

Special Education Teacher Workforce

Technical Working Group Summary | February 10, 2023

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Special Education Teacher Workforce

Technical Working Group (TWG) Meeting

February 10, 2023

National Center for Special Education Research
Institute of Education Sciences
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This meeting summary was prepared by Katherine Taylor (program officer at the National Center for Special Education Research) at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES). The summary draws from slide presentations, notes taken by Robin Pu Yigh (under JDC Events' contract ED-IES-D-0003), as well as notes taken by IES program officers, Sarah Brasiel, Britta Bresina, and Amy Sussman. The views expressed in this document reflect individual and collective opinions and judgments of the participants at the Technical Working Group meeting and are not necessarily those of IES or the U.S. Department of Education.

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Introduction

On February 10, 2023, the National Center for Special Education Research (NCSE) convened a technical working group (TWG) of 12 experts on the K-12 special education teacher workforce, including state- and district-level education leaders, teacher educators, researchers, and technical assistance providers. The goal of the TWG was to identify ways research can be used to better prepare, support, and retain an effective K-12 special education teacher workforce.

Prior to the TWG, participants were asked to respond to a series of questions regarding pressing problems and data and research needs related to the K-12 special education teacher workforce (see the appendix for a full list of questions). IES staff reviewed these pre-meeting responses to identify themes and inform the agenda topics and discussion questions.

IES Investment in the Special Education Teacher Workforce

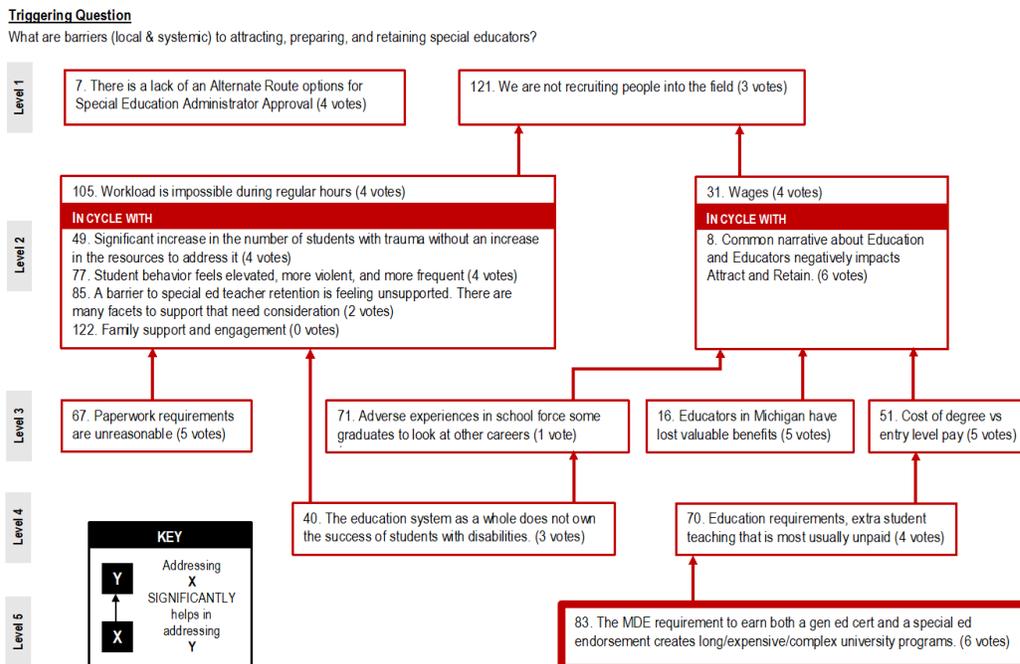
IES Director, Mark Schneider, opened the TWG by discussing the importance of and need for additional research and investment in the K-12 special education teacher workforce. He noted that long-standing shortages of special education teachers have made it challenging for schools to provide high-quality instruction and appropriate services for students with or at risk for disabilities. These problems have only worsened since the pandemic, with the increase in teacher burnout and the intensification of students' educational and mental health needs. There is a pressing need for research on factors contributing to shortages and strategies to increase the supply and retention of effective special educators. IES is committed to developing evidence on what works for whom and under what conditions, but also to finding answers to real world problems as quickly as possible. As such, Dr. Schneider encouraged the TWG members to think broadly and creatively around how IES could better support research and data collection that span the full educator career continuum (recruitment, preparation, and retention). For example, he asked TWG members to consider how existing IES resources, including the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs), could be used to support these efforts. He also asked the TWG for recommendations regarding how technology and other innovations, such as artificial intelligence, could be used to ease the demands on teachers and address other factors contributing to the special education teacher shortage.

