This report examines attrition data of Kansas special education personnel employed in the 1993-94 school year who did not return for the 1994-95 year. Fifteen tables display data on: (1) numbers employed, numbers of leavers, and percent of attrition from 1976 to 1994 in each special education category; (2) employment and attrition by level of instruction; (3) attrition based on size of the district, urban versus rural district, administrative organization of the district, and geographic region of the state; (4) attrition rates for those personnel who have teaching as a primary responsibility and those who are mainly support personnel; (5) attrition rate for full-time versus part-time employees; and (6) attrition rate for interrelated (cross-categorical) personnel and for personnel in traditional categories. The data indicate that the 1993 to 1994 attrition rate was 8.9 percent, which was very consistent with rates obtained since 1988. Senior high teachers had one of the lowest rates of attrition. Small districts had higher attrition rates than large districts, urban districts had slightly higher attrition than rural districts, and part-time personnel had higher attrition than full-time personnel. Attrition rates for teaching personnel and support personnel were identical. The data chronicle the growth and then decline of categorical self-contained programs, as well as the continued personnel increase in interrelated programs. (JDD)
Attrition Rates of Special Education Personnel in Kansas: 1993-94 to 1994-95

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Introduction

The availability of special education personnel to fill professional positions is a continuing concern for the educational community in Kansas. The institutions of higher education, the local school boards, special education cooperatives and interlocals, and the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBE) have an interest in the numbers of personnel available to serve students with disabilities and the gifted. The KSBE has the mandate to determine the numbers of qualified personnel currently employed, those otherwise available, and the numbers currently in training at institutions of higher education. Those numbers are used to identify additional training needs to meet existing and projected demands for personnel. The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development committee (CSPD), working with the Special Education Outcomes Team of the KSDE, regularly examines the quantity of instructional and support personnel available. To provide data for the CSPD and others to analyze the personnel employment situation, the Special Education Outcomes Team has requested personnel attrition data, one aspect of the personnel preparation situation, to be collected and analyzed.

This report addresses attrition for special education personnel employed in the 1993-94 school year who did not return for the 1994-95 year. This year's report contains four
new tables not found in previous reports. Table 4 provides a complete summary of personnel employed for each year since 1976. Tables 13, 14, and 15 provide more specific data about teachers assigned to the interrelated categories and the decrease in numbers assigned to the traditional categories. With the increase in the use of inclusive settings, there have been changes in assigning personnel to the traditional categories. With the proposed changes in teacher certification, now called licensing, it is probable that there will continue to be significant changes in the assignment and use of special educational personnel.

**Personnel Attrition Data**

Fifteen tables have been prepared to present the numbers of Kansas special education personnel employed during the 1993-94 school year who did not return for the 1994-95 school year. The tables were developed using data provided by the KSDE on computer disk. The data were analyzed employing computer facilities at Emporia State University. After matching on social security numbers for the two comparison years, personnel were identified who were employed any time during the 1993-94 year who did not return at the start of the 1994-95 school year to be employed in a special education position in the state of Kansas. Throughout the report the descriptive terms leavers and stayers are used to describe the personnel changes. Adopted from the research of Bobbitt (1991) and Boe (1993), the terms are applied in a context that fits the special education employment situation in Kansas. A leaver is an individual who was employed in special education in 1993-94, but who did not return in Kansas, in
special education, for the 1994-95 school year. A stayyer is an individual who remained in special education, somewhere in the state for both of the two base years. In addition, the report is based on headcount data and not FTE data.

Table 1 is a summary table that displays attrition rates on an annual basis from 1977 through 1994. When school started in 1994, 537 of the 6,058 personnel who had been employed the previous year did not return to special education employment in Kansas. The attrition rate of 8.9 per cent is very consistent with rates obtained since 1988, and significantly less than the double digit rates from 1977 through 1987. Table 1 is based on all special education personnel including all categories of teachers and support personnel. In some states, only the attrition rates for teachers are considered for analysis, so some care is needed in comparing Kansas data with other states. Separate attrition rates are provided for teaching personnel in Table 10 and support personnel in Table 11.

Table 2 displays the attrition data for 1993-94 for each special education personnel category. The range is from 0% to 100%, with many categories at the extremes based on small samples. The category with the largest number employed was Interrelated LD/EMR/BD, with an attrition rate of 10.3%. It is interesting that the three traditional categories of LD (8.8%), EMR (9.9%) and BD (10%) had lower attrition rates than that of the combined interrelated category. The other major traditional categories had rates of 10.2% for gifted, 8.6% for speech/language, 7.7% for early childhood handicapped,
7.5% for special education administration, and 6.1% for school psychology.

