

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020



Stemming the Tide: Addressing the Educator Shortages in Special Education

Panelists



Naomi Ondrasak, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher &
Policy Advisor,
Learning Policy Institute



Jane West, Ph.D.
Consultant,
TED & HECSE



Cassandra B. Willis, Ph.D.
Education Specialist,
Henrico County Schools

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020



#SELS2020



Shortages of Special Educators

Jane West Ph.D.

@janewestdc

Consultant to the Teacher Education Division of CEC

History of Federal Role in Supporting Personnel

- 1958 “An Act to Encourage Expansion of Teaching in the Education of Mentally Retarded Children through Grants to Institutions of Higher Learning and to State Agencies”
- Provisions in IDEA (since 1975): Personnel Preparation and State Personnel Grants
- Since 1980’s: Higher Education Act: loan forgiveness, TEACH grants (scholarships that may become loans), Teacher Quality Partnership Grants

Federal Policy

- Every Student Succeeds Act removed “highly qualified” which required a BA and content knowledge
- States full authority to determine who teaches
- Shortages propelling lower state standards, use of long-term subs and uncertified or under certified teachers
- IDEA DOES require a minimum of a BA
- Link between well prepared teachers and student outcomes needs to be further researched and messaged

Shrinking Capacity: Higher Education

- The engine which provides the workforce is challenged
- The number of special ed doctoral programs has shrunk, reducing faculty which reduces capacity to prepare teachers and other personnel
- The loan burden for teachers and other special educators is a deterrent
- Enrollment in teacher prep decreasing and will be exacerbated by pandemic

COVID Challenges

- Layoffs/state budget cuts
- Greater need for more staff
- Retirements and resignations
- Shortages prior to the pandemic
- Lower enrollment in teacher prep programs: pipeline implications
- New teachers who did not complete their preparation programs
- Disproportionately experienced by high-poverty schools

Teacher retention and critical shortages

Dr. Cassandra Boyd Willis
CEC Teacher Shortage Panel
July 15, 2020

My Why



Background

- **Continuous shortage of special education teachers**
(Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005; Fideler, Foster, & Schwartz, 2000; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001)
- **Special education teachers leaving in first three years**
(Edgar & Pair, 2005; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Miller, 2018)
- **Importance of administrative support of novice teachers in creating a positive work experience and positive student outcomes** (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith, & Leal, 2002)

Survey Tool

- **Modified Administrative Support Survey**
- **Measures support in four areas**
 - **Emotional**
 - **Instructional**
 - **Technical**
 - **Environmental**
- **47 questions**
- **Demographic Questions**

The information in this study can help us learn how to better retain early career special educators, particularly those with 0-3 years of experience. In this survey, an administrator can be defined as personnel who provide direct support to early career special education teachers. We anticipate that the survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey is confidential and anonymous. Your answers will not be linked to you as an individual and shared with school officials. Your participation is voluntary and there are no risks associated with participating in this study. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at boydcr@vcu.edu. Thank you for your participation.

Section 1: Please make two judgments about each Administrative Behavior. First, rate the level of support you THINK IS APPROPRIATE TO PROVIDE teachers. Next, rate the level of support you ACTUALLY PROVIDE teachers. Use the following rating scales: 5- Very true, 4- True, 3- Undecided, 2- Not really true, 1- Not true at all.

1. Make teachers feel that they are making a difference.

THINK IS APPROPRIATE					ACTUALLY PROVIDE				
Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All	Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Show interest in what teachers do in their classroom.

THINK IS APPROPRIATE					ACTUALLY PROVIDE				
Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All	Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Provide teachers information about modifying instruction.

THINK IS APPROPRIATE					ACTUALLY PROVIDE				
Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All	Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Give teachers information about instructional techniques that will help improve teaching.