NCSE Acting Commissioner, Jacquelyn Buckley echoed Director Schneider's comments, emphasizing that the teacher workforce has been a priority throughout NCSE's history. While NCSE has funded many projects related to understanding and improving different aspects of the K-12 special education teacher workforce, including pre-service teacher preparation and in-service professional development and working conditions, what is needed at present is a concerted, shared effort to identify the most pressing research questions related to the supply and retention of high-quality special education teachers. Dr. Buckley asked the TWG to provide input on these questions, and how IES can best support research to address them.

Pressing Problems Related to the K-12 Special Education Teacher Workforce

The first topic of discussion was to identify factors driving special education teacher shortages. To begin this discussion, one TWG member shared findings from a study to better understand the barriers to attracting, preparing, and retaining special educators in Michigan and inform a more comprehensive systems approach to addressing shortages and supporting the special education teacher workforce. In this project, the research team solicited barriers from a range of state and local education agency stakeholders, of which a subset of 16 were identified as the most critical. These were used in a process of influence mapping, which involved exploring whether and how efforts to address one barrier would affect other barriers (see Figure 1). For instance, if a particular barrier was removed or modified, would that reduce the salience of other barriers? The most influential barrier identified was Michigan’s requirement for special education teachers to earn both a general education certificate and a special education endorsement. Removing this barrier would eliminate requirements for an additional semester of student teaching (usually unpaid) and thereby reduce the costs of getting a degree. Reducing these costs could, for some teachers, reduce the degree to which low wages present a barrier to joining the special education workforce because low wages can make it difficult to repay college loans or degree expenses. Addressing the issue of wages could ultimately influence the number of people entering the profession. Another significant and influential barrier is that the education system as a whole does not own the success of students with disabilities, meaning that the education of students with disabilities is often seen as the sole responsibility of special educators and not others in the school. If this barrier were addressed, it would improve poor working conditions that include burdensome workloads and adverse experiences in school. Although many of the core barriers, like low wages and certification requirements, existed prior to COVID-19, the pandemic exacerbated many barriers, including an increase in student trauma without the resources to address it.

Figure 1. Influence Map of Barriers Identified by the [OPTIMISE](#) Barrier Action Team



Another TWG member shared findings from a recent data collection effort in Mississippi, where the goal was to understand the reasons why special education teachers were leaving within 3 years of starting. Exit interviews were conducted with teachers to find out why they left and what would have encouraged them to stay. Half of teachers reported leaving for financial reasons. Teachers also said they needed additional mentoring and induction supports, opportunities for advancement, clearer roles and responsibilities, more supportive administrators, less paperwork, and more respect for their specialized knowledge. Principals were also asked why they believed teachers were leaving and findings revealed that they were often unaware of special education teachers' extensive responsibilities and their need for additional support to feel successful.

Following these introductory comments, the TWG members engaged in an open discussion around the factors driving special education teacher shortages and how problems might evolve over the next 5-10 years. They expanded on the problems discussed above related to preparation and certification, working conditions, and economic issues and identified additional issues affecting the workforce summarized below.

Supply of Special Educators

In addition to increased rates of attrition among special education teachers, driven in part by the issues described above, the pool of special educators is also dwindling. Not only are there fewer students choosing to major in education, but there are also teachers with a special education or dual (general and special education) certification that are choosing not to pursue a career as a special educator. Although little is known about the reasons behind these choices, TWG members discussed several possibilities. As one TWG member put it, we are seeing a perfect storm of political and budgetary issues that are likely making the profession less attractive. Teaching is also competing against other professions that can pay more, provide more flexibility in work hours and settings, and have more successful staffing models.