Table 3 provides a summary from 1976 through 1994 of the total employment and attrition data for all categories. For example, for the category of learning disabled, there has been a total of 13,988 teachers employed, with 1,562 total leavers, for an attrition rate of 11.0 per cent. The total attrition rate for all of the categories from 1976 to 1994 is 12.1 per cent. As in Table 2, the highest rates are based on very small numbers.

Table 4 is a composite table of employment and attrition in Kansas from 1976-77 and is a new table provided this year. It is a long table, printed on multiple pages. The table reports the numbers employed, the numbers who were leavers, (called "lost" in the table to keep the column widths smaller), and the percent of attrition for each category, from 1976 to 1994. The table provides a panoramic view of special education in Kansas from the time of the passage of PL 94-142 though the present. The table shows personnel employment patterns as educational philosophies and practices in special education have evolved. For example, Table 4 chronicles the growth and then the decline of categorical self-contained programs while the interrelated programs have continued to increase. Twice, additional categorical titles were added as specializations have developed and changes in mandates required new personnel. Table 4 also reveals that since 1976-77, the following changes or relationships have occurred:

1. In 1977, there were 2,460 special education personnel, while in 1994 there were 6,058, an increase of 246 percent.
2. In 1977, the largest category, with 562 personnel, was semi-independent, the term used in Kansas then to classify EMR. The number of personnel in that category now, with the development of interrelated programs and inclusion are 161 personnel, for a decrease of 349 percent.

3. The category of learning disabilities grew from 513 in 1977, to a peak of 916 in 1987, and then declined to 498 in 1994, again probably due to the increase of interrelated positions.

4. The traditional categories with the largest gains in percent employed from 1977 through 1994 were gifted (685%) and social work (522%).

5. The interrelated categories have grown from 132 teachers to a total of 1,759 teachers in all of the subcategories of interrelated, for an increase of 1,333 percent.

6. In 1986, the number of categories was increased form 24 to 38. The additional categories were in the support areas and the subdivisions of interrelated were added.

7. In 1993, the number of categories was increased again to 48. Many recent categories were added to meet mandates found in PL 101-476.

8. In education, it is in vogue to examine the numbers of administrators employed. In special education, the number increased from 64 to 106, an increase of 166%. This should be compared with the 246% increase in all personnel that grew from 2,460 to 6,058.

Table 5 summarize the employment and attrition by level of instruction. Many individual results are clustered around the total mean, without much variation. The fact that Senior
High has one of the lowest rates is interesting, in light that one might think that the rates would be higher at high school because the students are more challenging and difficult to manage. A first glance hypothesis to explain the low attrition at the high school level could be related to the age of the teachers. More experienced, older teachers are hired for the high school jobs since it is believed the positions are more difficult. Because of the selective hiring of individuals who can "handle it," they are perhaps slightly less likely to quit.

Table 6 presents the attrition data based on the size of the district. The three categorical sizes, 100 personnel and above, 11 to 99, and 10 and below were arbitrarily selected. While the small districts had the highest rate, it is probably a statistical artifact. The 44 districts employed only 104 teachers, only 2 percent of the total. The small districts were almost all members of some form of cooperative, and they had hired additional teachers above their fair allotment from a cooperative to meet a local need. Larger districts could have lower attrition rates because they tend to be more desirable districts to teach in, not only for salary, but also for other benefits such as shopping, medical, employment opportunities for a spouse, and social events. Teachers naturally migrate to these larger districts as they move through their careers. The more successful teachers are more likely to be hired in these desirable districts because many have a larger pool of applicants. Hiring successful teachers who have worked their way up will probably result in a lower attrition rate.
Table 7 shows the attrition rates for urban versus rural districts. An urban district was operationally defined as any district located primarily in one of four counties: Sedgwick, Shawnee, Johnson, or Wyandotte. This included 25 school districts. The remaining 279 school districts in the other 101 counties were operationally defined as rural districts. The urban districts had an attrition of 9.5% versus 8.3% for the rural districts. These results appear to be contradictory when compared with Table 6, which had large districts with lower attrition rates. In Kansas, many large cooperatives are not in urban areas. In addition, in the urban counties, there are some smaller districts, and personnel move from a small urban district to a larger one.

Table 8 displays the data arranged by the type of administrative organizational plan of the district. Single district refers to those school districts that provide all or most of their special education needs with their own personnel. If they do use the cooperative services of another district, it is usually based on an individual contract for a student. Single districts would include those such as Wichita, Shawnee Mission, Eureka, and Fort Scott. Cooperatives and interlocals are terms used to describe groups of school districts that band together to provide services. An essential difference between the two is how they are governed. A cooperative is governed by one of the sponsoring districts. An interlocal establishes its own governing board and functions independently, except it cannot levy direct property taxes. There are a few personnel who do not fit conveniently in one of the groups; they are included in the "other" category. There were some moderate differences in attrition rates, with cooperatives having the lowest rates and
single districts the highest of the three primary types.