THINK IS APPROPRIATE					ACTUALLY PROVIDE				
Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All	Very True	4	3	2	Not True at All
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

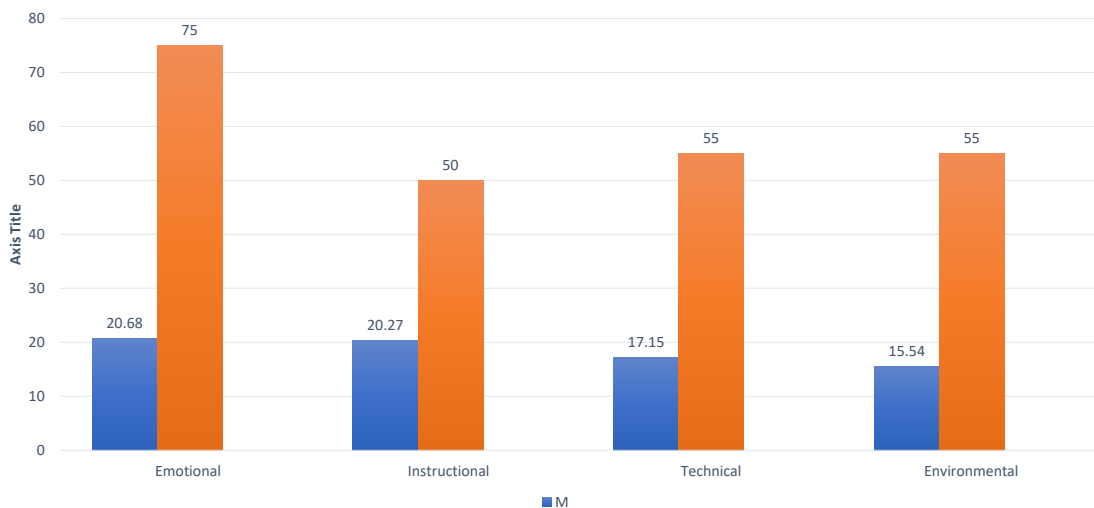
Sample Questions

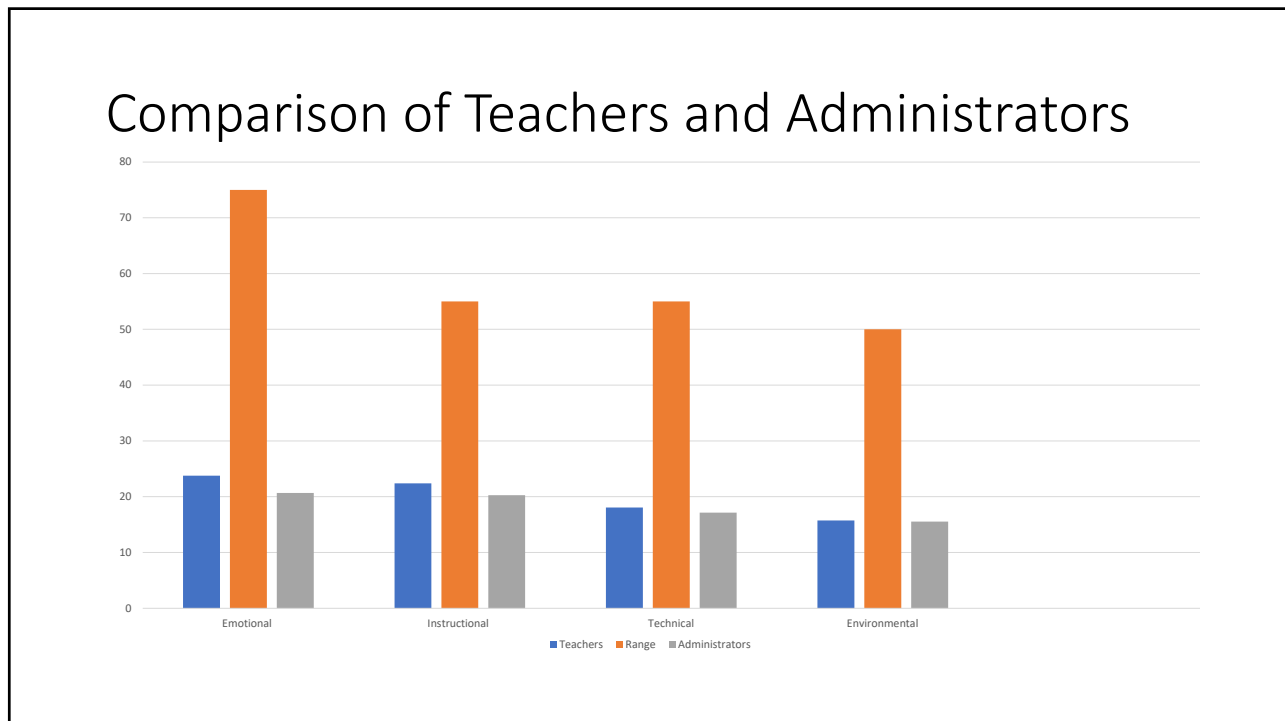
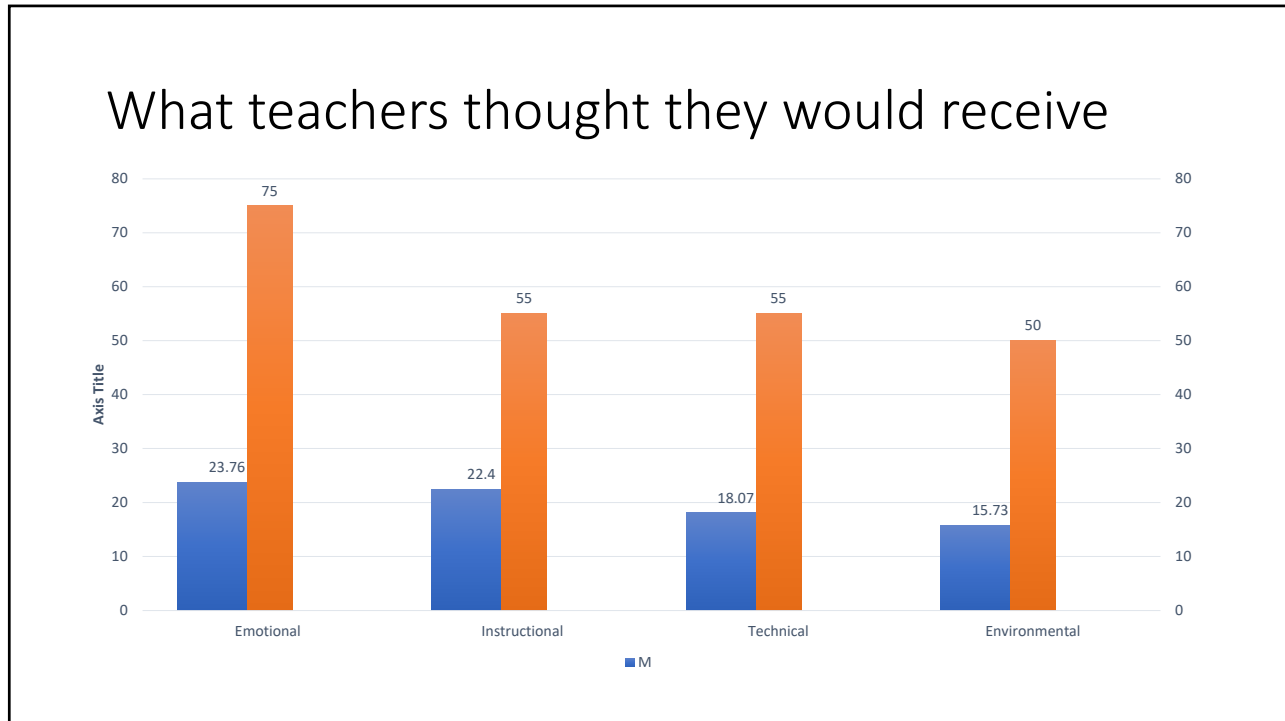
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make teachers feel like they are making a difference. • Show interest in what teachers do in their classroom.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that teachers have enough planning time. • Make sure that teachers have the space they need to teach and plan.
Instructional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give teachers information about instructional techniques that will help improve instruction. • Suggest alternative methods for students who are struggling.
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help teachers follow the federal and state special education regulations. • Provide teachers with reliable feedback about their IEPs.

