

Keeping Great Special Educators

Proactively planning for the retention of special educators in order to build better outcomes for diverse learners

Presented by:

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Objectives:

Participants will be able to:

- *Understand the key components contributing to the retention and movement of special education teachers in Colorado and how this correlates with the outcomes for diverse learners.*
- *Distinguish the key factors associated with teacher retention that impact their school community.*
- *Assess and propose possible solutions for their school communities.*

State of Special Education in Colorado

Before we start, think of a special educator you have had the pleasure to work with and the impact that educator has had on a student in your community. Consider the environment you have created to support that educator in their work.



90,715

Colorado students enrolled in special education programs

13%

Approximately 11,800 students with disabilities in CO are enrolled in public charter schools

3,417

Special educators in Colorado

7,563

Paraprofessionals in Colorado

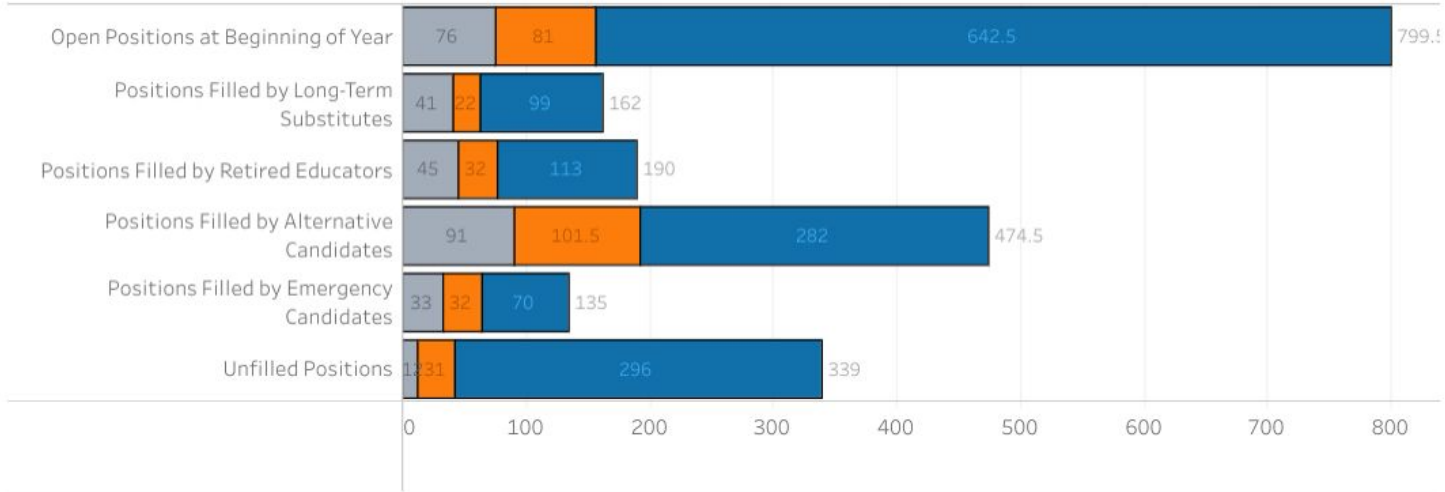
3%

% growth of special educators across the United States from 2018 to 2028

-17%

% drop of special educators over the past decade

State Level Shortage Data



The national teacher turnover rate is at 8%. Rates increase by 50% in areas serving low-income communities and 70% higher for teachers serving students of color. Highly needed teachers in special education teachers are 50% more likely to move schools or leave the profession in comparison to others in varying fields.

Why is this happening?

Experience

Teachers are most at-risk to leave within their first year. Research shows approximately 50% of educators will leave within their first several year of teaching.

Retirement

A large number of individuals are expected to retire over the next decade. Some are choosing to leave earlier based on work-related experiences.

****Matched with the decrease of students enrolling in SPED teacher preparation programs**

Work-Related Experiences

Work stress and dissatisfaction are highly correlated to teacher turnover.

Work-Related Experiences



- Lack of support from administrators and colleagues
- Large caseloads
- Non-teaching responsibilities (e.g., excessive paperwork)
- Student behavior
- Accountability requirements
- Salary and benefits
- Lack of opportunity to teach students

Impact on Students

- Disrupts instructional cohesion
- Diminishes the effectiveness of educational programming
- Negatively impacts school culture, collaboration, and relationship-building opportunities
 - *Integral in building high-leverage practices to build positive outcomes for students with disabilities* ([CEC High-Leverage Practices](#))



What does this mean for Colorado?

CMAS Test Outcomes in Colorado



9%

of students with disabilities **meet or exceeded state expectations** on CMAS English Language Arts, compared to 50% of students without disabilities.