Table 9 reports attrition by geographic region of the state. The regions are identical to those used by Skillett (1995). A map of the state is provided to locate the regions. This year the pattern of attrition rates is interesting to consider, but difficult to detect a pattern. For example, the lowest rate was in region 9, in the southeastern part of the state that historically has paid the lowest teacher’s salaries. The highest attrition rate for an area was in region 6, in the northeast. The far western part of the state has been divided into two regions, the northwest (7.1%) and the southwest (11.4%). One would think that the rates for the two would be much closer. In summary, no reasonable hypotheses can be suggested to explain the differences in attrition rates for the nine geographic regions.

Tables 10 and 11 are based on the data found in Table 2, but the data have been separated to provide attrition rates for those personnel who have teaching as a primary responsibility (Table 10) and those who are mainly support personnel (Table 11). Probably because of the history of how Kansas has reimbursed districts for special education personnel, most personnel are considered as ‘teachers.’ However, in much of the rest of the country, support personnel are often employed through other agencies. In addition, much of the research on teacher attrition generated in other states does not include support personnel as teachers. The data for the two tables suggest that while both the numbers employed and the leavers are higher for
teaching personnel, the attrition rates for teaching personnel and support personnel are identical.

Table 12 displays the attrition rates as they are associated with the percent of full-time employment. There is almost a perfect inverse relationship between the two variables. The higher the percent of time employed, the lower the attrition rates. The most notable aspect of Table 13 is that if one just looks at the attrition of those employed in the category of ".81 percent of the time to full-time," the attrition rate is 7.9%. In addition, that group contains over 5,000 of the 6,058 personnel. Therefore, while it is true that the total attrition is 8.9%, it is much closer to 8% for the vast majority of personnel, and these personnel provide the bulk of all of the services.

Tables 13, 14, 15, and a graph that follows Table 14 provide more information about the growth of the interrelated category. Table 13 presents the attrition data for interrelated personnel. Kansas uses the term interrelated as other states would use "cross-categorical." Over the years, the number of personnel assigned to the interrelated category has continued to increase. In the initial years, the attrition rates in interrelated were higher, paralleling the overall attrition rates. During the past few years, attrition rates for interrelated classes have been at or below the total attrition rate for all categories. Again this year the rate for interrelated at 8.6% was slightly lower that the total of 8.9% attrition.
Table 14 shows the number of personnel employed in the five traditional categories of educable mentally retarded, trainable mentally retarded, severe and multiple handicapped, learning disabilities, and behavior disorders, and the interrelated category. In 1977, the interrelated category contained 132 individuals. This number grew to 528 in 1985, when the interrelated category was subdivided and personnel assigned to one of six subcategories (LD/EMR and LD/EMR/BD, for example). In 1993, one additional interrelated subcategory appeared, that of BD/EMR. The reader is referred to Table 4, a composite table of employment that provides specific data about the attrition rates for the subcategories of the interrelated category. For the traditional categories, they all had some growth in personnel from 1977, peaked at different times in the 1980s and have declined, several to below the employment levels where they started in 1977. The line graph following Table 14 displays the same data.

Table 15, the final table, displays the trends in employment and attrition for all personnel, for teaching personnel only (no support personnel), and interrelated personnel. The interpretation section at the bottom of Table 15 is called to the reader's attention and will not be repeated here. Two columns from Table 15 are of particular interest. The third column from the right (Percent Employed Who Were Teachers) shows that there has been a gradual slow decline of the proportion of personnel who serve primarily as teaching personnel, but the general effect is interpreted by this writer to suggest that two-thirds of all personnel over the years have generally been assigned to teaching. That appears to be a fair proportion.
The other column of interest is the one at the far right of Table 15 (Percent of Teachers Who Were Interrelated). Here there has been a constant increase of teachers assigned to the interrelated category. Sometime within the next three to five years, the State has plans to change to new licensing categories. All of the traditional categories will be gone, to be replaced most likely by an Adaptive category and a Functional category. It appears the State will be recognizing current reality, where categories are no longer required to deliver services.
Table 1. Special education attrition rates for 1977 through 1994

