

A MILLION PAPER CUTS

Why Special Education
Teachers Leave
the Profession

INTRODUCTION

Illinois has reported a shortage of special education teachers since 1996.¹ In 2022, there were more than 650 unfilled special education teacher roles statewide.² The state has more than 250,000 students who qualify for special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).³ Students may have a range of learning, emotional, behavioral, or physical disabilities that require specially trained educators to help them be successful. For those who qualify, IDEA guarantees a free public education with the services these students need. But what happens when there aren't enough teachers? With more students qualifying yearly and more teachers leaving, how can Illinois keep up? Research shows that almost 50 percent of special education teachers leave the field within their first five years.⁴ Hearing directly from special education teachers is important in order to identify and address the causes of special education teacher attrition.

We are a group of educators and Teach Plus Illinois Policy Fellows who are focused on improving special education teacher retention. To better understand why special education teachers leave the field and how to solve this problem, we held focus groups for teachers throughout Illinois who have special education experience. In this brief, we present our findings and recommendations for policymakers.

Findings

1. Special education teachers want effective mentorship and continued professional development throughout their careers.
2. Increasingly heavy workloads result in lack of time to fulfill duties and responsibilities and deteriorating mental health for special education teachers.
3. School administrators do not have a comprehensive understanding of special education teachers' responsibilities and duties.
4. Educator preparation programs do not adequately prepare special education teachers for non-instructional parts of their job such as writing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and successful collaboration.

Recommendations

District leaders and elected officials should:

1. School districts should provide a robust mentoring program with at least two years of mentorship for special education teachers.
2. Districts should increase pay for special education staff and create additional positions to reduce workload.
3. School administrators should be trained to understand special education teachers' duties and incorporate their suggestions regarding student needs.
4. ISBE should require more classroom field experience, training in managing IEPs and paperwork, and practice in collaborating with peers as part of special education preparation programs.

METHODOLOGY

Our group of Teach Plus Illinois Policy Fellows included three special education teachers, two English teachers, and one math teacher. Our research was driven by the following questions:

- + What supports are necessary to more effectively retain special education teachers?
- + How can undergraduate special education teacher preparation programs more effectively create an engaging and supportive program of study for pre-service candidates?
- + What should administrators know in order to be able to better support and retain special education teachers?

To better understand the lived experience and needs of special education teachers in Illinois, we designed a focus group protocol to collect data on the teachers' perspectives. We led virtual focus groups with 38 special education teachers. These educators came from a diverse set of backgrounds and contexts in which they have taught, with:

- + 53 percent (20) of the focus group participants had taught in special education contexts for 11 or more years, 32 percent (12) had taught in special education contexts for between four and 10 years, and 16 percent (6) had taught in special education contexts for fewer than four years.⁵
- + 32 percent (12) of respondents identified as a teacher of color.⁶
- + 24 percent (9) of the focus group participants identified as special education teachers in a cooperative organization, an outside group that partners with its member school districts to provide special education services for those districts.⁷

FINDINGS

1. Finding 1: Special education teachers want effective mentorship and continued professional development throughout their careers.

Research shows that new special education teachers who have strong induction support find their roles to be manageable, believe that they are successful in helping students with their IEP goals, and indicate that they can help even the most difficult students.⁸ Special education teachers in our focus groups indicated that they want formal mentorship programs that pair them with a qualified teacher. At the same time, many participants stated that while they did have mentorship programs, there was no consistency in how these programs are designed or implemented.

One participant said: *"Each new teacher to the district is paired with another teacher - not necessarily a teacher in the same or similar position. You are introduced by [being] given the mentor teacher's email and that is about it. It is then up to the mentor and mentee to figure things out. It is abysmal."* They explained further, *"My mentor teacher when I started had absolutely no idea about special education ... She routinely came*

*to me to ask me questions about IEP goals, the law, and to give her strategies. I was completely on my own.”*⁹ This sentiment was repeated throughout our focus groups. New special education teachers are paired with mentors who have no knowledge of the field and are unable to help.