7%

of students with disabilities **meet or exceeded state expectations** on CMAS mathematics, compared to 38% of students without disabilities.

(from Colorado Department of Education 2018-19 performance framework flat files)



Test Outcomes in the United States



16th

On the NAEP,

Colorado has the 5th largest gap in the US between outcomes for students with disabilities compared to non-disabled students based on rank order.

Students without
Disabilities

Students with
Disabilities

42nd



74%

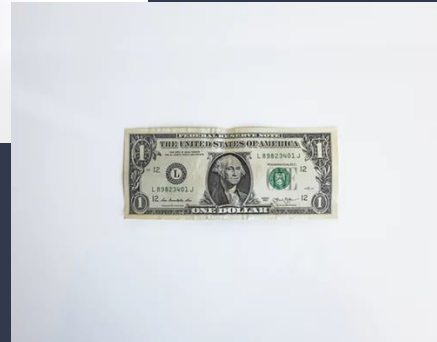
% of students receiving SpEd services that graduate high school
with a regular diploma (50% in 4 years)

22%

% of students receiving SpEd services that drop out (Largest %
between 16-18)

Teacher retention in
special education is a key
factor that directly
impacts outcomes for
students with disabilities.

“Seizing the Opportunity” in the Charter Community



Why Charter Schools?

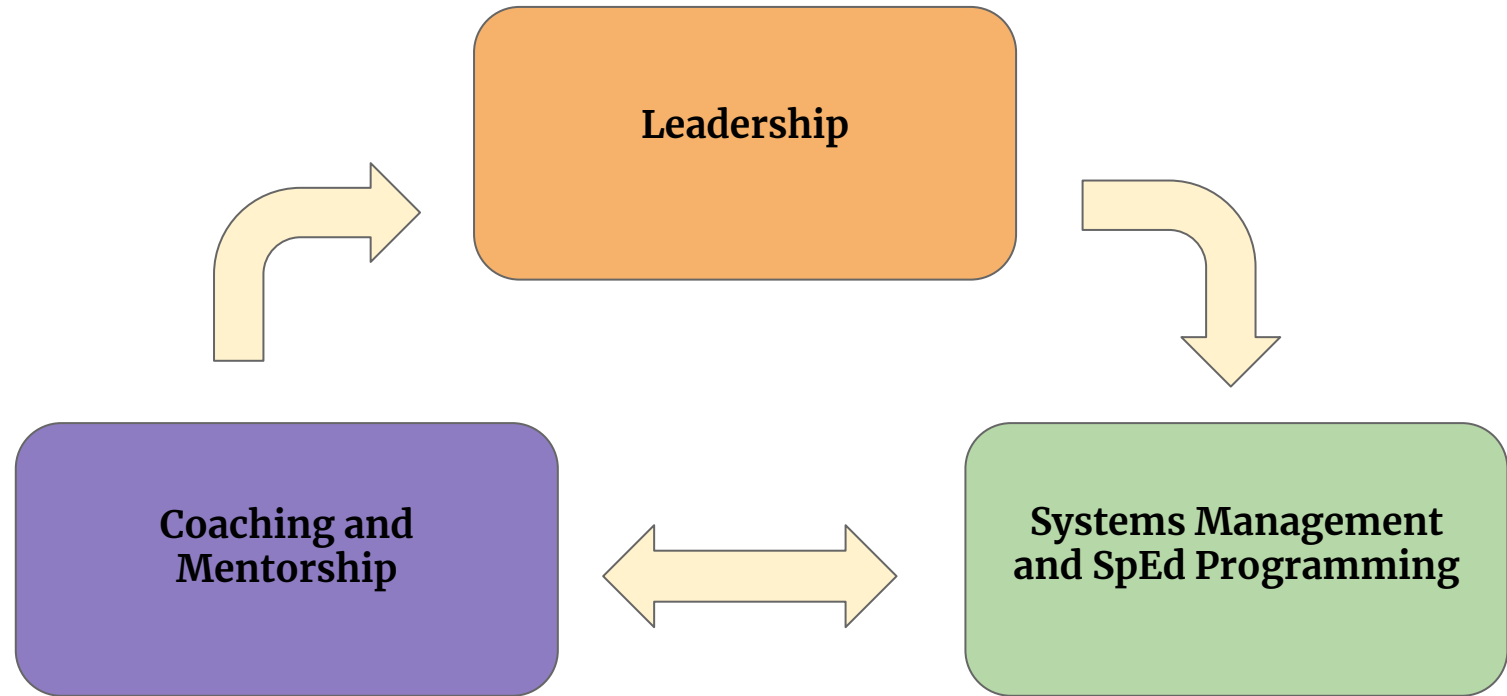


- Charter schools are attracting students with disabilities
- Private school enrollment is declining. In part to Charter and Magnet school programs.
- Autonomy over curriculum and school management
 - Rate of access
 - Smaller class and caseload sizes
 - Incentives for teachers
 - Creative approaches to programming

