



Addressing the Special Education Teacher Shortage

The Problem

- In the past decade, the nation has seen a 70% decrease in enrollment in teacher education programs.
- According to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 60% of first-year special education teachers were working without a full special education credential in the 2017-18 school year.
- The special education teacher turnover rate is approximately 25%.

Potential Solutions

Promote within: Any current gen. ed. teachers looking to make the switch? Are any substitute teachers, paraeducators, school staff, or parents with a bachelor's degree interested in moving into special education? LEAs can hire an intern SPED teacher only a few months into their ed. specialist program if they meet certain requirements (even if they do not possess a general ed. credential), and it may be even easier if the teacher already holds a teaching credential. Internal staff interest surveys or referral bonuses may be a good way to find interested potential candidates.

Reaching out to local and online Universities: Consider contacting SPED department chairs, professors, job coaches, and placement specialists at local universities asking for leads on interns or intern eligible students in their programs. Online universities like National University, Brandman University, and Alliant University (to name a few) regularly place intern teachers with local school districts and charters.

Connect with teacher placement organizations: Teach For America, local district intern programs (such as High Tech High Teacher Center in San Diego), county offices of Education, and other similar placement organizations may be able to place an education specialist intern with your school. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many placement organizations and education non-profit organizations are hosting virtual job fairs to help educational agencies and schools find qualified candidates.

Edjoin Posting tips: Consider posting the salary range for the position in the listing, as opposed to using “competitive” or another placeholder. Researching Ed. specialist salary ranges in your area, and offering additional incentives such as a signing bonus or a stipend for continuing education may help make your posting appear more attractive to potential candidates.

Mod/Severe Education Specialist vacancies: If no qualified candidates can be found, CTC's Special Education Limited Assignment Teaching Permit (SELAP) may be a way to hire or transition a mild/moderate education specialist into a mod/severe opening.

Resources: Staff interested in pursuing a career in teaching can find more information about requirements, traditional teacher credential programs, intern teacher programs, financial aid options, and receive free career counseling at the links below: _

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/bt/>

<https://www.teachcalifornia.org/Steps/Special>

<https://californiateach.org/candidate/jobfairs/public>

<https://www.ctc.ca.gov/educator-prep/intern/default>

https://www.ctc.ca.gov/docs/default-source/leaflets/cl707b.pdf?sfvrsn=e0d3a84d_4

Sources:

Since 2001, overall teacher preparation enrollments in California for all subjects have declined by more than 70 percent, and program completers have also decreased (Darling-Hammond et al., 2018)

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/PACE_Special_Education_Teacher_Shortage_REPORT.pdf

A high turnover rate among special education teachers, which has remained relatively stable at around 25% over the past 20 years, contributes to this shortage.

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tchr-ret/cresource/q1/p01/>

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