What did I want to know

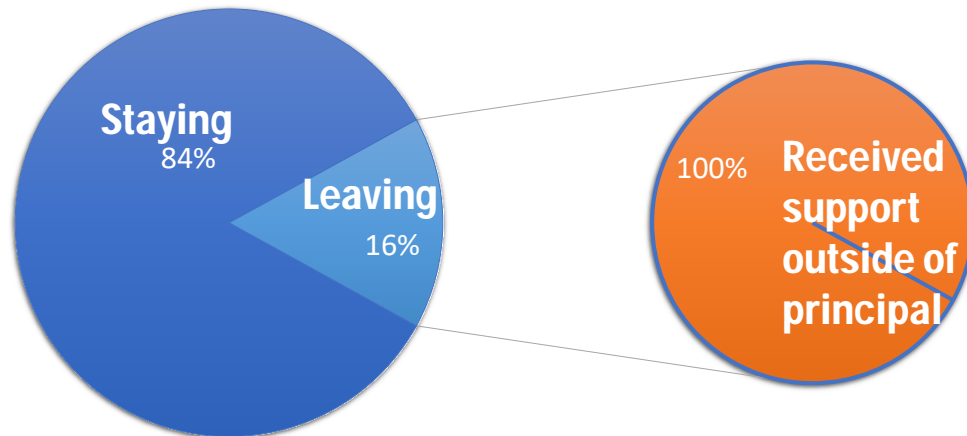
1. What are administrators perceptions of the types of support early career special education teachers need to be successful?
2. What are early career special education teachers perceptions of the types of supports administrators can provide them to be successful?
3. Is there a relationship between the type of administrative support received by early career SETs and their choice to remain a SET?

What principals thought teachers needed





Retention Decisions



Important details to the research

- **Sample demographically representative of the teaching workforce**
- **Diversity of work force impacts student achievement**
- **Disability category – evidence around EBD and Autism**
- **Provisionally Licensed teachers**

What does that mean for our work?

- **Professional development for principals around support**
- **Collection of more precise data**
- **Create structures to check in with early career SETs**
- **Examine qualifications of leadership**
- **Formal training in supporting teachers**
- **Track and monitor retention data more precisely**
- **Layer on the impact of COVID and reduced budgets**

Final Thoughts

- **Continued funding is crucial to recruitment and retention**
- **Federal policy matters, as does local policy**
- **Start in your own district**
- **Remember when you were a teacher!**
- **Lead from the seat you are in!**

Special Education Teacher Shortages: Deep Dive into California

July 15, 2020

- **Naomi Ondrasek**, Senior Researcher and Policy Advisor
- @LPI_Learning



The Need for a Stable, Well-Prepared Special Educator Workforce

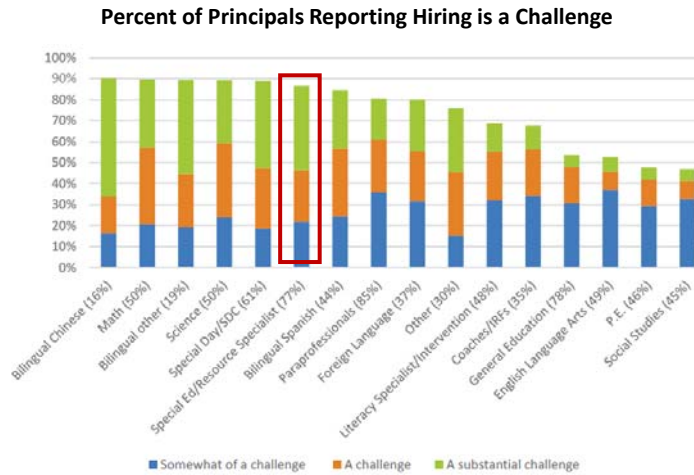
- Special educators with more extensive preparation:
 - Are less likely to turn over
 - Boost achievement for students with disabilities
 - Are better prepared to use a variety of instructional methods

California's Policy Context

- Achievement gaps have grown
- 187 districts/COEs need differentiated assistance based on poor outcomes for students with disabilities
- California policymakers committed in 2019 to working on special education