Special Educators' Roles and Responsibilities

Another factor that contributes to special education teacher burnout and attrition is role ambiguity. In the same exit interviews mentioned above, a significant portion of special education teachers leaving their positions said they would have appreciated clearer roles and responsibilities. TWG members discussed the need for an agreed upon role of the special educator. If they are truly special, then their preparation and compensation should be commensurate with this. In other words, their training should reflect that of a specialist and provide them with an extensive portfolio of knowledge necessary to meet the diverse educational and social/emotional needs of students with disabilities. TWG members also discussed how special educators' roles vary widely by district, school, and classroom; for instance, sometimes they are classroom teachers, co-teachers, or interventionists. Further, because of severe teacher shortages and the fact that there may only be one or a few special educators in a school, they often end up taking on many roles and responsibilities. As such, special education teacher preparation and in-service training should better address these varied roles while also supporting special educators as specialists.

Collegial and Leadership Support

One of the contributing factors to burnout and attrition is that special educators do not feel adequately supported by other school professionals, namely general education teachers and administrators. Special education teachers have complex and varied roles that are often not well understood by their

fellow teachers or leaders. They may also feel like they are the only ones taking responsibility and advocating for students with disabilities. Often, general education teachers feel unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities and have only taken one course in their teacher preparation programs focused on teaching students with disabilities. Likewise, school leaders often have not had a single class on special education, and when they do, it is usually focused on special education law. Several TWG members highlighted the need for leaders to establish and maintain an inclusive culture where there is shared commitment and accountability for all students, including students with disabilities, and shared planning and collaboration opportunities for general and special educators.

Research Needs Related to the Special Education Teacher Workforce

TWG members discussed a variety of areas in which additional research is needed. This section summarizes the research needs and opportunities discussed by the TWG members and how they relate to the pressing problems mentioned above.

Supply of Special Educators

As noted above, the pool of special education teachers is dwindling. Therefore, an important direction for future research is understanding how to increase interest in becoming a special education teacher. As one TWG member mentioned, many teachers attribute their career choice to high school programs that allow them to explore the teaching profession while earning credits. It would be useful to study how such programs contribute to the supply of special education teachers. There are also teachers with a special education certification that are not currently in special education positions. Additional research is needed on this “reserve pool,” including why they chose not to pursue special education positions or why they left those positions and what incentives might attract them to a special education position.

Preparation and Certification

Over the past decade, there has been a substantial rise in the number of alternative teacher preparation and licensure pathways. To illustrate this, one TWG member presented data from Washington state showing that prior to 2014, most special education teachers received their initial teaching credentials through public or private colleges and universities. After that, there was a considerable increase in the number of teachers that earned credentials through alternative routes, including online, 2-year, Tribal, and 1-year grow-your-own programs as well as emergency certification routes. For example, in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a sharp increase in the number of emergency certified special education teachers as many teachers were allowed to enter the workforce without completing their training. Also in 2020, more special education teachers were prepared through one online program than in all the public colleges and universities in the state combined. Other TWG members commented that the trends seen in Washington state are similar to other states, such as Texas and Florida.

According to these Washington data, the number of licensed special education teachers has increased over time. However, there is likely considerable variability in the qualifications of teachers licensed through these different pathways. And although there may be an assumption that teachers coming out of alternative teacher education programs are less qualified and, as such, are more at risk for attrition,

there has been little research on the outcomes of these programs. There is also wide variation in the design and quality of these programs and limited descriptive research on their specific features and differences. Therefore, studies are needed that examine the features of these different programs as well as their impacts on the qualifications, recruitment, and retention of special education teachers and outcomes for students with disabilities. Nevertheless, several TWG members emphasized that we cannot discount alternative preparation programs when so many teachers, particularly teachers of color, are prepared this way. Many of these programs also have unique strengths. For example, grow-your-own programs, which recruit and train school staff (such as paraprofessionals) and community members to become certified teachers, have been able to attract a more diverse group of teachers. Teach for America has forged connections within the education community and outside of it, including with philanthropic organizations and large companies, to create a strong network of support. Therefore, there is an opportunity to learn from these programs and better understand what has worked well.