Those participants who stated that their mentorship had a positive effect on their pedagogy also had a more formal program in place. One respondent said, *“We have monthly meetings for the first two years of teaching with our mentors and the other new teachers where we learn the best practices to be successful in our buildings.”* She further explained, *“Learning from my mentor and others around the building has helped provide me with the best scenario for success.”*¹⁰

Participants also noted that if they did have a mentorship program, it was limited. One participant wrote, *“The mentorship program is only for first- and second-year teachers. There is no support after that.”*¹¹ When participants were asked what advice they would like to share with school administrators regarding the retention of special education teachers and/or changes that could be made, one teacher said, *“Supporting and developing your SPED team matters and impacts the most marginalized students within the school. If you can do this right you can support all kids in being successful.”*¹²

2. Increasingly heavy workloads result in lack of time to fulfill duties and responsibilities and deteriorating mental health for special education teachers.

The rigorous paperwork demands of working as a special education teacher are driving educators from the field at a rapid rate.¹³ Many special education teachers in our focus groups felt that the work they need to accomplish makes their job impossible to complete during their contractual hours. Many participants cited IEP paperwork, communication with families, behavior intervention plans, goal monitoring, collaboration with other service providers, creating curriculum with little or no guidance, and managing support staff as far too many responsibilities. Sixty-two percent of participants ranked acceptable workload as the first or second most impactful category in their ability to manage their responsibilities. As one participant noted, *“Logistically, it’s impossible to be an effective teacher, case manager, curriculum designer, goal writer, and online learning management system navigator within the span of normal working hours.”*¹⁴

We asked the special education teachers in our focus groups to reflect on whether they were able to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their teaching position during contractual hours. Twenty respondents indicated that they “strongly disagreed” and 10 indicated that they “somewhat disagreed.”¹⁵ One educator stated: *“I spend many of my planning periods working with students who have fallen behind. Sometimes my planning periods are filled with meetings ... I often say to myself, ‘If I can just make it through this week, it’ll be better next week.’ But those tough weeks fill up more and more of my schedule each year. I am not an exception. The majority of teachers in my department do this as well and they take on additional, often unpaid roles.”*¹⁶

Paperwork in particular appears to be a strong determining factor in special education teacher attrition.¹⁷ One educator who participated in the focus group noted, *“Constant additions to the IEP process are like death by a million paper cuts.”*¹⁸ It is evident that the overwhelming paperwork is a factor that is driving special educators out of the profession.

“Constant additions to the IEP process are like death by a million paper cuts.”

Excessive workload demands are negatively impacting special education teachers' mental health as well as student outcomes. IEPs are long, legal documents that not only require many hours to write, but also call for extensive documentation throughout the school year. These additional responsibilities outside of teaching are taxing, and take away time from being able to prepare and execute well-planned lessons. As one educator noted, *“I worry constantly that I cannot sustain this workload and still provide quality education to my students.”*¹⁹

Often, the paperwork demands required of special education teachers are the same regardless of the student's disability. One aspect of the 2004 IDEA amendment requires teachers to prove that students are participating in instruction in the least restrictive environment.²⁰ While this directive makes sense for students with high incidence disabilities, it creates redundancy for students with low-incidence disabilities. There should not be a burden of proof on special education teachers to justify that a person with an intellectual disability will benefit from special education services. As one focus group participant noted, *“The paperwork is redundant and unnecessary. It takes so long to complete and really doesn't give us more information. I cannot get this done during my day.”*²¹ Allocating time in the workday to address paperwork demands, or streamline paperwork expectations, would reduce special education teacher attrition.

3. School administrators do not have a comprehensive understanding of special education teachers' responsibilities and duties.

Respondents noted that administrators do not have enough understanding of the role of special education teachers to adequately create structures in schools to help them, and therefore their students, succeed. There has historically been a divide between the knowledge that administrators need to best support special education teachers and their students and the training administrators actually receive. For example, a 2018 study found that, of 929 school administrators in California, 73 percent had no training in the evaluation of special education teachers.²² This chasm has consequences for how special education departments function and special education teachers experience their jobs.

In our focus groups, we found that, whether through ignorance or inaction, school administrators were often not taking active roles in the special education functions at their schools. One respondent named how distant administrators were from the real issues

facing special education teachers and students. *"I believe my administration genuinely cares about the SPED department as a whole,"* the respondent shared. *"However, I honestly believe they are out of touch when it comes to issues that most affect our department and students."*²³ Other respondents found that their administrators were willing to listen to the solutions but not make any real changes. *"Administration is willing to hear the concerns, but we don't always see any action taken."*²⁴ Based on how limited administrators' understanding of the special education field is, this lack of action isn't surprising, but it does create many of the challenges special educators face in their jobs.

