-90
4. Chapter 7, pages 113-116
5. Chapter 8, pages 137-138
6. Chapter 9, pages 153-154

Implications

- Retirement and personnel leaving special education provide challenges to staffing positions with well qualified personnel and opportunities to seek diversity among new hires
- Need for decreasing paperwork that takes time away from direct services to students (or adds time to the workweek)
- Need for human resources policies addressing needs of different personnel groups, or different districts
- Serving many students with specific learning disabilities may require new approaches to teaching and learning

Recommendations

1. Commit to filling all special education positions.

- Seek qualified minority group members and bilingual candidates.
- Use funding and release time to support career advancement for teachers.
- Provide funding and release time to SLPs, EDs, and LSSPs to learn second language.
- Provide clerical support for paperwork duties.
- Rely on retired special educators until permanent staff can be hired.

Recommendations

2. Commit to high quality HRM.

- Use a broader range of recruitment strategies, and expand use of stipends or supplements for special education positions.
- Send special education personnel on recruiting trips.
- Provide salary and benefits at levels comparable to nearby districts and organizations competing for personnel, OR
- Provide personnel with more choices in workload, work arrangements, etc. to compensate for lower pay.

Recommendations

3. Commit to retaining qualified special education personnel.

- Improve school climate relative to
 - supervision and leadership,
 - instructional resources and materials,
 - greater opportunity to work directly with special education students to see their growth and progress.
- Identify creative ways to decrease job stresses, especially for other special education professionals.

Discussion Questions

Thank you!

For further information please contact us by telephone or e-mail

- Dr. Fanny Caranikas-Walker
 - ◆ fanny.caranikas-walker@tasb.org
 - ◆ 512.467.3632

- Dr. Molly Cordeau
 - ◆ mollyc@esc4.net
 - ◆ 713.462.7708