TWG members also cautioned that available research on teacher preparation and other aspects of recruitment that support special educator retention has been influenced by systemic biases. In particular, there has been little attention paid to the experiences of teachers and teacher candidates from marginalized communities, including teachers of color and those from other minoritized backgrounds (such as LGBTQIA+). Therefore, the programs and policies based on existing research and data can be more harmful than helpful because they do not consider the unique experiences and barriers faced by teachers from these communities (for instance, barriers created by systemic racism that influence the preparation and recruitment of special education teachers of color). Biases may also stem from a cultural mismatch between researchers and the communities they study, which can lead to difficulties recruiting diverse samples, collaborating with community members to develop research questions, and interpreting and reporting findings with an understanding of cultural context and systemic barriers. As such, there is a need for research that takes into account the lived experiences and cultural contexts of a more diverse group of teachers and teacher candidates to create a stronger evidence base around effective teacher preparation.

Special Educators' Roles and Responsibilities

The ambiguity in special education teachers' roles has significant implications for the way in which teachers are prepared and what special educators need to know and be able to do. TWG members discussed the need for agreed upon roles and responsibilities for special educators as well as research on the knowledge and skills special education teachers need to be effective in these roles. Results of research on the roles of a special educator as well as the knowledge and skills that are needed for these roles could inform teacher preparation as well as professional development interventions.

Working Conditions

TWG members discussed several directions for future research on special education teachers' working conditions. TWG members noted the need for more qualitative research to better capture the nuances of special education teachers' experiences and to inform the development of measures of their working conditions. Special education teachers have unique roles and working conditions that are often not captured in quantitative data. For instance, special education teachers may feel a lack of belonging in the workplace and experience perceptions that they are not "real" teachers compared to general education colleagues. They may perceive a lack of shared ownership for the education of students with

disabilities, a lack of recognition and use for their specialized skill set, and massive paperwork and legal requirements that undermine their capacity to provide services to students with disabilities.

For teachers of color, there are additional factors that contribute to burnout and attrition. For example, racial microaggressions, which are comments or behaviors that either intentionally or unintentionally communicate negative messages towards historically marginalized groups, and expectations to be cultural brokers for students and their families can contribute to hostile work environments and greater workloads and emotional burden, respectively, for teachers of color. Therefore, qualitative research and measure development must also acknowledge prejudices and structural barriers to equitable, productive working conditions. Researchers should take responsibility for this and be more transparent about how their research samples are selected, what comparison approaches are used, and how systemic barriers are assessed and analyzed. They should elevate the voices of marginalized special education teachers and incorporate their funds of knowledge through all phases of the research. They should also consider approaches grounded in equity, such as critical disability theory, critical race theory, intersectionality, and quantitative critical theory.

Research on working conditions should be conducted in a variety of settings and communities. Because there is evidence that schools in higher income areas have better working conditions, it is important that samples not only include these schools but also those in lower income areas where there may be poorer working conditions. Research should also explore the root causes of poor working conditions, for example, by exploring the role that leadership and school climate play in working conditions. Additional research is also needed on how to intervene to improve working conditions and how to engage school, district, and state leaders in this process. Research has shown that principals are important influences on special education teachers' decisions to leave or stay in their positions. More research is needed on how principals and other leaders exert that influence and how that could inform intervention efforts.

Collegial and Leadership Support

Special education teachers do not teach in isolation. Paraprofessionals and related service providers play an important role in supporting special education teachers and their students. More research is needed on this group of professionals, including their role in classroom instruction, working conditions, and the retention of special educators. TWG members also emphasized that shortages are occurring in other positions as well, including general education teachers, substitutes, and transportation staff. For example, one TWG member noted that the routes to certification for general education teaching have been diversified and expedited as much as or potentially even more than special education. If general education teachers are underprepared, it has implications for students with disabilities as well because these students are often educated in general education classrooms. Therefore, research should also take a broader look at the overall health of the education workforce and how this relates to outcomes for teachers and students with disabilities.