Ultimately, our respondents believe that special education teachers operate in systems that fail to prioritize their roles and the needs of their students, leading to these teachers navigating a system not built for them. This starts with establishing and clarifying the job responsibilities to set special education teachers and departments up for success. *"I'd like to see explicit directives and defined roles and responsibilities,"* one respondent wrote. *"I'd like a committee to sit down and attempt to see what supports are necessary for real success to take place in the special education environment."*²⁵ Respondents expressed a need to have a seat at the table when school-level policy decisions are made, as this would help better position special education teachers for success. *"Make us a part of the conversation,"* another respondent wrote.²⁶ While the expectations placed on special education teachers are great, the lack of understanding from administrators and the unwillingness to include special educators in the discussion prevents change from happening.

4. Educator preparation programs do not adequately prepare special education teachers for non-instructional parts of their job such as writing IEPs and successful collaboration.

Respondents in our focus groups noted that many educator preparation programs for special education credentials did not adequately prepare them for the critical elements of their role. Special education teachers report a wide variety of requirements through their preparation programs, ranging from only three classes to complete a certification to many hours of clinical experience in schools.

Some respondents explained that they had very little training or classroom experience, especially if they went through a certification program rather than a full undergraduate or graduate program. One teacher noted, *"I had to take 3 classes to get my special education endorsement. These three classes left me ill-prepared for life in the classroom as a special education teacher. When I received my endorsement, I did not have any knowledge of the 13 categories of eligibility for special education. This left me really overwhelmed when I began my career as a special education teacher."*²⁷ Teachers with little training and classroom experience reported feeling unprepared for their roles, even years into their career.

Several respondents noted challenges in learning how to write and prepare IEPs on the job due to a lack of training in their preparation programs. Even respondents who felt that they had a supportive and structured preparation program reported feeling a lack of preparation when it came to IEP writing. One teacher stated, *"The biggest thing that I had to learn on my own was managing IEPs and writing IEPs and learning the ins and outs of a school district. That was not provided during teacher training."*²⁸

Regardless of the type of preparation program, nearly all special education teachers reported that they would have benefited from more classroom experience. One respondent noted, *“I wish I would have been given more time in the classrooms actually having the experiences.”* Another respondent stated, *“Of course book work in a classroom is nothing like the real thing, the observations & student teaching experiences were invaluable.”*²⁹ Now that these teachers are working in the field, they recognize the value of classroom experience during preparation programs and know it to be critical to their success.

It is clear from the focus group responses that there is little consistency in the amount of classroom exposure required for a special education credential. Traditional teacher preparation programs tend to have a minimum requirement of hours spent in the classroom, but those who go through a non-traditional route like a certification program may not. With special educators' attrition at an all-time high, it is important that teacher prep programs are producing high-quality teachers who have the skills and knowledge to withstand the rigorous demands of the job.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School districts should provide a robust mentoring program with at least two years of mentorship for special education teachers.

New teachers who take part in induction programs at their schools are more likely to stay in the classroom, and mentorship is a key aspect of these initiatives.³⁰ As we've shown in Finding 1, many special education teachers in our focus groups experienced a lack of mentorship in their roles. Even in the case of respondents who received some form of mentorship, relying on informal connections isn't a sustainable model for success. We recommend school districts in Illinois that are not taking advantage of [ISBE's new teacher mentoring program](#) **create a framework for and subsequently implement systematic, sustained, evidence-based mentorship programs specifically for their special education teachers.** These programs should contain the following:

An effective mentor matching process. The job of the special education teacher is unique and often overwhelming. A new special education teacher needs a mentor who will be helpful in the various aspects of the position. [Mentorship programs are most effective when mentors are effectively matched with mentees.](#) School districts should create a system in which teachers don't simply have a mentor, but are paired with one who is attuned to the needs and stresses of the position. If they are unable to do so, they should leverage ISBE's new mentoring program which provides content-area matching.³¹

A focus on mentor training and flexibility. School districts must also provide effective training for any veteran special education teachers who are to become a mentor. [Mentorship is most effective](#) when a mentor is adept at responding to the various professional, social, and emotional needs of their mentee, and the impetus is on districts to ensure that all mentors receive training and that there is a feedback process on both the quality of the training and the mentorship received overall.³²

By providing effective training for mentors, districts can ensure that the special education teachers in these roles have the latitude to vary the supports based on the novice teacher's needs. There are numerous parts of a special education teacher's job that can be challenging to navigate, and it is essential that mentors have the training and the flexibility in their position to shift focus as necessary.