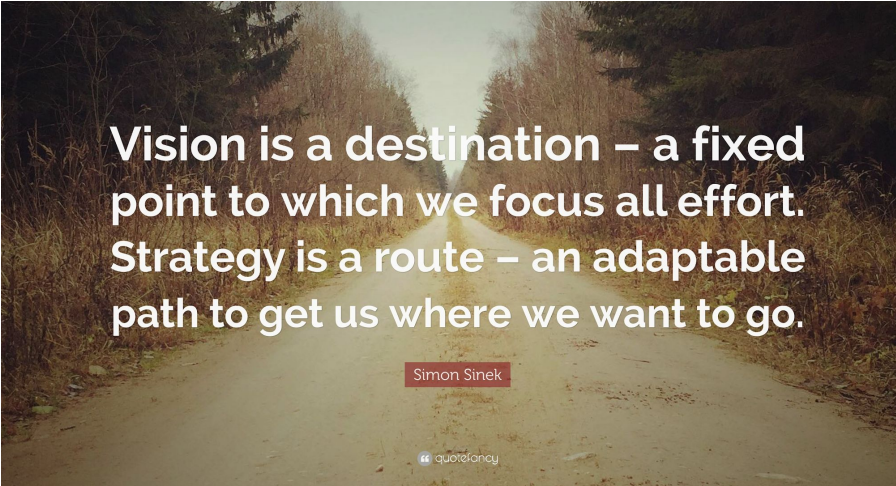
Core Functions to Seize the Opportunity [\(CRPE Study\)](#)

- **Trusting relationships between schools and families** built on caring and productive communication.
- An orientation toward **ongoing problem solving** to meet individual needs.
- **Blurred lines between special and general education** students' instructional and social experiences, so that students with disabilities were educated with all other students most of the time and treated as full members of the school community, not stigmatized or unnecessarily isolated.

Proactive Solutions



Leadership



Vision is a destination – a fixed point to which we focus all effort. Strategy is a route – an adaptable path to get us where we want to go.

Simon Sinek

quoteology

- Create a vision for serving Diverse Learners in your community
 - *“All kids are our kids!”*
- Strategic decision making
 - *Scheduling*
 - *Hiring*
 - *Allocation of funds*
- Leveraging the voices and leadership in special education
- Setting norms and policies that align to positive relationship-building and behavioral systems

Systems Management and Programming



- Scheduling of educators
 - Utilize creativity!
 - *Examples: looping teachers, creating time for collaboration and co-planning*
- Using systematic information to drive problem-solving
 - MTSS
 - Accommodations
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Compliance Process
 - Case Management
- [SpEd Systems/ Programming Considerations \(3 year plan\)](#)
- Inclusive Practices Walkthrough

Example 1: Scheduling

- Always schedule the highest need students first (e.g., SpEd/ELD, SpEd, ELD)
- Create SpEd teacher schedules to include co-planning time with general education
- Consult with SpEd director on student service minutes
- Think of creative ways to support new teachers:
 - *Keep in the same content area or grade level*
 - *Allow teachers to [loop](#) with students each year*
 - *Take away extra responsibilities to provide time for paperwork*
 - *Provide cool electives for push-in or resource support*
 - *Build in inclusive systems slowly*



Example 2: Accommodations System

How will teachers access student accommodations?

How will teachers implement student accommodations?

How will students advocate for accommodations?

How will accommodations be documented and updated?

[illegible]

Coaching and Mentorship



"I just would like to have someone I can ask questions of instead of having to look on the internet or wait for days to receive an email back with answers." -New SpEd teacher in Denver

- A coach or mentor that has experience in Special Education
- Guarded time for SpEd teachers to collaborate with school team and to receive feedback
- Professional development opportunities that correlate with the goals for the year
 - If it isn't benefiting their practice, allow them attend something that will

As Charter School Leaders,
we have a responsibility
and opportunity to
support the retention of
great special educators
through proactive
solutions in our
communities.

Resources

[Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

[CDE Special Education Data](#)

[CEC High-Leverage Practices](#)

[Collaborative for Exceptional Education](#)

[CSI Colorado](#)

[Exceptional Education by Design](#)

[IRIS Center \(Vanderbilt University\)](#)

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