Economic Issues

There are many arguments for addressing shortages, but as one TWG member said, you get the ear of policymakers by making it economic. The field needs to be able to show policymakers that if money is invested differently, it will lead to cost savings and better outcomes for teachers and students. To do this, research is needed on the cost of teacher attrition as well as the costs and benefits of strategies to prevent it, such as higher salaries and other financial incentives (e.g., loan repayments and bonuses) as

well as programs to improve teacher effectiveness and working conditions (e.g., induction supports, coaching). We have limited understanding of the impact of financial incentives on teacher retention. TWG members recommending exploring this question and pairing the findings with those on the cost of attrition to argue that attrition costs could be converted to financial incentives to keep teachers in the field.

Interventions

One TWG member stated, and many others agreed, that we need to stop admiring the problem and, instead, apply what is already known to address pressing problems facing the K-12 special education teacher workforce. We cannot afford to wait when the urgent needs in the field necessitate more action-based research. What we can do now is implement promising strategies or interventions and conduct research simultaneously. For example, we can use approaches such as continuous improvement or plan-do-study act cycles that involve an iterative cycle of implementing a change to an existing process or program on a small scale, observing and analyzing the results, making modifications as needed, and implementing more broadly. In terms of promising strategies or interventions, TWG members emphasized the importance of mentoring and induction supports for retaining new teachers. Differentiated staffing, where multiple teachers share the responsibility of teaching and work with students in a range of capacities based on their particular skills, was also mentioned as a promising strategy for reducing teacher burden and promoting retention. TWG members also discussed the importance of high-quality, job-embedded professional development and the fact that it is not happening in schools. Teacher and substitute shortages can make it difficult for teachers to participate in professional development, along with high costs and logistical challenges. In today's context, teachers need real-time, on-demand coaching and professional development supports while they are in the classroom. This comes back to the value of differentiated staffing models. Some TWG members argued that investing in coaching may be more beneficial than comparing teacher preparation models. One TWG member noted that they have seen teachers who come out of 7-year residency programs struggle just as much as teachers who come out of 1-year programs. What these teachers need are practice-based opportunities to learn evidence-based practices and apply what they learn in the classroom.

Data on the Special Education Teacher Workforce

Various types of national and local data have been used to describe the special education teacher workforce and to quantify shortages. TWG members discussed existing data, including strengths and limitations, and how they could be leveraged to address key research questions. They also considered what additional data are needed to more fully understand the special education teacher workforce.

Nationally Representative Data

One commonly used method of describing the special education teacher workforce is through nationally representative survey data. Although there is currently not a dedicated survey to examining the K-12 special education teacher workforce, several nationally representative datasets include data on special education teachers. For example, the [National Teacher and Principal Survey](#), which was redesigned from the Schools and Staffing Survey, provides descriptive data on K-12 education including school staff characteristics and experience. Unfortunately, there are limitations to using this survey for understanding the special education teacher workforce because it is administered infrequently, it is not

longitudinal (thus, does not capture job movement over time), few special educators are included in the sample, and it lacks key variables such as characteristics of the students teachers instruct.

There are also longitudinal surveys, including the [Baccalaureate and Beyond Longitudinal Study](#) which examines the education and work experiences of individuals after they complete a bachelor's degree. This dataset has a particular emphasis on the experiences of new K-12 teachers and can be used to study special education teacher preparation and certification. Older surveys include the [Beginning Teacher Longitudinal Survey](#) which was conducted from 2007 to 2012 and examined the experiences and career development of first-year teachers for 5 years. The Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE), which was funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs over two decades ago, was designed to describe the quality of personnel serving students with disabilities. These surveys are of limited value because of their age. As such, TWG members mentioned the need for another national survey study, like the SPeNSE, but with mechanisms for linking the data to other sources, like state longitudinal data systems.

To increase the use and usefulness of nationally representative survey data, TWG members mentioned the need for in-person trainings on these datasets. In the past, the National Center for Education Statistics hosted these types of trainings for several of their datasets, but most trainings have now moved online. TWG members noted the value of convening researchers in person, especially researchers who are early career, from minority serving institutions, and/or from institutions with less research activity to inspire enthusiasm for research using these existing datasets among a broader group of scholars.

