Improved Outcomes for Children with Disabilities Starts with Well Prepared Educators, Early Interventionists

Washington Profile

Washington Fast Facts

- 140,466 children and youth with disabilities receive early intervention and special education services provided by IDEA.
- There is a shortage of: Early Childhood Special Education, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, School Nurse, School Psychologist, Special Education, and Speech Language Pathologist.
- 232 future special educators/early interventionists received financial assistance through IDEA Personnel Preparation since 2006.
- Tacoma Community College and the University of Washington received IDEA Personnel Preparation grants from 2008-2012.
- $5,511,734 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.
University of Washington Program Prepares Teachers to Address Low-Incidence Disabilities

Project BUILD -- Building Upon Instructional Leaders' Discussions – will prepare at least 45 new teachers for students with low-incidence disabilities in high need schools in an effort to reduce high rates of teacher turnover with the most vulnerable student populations.

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.

65% of IDEA Personnel Preparation grants provide student financial assistance

90% of high poverty school districts report difficulty attracting highly qualified special educators

47 States and U.S. Territories have receive IDEA Personnel Preparation grants in last five years