A mentorship structure that can occur within contractual hours. Rather than create an additional component of a special education teacher's job that would take place outside of contractual hours, districts must create a structure to allow for the mentorship to occur within the hours stated in teachers' contracts.

A two-year duration. [The length of induction mentorship programs varies, but often, research suggests that a longer mentorship duration is better.](#)³³ We recommend mentorship for new special education teachers to last for a minimum of two years. Often, mentorship pairings evolve over time, shifting from the mentor helping the mentee with logistical and operational issues, to a relationship defined by trust which focuses on the deeper, more nuanced challenges of the job.

2. Districts should increase pay for special education staff and create additional positions to reduce workload.

Special education teachers find the demands and responsibilities of the job impossible to complete within contractual hours. As such, school districts need to amend the pay structure and allocation of duties in order to alleviate special education teacher attrition. We offer three suggestions to achieve this goal:

Increase teacher pay and funding for special education programs. Hawaii has begun an initiative to pay their special education teachers an additional \$10,000 dollars per year. A recent article on this initiative noted, "Hawaii's pay increase, which began in 2020, was a game changer. Before the incentive, in October 2019, almost 30% of the state's special education positions were vacant or staffed by teachers without appropriate licenses ... By October 2021, that number dropped by half, to about 15%."³⁴ Such a significant increase in retention over two years is strong evidence that pay increases will help achieve greater teacher retention. School districts in Detroit and Atlanta that also offered financial incentives watched their vacant special education positions disappear. While there is a financial burden to increasing salaries, the initiative would effectively offset the cost of recruitment and onboarding of new employees. One focus group participant noted, *"Give financial incentives for SPED teachers. I don't feel like my unique training is recognized or properly reimbursed."*³⁵

Federal, state, and local governments also need to properly fund their special education programs. Numerous respondents pointed to higher pay for teachers, higher pay for paraprofessionals, or increased funding for special education programs as advice they would share with policymakers. The need is apparent and stakeholders should consider the positive impact increased financial support for special education programs would have on our teachers and students.

Hire additional staff and divide workload. The responsibilities of special education teachers go far beyond pedagogy and classroom management. When asked what their responsibilities were, one participant noted, *"IEP development and necessary assessments, progress monitoring for IEP benchmarks and grading, curriculum*

development, attending curriculum and department meetings for both the general education English dept. and the special education dept, collaborate with general education teachers, speech language pathologist, social worker, and counselors on a weekly basis, communicate with parents both inside and outside of work hours, explain rights and responsibilities of our students and how to advocate on what they need, develop materials and establish instructional strategies for 5 different subjects."³⁶ This is a tremendous amount of responsibilities for one educator to fulfill.

One suggestion to resolve the insurmountable burdens placed on special education teachers is to restructure programs and reallocate responsibilities. Schools could hire additional teachers and lower caseload numbers, they could train paraprofessionals to communicate with families, and they could allocate additional positions for curriculum development, behavior management, or assessment. One participant noted: "*I'd like to see explicit directives and defined roles and responsibilities. I want pre-planned time built in for caseload and paperwork days.*"³⁷ There is a clear demand for a more defined structure of special education departments and additional staff to alleviate some of the exhaustive duties of special education teachers.

Provide teachers time or resources to complete IEPs efficiently. One theme across the literature and among the focus group participants regarding special education teacher attrition is the amount of time it takes to complete the IEP paperwork. One focus group participant stated: "*I would love for there to be additional paperwork days for special education teachers so they could get their work done during the school day. I think it would be great to give ALL special education teachers an additional plan period so that they can prepare for the additional work that they have to do.*"³⁸ It is undeniable that special education teachers' paperwork demands are too great to be completed during contractual hours. When asked if they are able to fulfill their job responsibilities during these, nearly half of focus group participants mentioned that due to the demands of paperwork specifically, they are not. Additional time needs to be made available to teachers to complete the paperwork, or add additional personnel to alleviate the workload.

3. School administrators should be trained to understand special education teachers' duties, and incorporate their suggestions regarding student needs.

As stated in Finding 3, a common frustration among our interviewees was the fact that many of them didn't feel supported by their administrators. We therefore recommend the following:

Train administrators. In some cases, teachers feel that administrators often neglect the needs of special education teachers, but others believe administrators truly do not have the proper training to support them. School administrators, especially those without a background in special education, may need more training and support related to evaluating special education teachers during preparation and in the early years of administration. Not knowing how to support quite arguably the most challenging and demanding population in a school district is simply frightening.³⁹ The legal consequences that schools can be under due to not properly completing paperwork or adhering to the individualized needs of their students can be crippling to a school. Administrators need to have formal training on how to support and evaluate special education teachers if they truly hope to have a school that believes in supporting each individual student.