Accountability Data

There was also a discussion of accountability data, including the [Section 618 personnel data](#) required by the Individuals with Disabilities with Education Act (IDEA). Section 618 of IDEA requires states to submit data to the Department of Education about students with disabilities receiving special education and related services under Part B of IDEA, including data on the number of full-time equivalent special education teachers, related services personnel, and paraprofessionals that are employed or contracted by the state. TWG members noted that these data only represent one piece of the puzzle and have limited utility because of concerns about reporting accuracy and differing licensure requirements that make the data incomparable across states.

State Longitudinal Data Systems

[State longitudinal data systems \(SLDSs\)](#) are intended to increase states' ability to manage and analyze education data that spans early learning, K-12, and the workforce. These data systems inform education leaders' and policymakers' decisions about how to improve student outcomes and provide opportunities for research to improve education policies, programs, and outcomes. SLDSs allow for tracking teachers over time and linking teacher and student data and are well suited to addressing certain questions related to the special education teacher workforce. Some of these data systems can be linked to state and district survey data as well as data on teacher preparation to provide further insights into the workforce. A strong SLDS includes data on preparation, licensure, workforce entry, and retention for all teachers in the state as well as outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities. TWG members provided examples of states with SLDSs that are well suited for studying the special education teacher workforce, including (but not limited to) Texas, North Carolina, Florida, Washington, and Arkansas. TWG members emphasized that SLDSs are best suited to examining

systems-level topics, such as licensure pathways, types of student teaching, financial incentives, career movement, and heterogeneity in turnover. At the same time, they cautioned that SLDSs are not able to address questions around school and classroom issues, such as teacher roles, instruction, and working conditions. However, they could be supplemented with other data to better contextualize the findings.

TWG members noted several issues that affect the use and usefulness of state-level data. First, there are several levels of data—state, district, and school—and shortages manifest differently across these difference contexts. The state data are not always reflective of what is happening at the local level. Therefore, it is important to dive deeper into the data and look at local data to see the whole picture, beyond basic supply and demand. This allows for a better understanding of the root causes of teacher shortages and more targeted solutions. For instance, issues with recruitment or hiring will require different solutions than issues with retention. Second, there is rarely full alignment across datasets, which can make it difficult to compare data across states. Having a set of common indicators could help address issues of comparability and ensure that variables that are important for the special education teacher workforce are included.

New Data and Methods

TWG members discussed the growing amount of new data, including social media data, classroom video data, and other online data, and the methods and tools that could be used to harness them. Web scraping is one method that has been used to describe and quantify teacher vacancies in real time. Other new methods include machine learning, artificial intelligence, and natural language processing. For instance, natural language processing could be used to conduct a Twitter analysis to study special educator well-being and burnout. To best take advantage of these data, we need researchers who are trained to use these newer methods.

Additional Needed Data

TWG members discussed potential improvements to existing datasets and additional data that are needed to better understand the special education workforce. For the most part, existing data provide an incomplete picture of teacher supply and demand. If we look at the number of teachers who are certified in special education, it should be enough to meet the need. However, many teachers with a special education certification are choosing not to pursue a career as a special educator. Sometimes they are working as general education teachers, sometimes as paraprofessionals, and sometimes they leave the field altogether. Additional information on these teachers would be helpful, including why they left the field or why they chose not to pursue special education teaching positions.

Another key limitation of existing data is the extent to which they include information on the in-class experiences of special education teachers. Additional data are needed on special education teacher roles, instruction, time use, and working conditions that could be linked to SLDS to provide a better understanding of the experiences of special educators. Other personnel, such as paraprofessionals and service providers, play a key role in the instruction, working conditions, and retention of special educators. Data on these personnel that could be linked to teachers would also provide a more complete picture of the special education workforce.

Moving Forward and Final Thoughts

In the final part of the meeting, IES staff asked for each TWG member's top recommendation for IES. TWG members made several recommendations that were specific to IES, including

- Providing funding for a network of researchers across the U.S. to address similar research questions across different states and contexts.
- Collaborating with other agencies, like the National Science Foundation, that are working to address the special education workforce shortage to co-fund research in this area.
- Charging the Regional Educational Labs with conducting fast turnaround studies on the special education teacher workforce in their local context.
- Supporting the development of the next generation of scholars interested in research on recruiting and retaining special education teachers.

