Alabama Fast Facts

- 86,249 children and youth with disabilities receive early intervention and special education services provided by IDEA.

- There is a shortage of: Autism (Kindergarten – Grade 12), Learning Disabilities (Kindergarten – Grade 12), Intellectual Disabilities (Kindergarten – Grade 12), Multiple Disabilities (Kindergarten – Grade 12), Speech (Kindergarten – Grade 12), and Visually – Hearing Impaired (Kindergarten – Grade 12).

- 716 future special educators/early interventionists received financial assistance through IDEA Personnel Preparation since 2006.

- Auburn University, University of Alabama Birmingham, and University of Alabama Tuscaloosa received IDEA Personnel Preparation grants from 2008-2012.

- $6,350,178.40 from the IDEA Personnel Preparation Program was invested from 2008-2012.

- The Personnel Preparation Program is funded under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

IDEA Personnel Preparation Program Increases the Special Educator Pipeline

Children and youth with disabilities – and their families – thrive when they have access to educators and professionals who are specially trained to address their complex needs. Unfortunately, there continues to be a chronic shortage of special education personnel in every state.

IDEA’s Personnel Preparation program recognizes this shortage and supports approximately 8,000 scholars annually, all of whom are preparing for a career to serve children and youth with disabilities.

65% of all Personnel Preparation funds go directly to future special education teachers, early interventionists, administrators, and researchers; serving as financial assistance that enables them to secure college degrees and gain expertise. Upon completion of the Personnel Preparation program, all recipients are required to “pay back” through two years of service in a high-need area for every year of federal support; a wise use of federal funding.
Shrinking Federal Investment

Over the last three years, funding for IDEA’s Personnel Preparation program had decreased from $90.6 million in FY 2010 to $83.7 million in FY 2013.

As a result, fewer future special educators, early interventionists, and related service personnel are receiving the financial assistance needed to pursue careers focusing on children and youth with disabilities, thereby exacerbating the personnel shortage that exists in nearly every state.

Building better outcomes for children with disabilities – and their families – starts with skilled professionals who work on their behalf.

At a minimum, funding for IDEA’s Personnel Preparation program must be restored to its fiscal year 2010 amount of $90.6 million, although to truly address the personnel shortages, an increase in funding is needed.

University of Alabama Program Focuses on Cultivating Leaders for Diverse, High-Poverty Areas

The University of Alabama – Birmingham’s program, *Cultivating Leaders for Inclusive, Diverse Environments*, is a collaborative effort with Birmingham City Schools, Bessemer City Schools, and the Alabama State Department of Education to prepare future special education administrators who can provide effective leadership in diverse, high-poverty educational environments. The program provides tuition support and incorporates innovative field experiences throughout the coursework.

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