Listen to special education teachers. Another ongoing issue for special education teachers is the fact that they do not feel heard by their administrators. Teachers need to feel supported and appreciated. They are the experts in their field, but are not always sought out on how to best support their own students. A study of the retention of special educators found that stress from lack of administrator support was a factor in retention and that “Perceived support by principals or other teachers in the school helped alleviate this stress.”⁴⁰ Teachers are much more likely to stay if they are working for administrators who are willing to listen and make changes to support their staff. Making necessary adjustments based on special education teacher input is a critical step in order to solve a high burnout rate among special education staff.

4. ISBE should require more classroom field experience, training in managing IEPs and paperwork, and practice in collaborating with peers as part of Special Education preparation programs.

As stated in Finding 4, special education teachers feel that teacher prep programs are not adequately preparing them for the many roles they hold. Many participants stated they felt unprepared for the non-instructional elements of the job. To better prepare future special education teachers, we have the following recommendations:

Classroom Experience. We recommend that all special education teacher candidates seeking licensure or an endorsement fulfill a minimum of 10 weeks working full-time in a special education classroom. Ten weeks is the minimum standard that the National Council on Teacher Quality recommends for any teacher candidate to experience.⁴¹

Managing Paperwork. Throughout the focus groups, special educators noted that it was a challenge to begin their role with little to no previous experience with paperwork including IEP writing, progress monitoring, and other data collection. Preparation programs for special education teachers must include a framework to teach and practice required paperwork and other aligned duties such as writing IEPs, gathering IEP data, and data collection for goals. While those general topics are frequently discussed throughout coursework, current teachers reported that they had little to no experience working with or being trained on paperwork in their preparation programs.

There are noted positive effects between extensive preparation and teacher retention. The better prepared special educator candidates are prior to entering the field, the more likely they are to stay.⁴² Many teachers in the focus group noted similar themes to a teacher describing feeling unprepared by stating, *“I don't feel like I received enough training in identifying disabilities or how to prepare an IEP.”*⁴³ When teachers do not feel prepared to adequately do their job, including the crucial legalities of their specific role in special education, students' needs are not fully met and teachers do not feel successful.

Preparation programs must develop a framework to directly teach and practice IEP writing and other paperwork needs based on state and federal guidelines. It would be beneficial to use templates from IEP and progress monitoring programs that are used in districts across the state. When possible, preparation programs should align this work to classroom experiences the teacher candidate has.

Collaboration. Many special education teachers in the focus group concluded through open responses that instruction, training, and practice in collaboration with colleagues were lacking in their preparation programs and would have been beneficial in their experience. To complete their duties and responsibilities, special education teachers are required to collaborate with many professionals including co-teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, general education teachers, and related service providers. Literature reviews show that teachers with more consistent and supportive collaborative relationships with colleagues typically had higher intent to stay in the field.

Since successful collaboration is a critical component in retention and very few special education teachers reported feeling prepared in that aspect through their preparation programs, it is clear that preparation programs must explicitly address the needs of how to develop successful collaboration and how to manage various roles and relationships. One teacher in the focus groups noted, *“I felt I had learned much but I did not feel I was prepared for what was really happening in schools. For example ... as a resource teacher grades 5-6, I had to learn on my own how to work with six different teachers and basically teach them how to include my students without making them feel ashamed for how they learned.”*⁴⁴ Current teachers note how critical collaboration is in their field, yet come out of preparation programs feeling ill-equipped.

Educator preparation programs must include a framework for special education teachers in training to implement collaborative techniques with professionals in the field through classroom experiences, while being supported at the preparation program level in navigating this experience. This may be implemented through several semester-long activities or projects where the teacher candidate is working on a common goal with several other professionals, and has support and guidance from their preparation program facilitator.

CONCLUSION

To fully support special education teachers, we need to foster teaching environments and training that are conducive to retaining them in our schools. School districts need to expand their mentorship programs with formal training, additional funds need to be allocated to increase positions to properly fulfill duties and responsibilities, district and school administrators need to continue professional development around the role of special education teachers to be able to provide effective feedback and resources, and education preparation programs need to incorporate additional opportunities for field experience. We urge district and state leaders to consider our recommendations in order to support the growth of special education teachers in the field and allow them to more effectively serve their students in an education system marked by its focus on equity and student success.