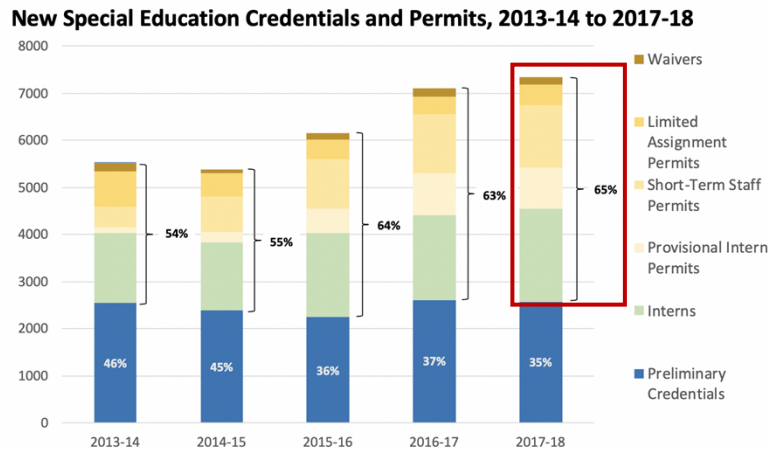
The Shape of the Shortage

More than 3/4 of Principals Find it Difficult to Hire Special Education Teachers



Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of GDTFII 2018 Principal Survey conducted by RAND.

Nearly 5,000 New Special Education Teachers Entered the Field Underprepared



Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing data dashboard.

Over 1/5 Teachers from Special Education Schools Turn Over



Teachers in special education schools



Between 2015-16 and 2016-17:

- 13.4% left the profession or state
- 7.3% moved between schools

Special Educator Shortages Across the U.S.

- In 2015-16, Teacher Shortage Area data reported to the USDOE show that:
 - 48 states and DC identified special education as a shortage area
 - Most states identified special education as the most severe shortage they face, appearing on their shortage reports for many grade levels and many subareas.

Factors That Impact Special Educator Attrition

Preparation and Professional Learning Impact Attrition



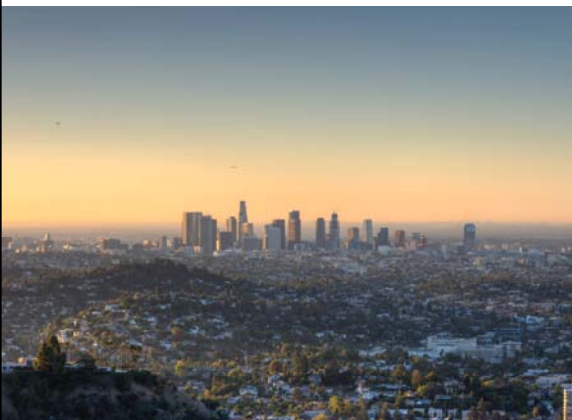
- Underprepared teachers leave at twice the rate of those who are fully prepared
- Intensive preparation and professional learning experiences can help improve both teacher retention and efficacy
- CA made changes to special education teacher preparation 30 years ago

Working Conditions Impact Teacher Attrition



- State law does little to limit high caseloads
- Support from colleagues and administrators impacts special educators' decisions to remain in the field

Financial Supports Impact Recruitment and Retention



- Student debt deters candidates from pursuing teaching careers
- Special education teachers cite low salaries as a reason for leaving

Policy Moves to Address the Shortage

A Comprehensive Policy Approach to Improve Recruitment and Retention

- 1) Strengthen the pipeline with recruitment incentives for high-retention pathways
- 2) Improve the quality of and access to preparation
- 3) Expand and strengthen professional development
- 4) Improve working conditions for special education teachers
- 5) Increase compensation

California's Investments in Special Education: Pre-COVID-19

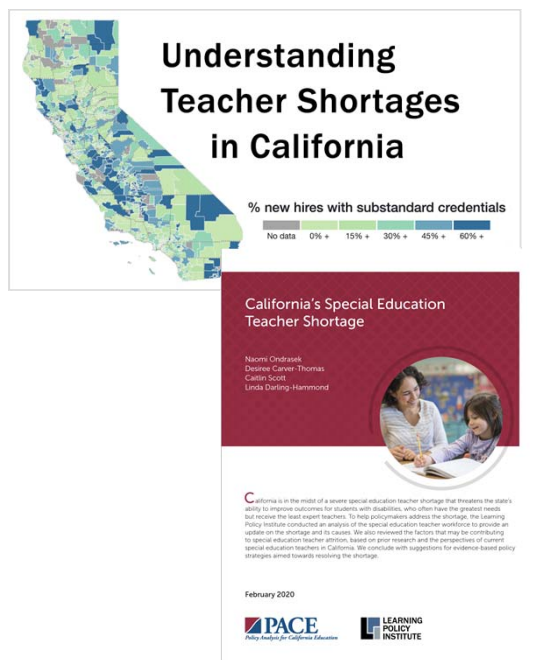
Special Education Local Solutions Grant Program	\$50M (2018)
Teacher Residency Grant Program	\$75M for teacher residencies (\$50M special ed, \$25M STEM/bilingual) (2018)
Golden State Teacher Grant Program	\$89.75M (2019)
Additional Special Education Funding	\$545M (2020)
Teacher Scholarships in Special Education	\$15M (2020)