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>2460</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>2894</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>3272</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>17.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>3551</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>16.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>3955</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>4110</td>
<td>458</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>4329</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>4400</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>4533</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>4660</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>4798</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>4774</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>4977</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>5223</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>5469</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>5507</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>5919</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>80889</td>
<td>9410</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation: During the 1993-94 school year 6058 personnel were employed in special education; 537 did not return in special education for the 1994-95 school year, for a rate of 8.9%. The total attrition rate for all years, from 1976 through 1994, is 11.8%.
Table 2. Total special education attrition by category: 1993-94 to 1994-95

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1993-94 Employed</th>
<th>1994-95 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation/Mobility specialist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counselors</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelated BD/EMR</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebound</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personnel Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infant Toddler</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
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<td>Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hearing Impaired</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>846</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gifted</td>
<td>452</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavior Disorders</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integration Specialist</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physically Impaired</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
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<td>Educable Mental Retardition</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>9.9</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Interrelated EMR/TMR</td>
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<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Severe Multiple Handicapped</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Handicapped</td>
<td>297</td>
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<td>7.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Ed. Administration</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interrelated LD/BD</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapted PE</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEIMC (Material Centers)</td>
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<td>Interrelated LD/EMR</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Special Needs</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6.5</td>
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<td>School Psychology</td>
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<td>Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dance/Movement Therapy</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Music Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recreation Therapy</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitation Counseling</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition specialist</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL                                      | 6058             | 537             | 8.9             |
Table 3. Total special education attrition by category: 1976 to 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1976-94 Employed</th>
<th>1976-94 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Therapy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation/Mobility Specialist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance/Movement Therapy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelated BD/EMR</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Development</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>698</td>
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<td>Counselors</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>103</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art Therapy</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebound</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>17.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Therapy</td>
<td>887</td>
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<td>3338</td>
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<td>226</td>
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TOTAL 4660 495 11% 4798 561 12% 4774 468 10%

x = category no longer used
Table 4. Employed, leavers, and percent attrition from FY77 (1976-77 school year) to FY94 (1993-94 school year).

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<tr>
<td>Orientation/Mobility Specialist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5918</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>9%</td>
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</table>
Table 5. Special education attrition by level of instruction: 1993-94 to 1994-95.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level of Instruction</th>
<th>Personnel Employed 1993-94</th>
<th>1994-95 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>36</td>
<td>10.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior High</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>Intermediate/Junior High</td>
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<td>Junior High/Senior High</td>
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<td>All Levels (EC - 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Levels (K - 12)</td>
<td>1306</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Size</th>
<th>Number of Districts</th>
<th>Personnel Employed 1993-94</th>
<th>1994-95 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Districts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3143</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>8.4</td>
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<td>Medium Districts</td>
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<td>2811</td>
<td>260</td>
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<td>Small Districts</td>
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<td>11.5</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definitions: A **large district** has 100 or more special education personnel.

A **medium district** has 11 to 99 special education personnel.

A **small district** has 10 or less special education personnel.
Table 7. Special education attrition for urban districts and rural districts: 1993-94 to 1994-95.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Location</th>
<th>Number of Districts</th>
<th>Personnel Employed 1993-94</th>
<th>1994-95 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2749</td>
<td>261</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
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<td>304</td>
<td>6058</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Definition of location: An urban district was operationally defined as any district located primarily in one of four counties: Sedgwick, Shawnee, Johnson, or Wyandotte. Districts in the other 101 counties were operationally defined as rural districts.

Table 8. Special education attrition by type of administrative plan: 1993-94 to 1994-95.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Plan</th>
<th>Personnel Employed 1993-94</th>
<th>1994-95 Leavers</th>
<th>Percent Leavers</th>
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</thead>
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<th>Percent Leavers</th>
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<td>4 (South Central)</td>
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<td>7 (Wyandotte and Johnson Counties)</td>
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State of Kansas

Geographic Regions
Table 10. Special education attrition for teaching personnel: 1993-94 to 1994-95.

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Table 14. Frequency of personnel by category: Traditional categories and interrelated combined categories.

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Frequency of Personnel by Category
See Table 14 for the data
Table 15. Total employed and lost, teachers employed and lost, Interrelated employed and lost: Data and percent lost.

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</tbody>
</table>

Interpretation: In 1994, there were 6058 personnel employed. 537 of them did not return at the start of the 1994-95 school year for an attrition rate rounded to 9%. Of the 6058, 4063 were employed primarily as teaching personnel, not support personnel. 369 of the 4063 teaching personnel did not return for a 9% attrition rate. Of the 6058 total personnel, 1759 were interrelated categories. 152 of those in interrelated did not return for an attrition rate of 9%. In 1994, 67% of all of those employed primarily as teachers, and 29% of the total employed were interrelated teachers. Finally, of all teachers employed, 43% were in the interrelated category.
References