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ABOUT TEACH PLUS

The mission of Teach Plus is to empower excellent, experienced, and diverse teachers to take leadership over key policy and practice issues that affect their students' success. Since 2009, Teach Plus has developed thousands of teacher leaders across the country to exercise their leadership in shaping education policy and improving teaching and learning, to create an education system driven by access and excellence for all.

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ENDNOTES

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- 2 Educator Licensure Unfilled Positions 2022 (2022). Illinois State Board of Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.isbe.net/unfilledpositions>
- 3 Fast Facts: Back to School Statistics. National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>
- 4 Facts About the Teaching Profession for a National Conversation About Teaching. United States Department of Education. Retrieved from: <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/respect/teaching-profession-facts.doc>
- 5 Question: Including the 2021-2022 school year, how many years of teaching experience do you have? Response: (n=38) 1-3 years (15.79%) 4-5 years (2.63%) 6-10 years (28.95%) 11+ years (52.63%)
- 6 Question: "Do you identify as an educator of color?" Response: (n=37) Yes (32.43%) No (64.83%) Prefer not to say (2.7%)
- 7 Question: "Are you currently a special education teacher in a co-op organization?" Response (n=38) Yes (23.68%) No (76.32%)
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- 9 Question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: "Formal mentorship at my school has positively impacted my pedagogy.""
- 10 Question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: "Formal mentorship at my school has positively impacted my pedagogy.""

- 11** Question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: "Formal mentorship at my school has positively impacted my pedagogy.""
- 12** Question: "What advice would you like to share with school administrators regarding the retention of special education teachers and/or changes that could be made?"
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- 14** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am able to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of my teaching position during my contractual hours."
- 15** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am able to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of my teaching position during my contractual hours." Response (n=38) Strongly disagree (52.63%) Somewhat disagree (26.32%) Somewhat agree (8.42%) Strongly agree (2.63%)
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- 19** Question: "If you've considered leaving the special education field (or have already left the field), please explain why."
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- 21** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: I am able to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of my teaching position during my contractual hours."
- 22** Rodl, J.E., Bonifay, W., Cruz, R.A., Manchanda, S. (2018). A Survey of School Administrators' Training and Support Related to Evaluating Special Education Teachers. *Journal of School Administration Research and Development*. 3(1). Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1190961.pdf>
- 23** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My current administration provides the necessary support to allow me to fulfill my professional responsibilities.""
- 24** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My current administration provides the necessary support to allow me to fulfill my professional responsibilities.""
- 25** Question: "Can you provide some examples of additional support you would like to see at your school?"
- 26** Question: "What advice would you like to share with school administrators regarding the retention of special education teachers and/or changes that could be made?"
- 27** Question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My teacher preparation program provided me with the necessary training and resources to fulfill my duties and responsibilities as a special education teacher.""

- 28** Question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My teacher preparation program provided me with the necessary training and resources to fulfill my duties and responsibilities as a special education teacher.""
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- 35** Question: "What advice would you like to share with policymakers regarding the retention of special education teachers and/or changes that could be made?"
- 36** Question: "As a special education teacher, what are your responsibilities?"
- 37** Question: "Can you provide some examples of additional support you would like to see at your school?"
- 38** Question: "What advice would you like to share with policymakers regarding the retention of special education teachers and/or changes that could be made?"
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- 40** Gersten, R., Keating, T., Yovanoff, P., Harniss M.K. Working in Special Education: Factors that Enhance Special Educators' Intent to Stay. *Exceptional Children*. 2001;67(4):549-567. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1190961.pdf>
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- 42** Theobald, R., Goldhaber, D., Naito, N., Stein, M. (2020). The Special Education Teacher Pipeline: Teacher Preparation, Workforce Entry, and Retention. CALDER Working Paper No. 231-0220. Retrieved from <https://caldercenter.org/publications/special-education-teacher-pipeline-teacher-preparation-workforce-entry-and-retention>
- 43** Question: "Thinking about your current work environment, to what extent do you agree with the following statement: "I can adequately support the needs of students on my caseload and their families.""
- 44** Question: "To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My teacher preparation program provided me with the necessary training and resources to fulfill my duties and responsibilities as a special education teacher.""