California's Investments in Special Education: Post-COVID-19

Special Education Local Solutions Grant Program	\$50M (2018)
Teacher Residency Grant Program	\$75M for teacher residencies (\$50M special ed, \$25M STEM/bilingual) (2018)
Golden State Teacher Grant Program	\$89.75M (2019)
Additional Special Education Funding	\$545M (2020)
Teacher Scholarships in Special Education	\$15M (2020)

How Will COVID-19 Impact Shortages?

- What are educators saying?
 - 12% say the pandemic may lead them to leave the profession (1 out of 5 say they may not come back).
- More K-12 public education jobs were lost in April 2020 than in all of the Great Recession.
- Half of the losses between March and April were among special education teachers, tutors, and teaching assistants.



Stay Up to Date!

Sign up for updates

bit.ly/LPIupdates

LPI Resources on Teacher Shortages

learningpolicyinstitute.org/news/resources-teacher-shortages-united-states

Email Naomi Ondrasek, Senior Researcher & Policy Advisor

nondrasek@learningpolicyinstitute.org

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

Questions?

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020



Naomi Ondrasak, Ph.D.
Senior Researcher &
Policy Advisor,
Learning Policy Institute



Jane West, Ph.D.
Consultant,
TED & HECSE



Cassandra B. Willis, Ph.D.
Education Specialist,
Henrico County Schools

#SELS2020



COVID-19 Emergency

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020

- Provide an infusion of \$300 million in the next COVID-19 relief bill for IDEA Personnel Preparation Grants
- Increase CARES Act/COVID-19 funding to support evidence-based remote learning professional development for special education teachers and support staff
- Provide incentives to SEA's, LEAs, and early intervention providers to implement creative plans to decrease furloughs and "reduction in staff" numbers of special education teachers in the wake of COVID-19

#SELS2020



Fiscal Year (FY) 2021

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020

- Provide \$102 million for IDEA Part D Personnel Preparation Grants
- Provide \$48 million for IDEA Part D State Personnel Grants to assist SEAs and Part C state lead agencies
- Provide \$70 million for National Center for Special Education Research in Institute of Education Sciences (IES)
- Provide \$80 million for the Higher Education Act Teacher Quality Partnership Grant Program

#SELS2020



Legislative Priorities

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020

- Co-sponsor and support the Educator Preparation Reform Act, S. 969 (Reed, D-RI).
- Co-sponsor and support Supporting the Teaching Profession Through Revitalizing Investments in Valuable Educators Act (STRIVE), S. 1866 (Booker, D-NJ) and H.R. 3139 (Norcross, D-NJ).
- Co-sponsor and support Preparing and Retaining Education Professionals Act (PREP), S. 752 (Kaine, D-VA).

#SELS2020



Legislative Priorities

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020

- Include education administrators and specialized instructional support personnel in any legislation addressing education shortages
- Strengthen Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, Loan Forgiveness for Service in Areas of National Need, TEACH Grant Program
- Support technical assistance and resource development through existing centers, i.e. the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL), develop priorities specifically on preparing to serve children with disabilities.

#SELS2020



Questions?

Special
Education
Legislative
Summit **2020**
Virtual | July 13-24, 2020



Kuna Tavalin
Senior Policy and Advocacy Advisor,
Council for Exceptional Children
kunat@cec.sped.org



Dr. Kevin Rubenstein,
Policy Committee Chair,
Council for Administrators of Special Education
KRubenstein@elmhurst205.org

#SELS2020