Several TWG members highlighted areas where more policy- and practice-relevant research was needed, including

- The conditions that support greater retention as well as the qualities of teachers who stay in the field.
- What is and is not attracting people into education and what can be done to bring more people into the field.
- The role of school leaders, including the qualities that differentiate leaders who are more and less effective at supporting special educators, and the interventions needed to better prepare and train leaders to support special educator well-being and effectiveness.
- The economic consequences of the special educator shortage and the effects of economic interventions, such as increasing teacher salaries, on recruitment and retention.
- The roles, responsibilities, and activities of special educators and how they relate to teacher and student outcomes.
- Staffing models that are optimal for special education and how different models affect working conditions and student outcomes.
- Systemic inequities in teacher recruitment, working conditions, and retention and the experiences of teachers of color in the workforce.
- The outcomes of strategies and programs states and districts are currently implementing, such as financial incentives and grow-your-own programs.
- Teacher well-being and how COVID-19 has impacted it.

Appendix: Prewrite Questions

For State- and District-Level Education Leaders:

1. What are the most pressing problems related to the K-12 special education teacher workforce?
 - a. How have these problems been impacted by the pandemic and how might they evolve over the next 5-10 years?
 - b. What is currently being done at the state, district, and/or school level to address these problems?
2. What data are currently being used to inform decisions around special education teacher recruitment, staffing, compensation, and retention efforts?
3. What type of research or data are needed to better inform decisions around special education teacher recruitment, staffing, and compensation and better support the well-being and retention of special educators?

For Researchers and Technical Assistance Providers:

1. What are the most pressing problems related to the K-12 special education teacher workforce?
 - a. How have these problems been impacted by the pandemic and how might they evolve over the next 5-10 years?
2. What are some key research needs related to each of the following? (Please respond to any or all based on your expertise.)
 - a. Special education teacher pipeline (preparation, certification, and workforce entry)
 - b. Special education teacher shortages (recruitment and retention)
 - c. Special education teacher well-being (working conditions and burnout)
3. What are some low intensity research efforts that could address these needs and may yield rapid and impactful results?
4. What data are available to address research questions related to the K-12 special education teacher workforce? What are the limitations of available data?

Appendix: TWG Meeting Agenda

Special Education Teacher Workforce

February 10, 2023

11:00am - 4:00pm Eastern Time

Virtual Meeting

11:00-11:30: Welcome and Meeting Overview

- Introduction to TWG meeting & logistics (Katherine Taylor)
- Director's welcome (Mark Schneider)
- Welcome & meeting goals (Jacquelyn Buckley)
- Panel introductions

11:30-12:00: Pressing Problems (Introduced by Abby Cypher)

Guiding Questions:

- *What factors are driving special education teacher shortages?*
- *How might problems evolve over the next 5-10 years?*

12:00-1:00: Research Opportunities (Introduced by Roddy Theobald & Lynn Holdheide)

Guiding Questions:

- *What research is needed around special education teacher preparation, certification, & workforce entry?*
- *What research approaches/methods are best suited to addressing these complex problems?*

1:00-1:30: Break

1:30-2:30: Research Opportunities, continued (Introduced by Julie Etheridge, Bonnie Billingsley, & LaRon A. Scott)

Guiding Questions:

- *What research is needed around special education teacher working conditions & retention?*
- *What research approaches/methods are best suited to addressing these complex problems?*

2:30-3:15: Special Education Teacher Workforce Data (Introduced by Allison Gilmour & Li Feng)

Guiding Questions:

- *What existing data could be leveraged to address key research questions?*
- *How could existing datasets be improved & what additional data are needed going forward?*

3:15-3:30: Break

3:30-4:00: Moving Forward & Final Thoughts

- Lightning round: What is each panelist's top recommendation for IES?
- Opportunities for continued feedback & closing thoughts (Jacquelyn Buckley)