



***National Center to Improve Recruitment and
Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with
Disabilities – Personnel Improvement Center (PIC)***

Issue Brief

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**Statewide Personnel Data Management:
Creating a System for Addressing Special Education, Early
Intervention and Related Services Personnel Needs**

What is Personnel Data Management?

Personnel Data management is the ongoing, systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of personnel data for:

- ✓ planning
- ✓ decision-making
- ✓ evaluation of personnel development needs, and
- ✓ development of strategies for recruitment, preparation and retention

Why is it important?

Addressing the current and emerging trends in personnel needs is essential for states to assist their local districts in successfully responding to the federal and state requirements of providing a highly qualified special education, early intervention and related service workforce to serve infants and youth with disabilities, birth to 21, and their families. Ensuring that all students with disabilities have qualified personnel is fundamental to achieving the high standards required by federal and state reforms and high stakes accountability systems.

Personnel data is important because it:

- ✓ provides critical information for a state education department's continuing resource allocation, program and policy decisions;
- ✓ allows state agencies, local school districts and Part C programs to understand and react to labor market trends;
- ✓ enables states and school districts to respond quickly and effectively to continuing changes (including predicted retirement rates) in the recruitment, supply and retention of highly qualified teachers and service providers of students with disabilities; and
- ✓ can support the ability of state and local educational agencies to evaluate the impact of policy decisions and resource allocations.

Effective personnel data management systems do more than collect, analyze and provide data reports. They make it possible for program stakeholders to gather and use information, to continually learn about and improve staffing practices, to plan appropriate actions and to seek necessary funding.

Data are helpful to states in identifying multidimensional issues in personnel that often require multidimensional policy responses. Therefore, it is crucial that the capacity for addressing continuing personnel changes and needs be built into state and district data management systems.

What kinds of data are relevant?

Data that informs the state, local school districts and Part C programs of on-going staffing needs are essential in the planning and decision-making process for implementing needed changes in personnel policy and practice. Personnel data can include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ demand data, including specific areas of shortages by title/type and by region/LEA and highly qualified teacher (HQT)/non-HQT status by region/LEA;
- ✓ supply data, including new certificates issued, existing pool of certified teachers, movers/transfers, higher education (IHE) pipeline and IHE capacity by certificate area;
- ✓ attrition data and related conditions associated with attrition; and
- ✓ retention data and related conditions associated with retention.

Because educational leaders use customized data extractions, analysis and reports to support policy decisions regarding special education personnel, state management information system (MIS) staff must rely on accurate special education personnel data from all their preparation programs, as well as their local districts and Part C programs.

What are the essential elements of statewide personnel data management systems?

The Center conducted interviews with five states (DE, FL, GA, MI and WY) over the past month. (The states chosen for these interviews are not intended to be nationally representative but provide different contexts to develop a better understanding of the variability in well-developed state personnel data management systems). An analysis of those interviews suggest that there are six essential elements of a well-developed Statewide Personnel Data Management System. These elements are listed below and include the range of strategies and approaches being used by several states to collect, analyze and report on special education-related personnel data.

Essential Elements of a Comprehensive Personnel Data Management System

Element 1:

The system should be designed to systematically collect and analyze data relevant to the state's personnel management needs and personnel issues.

- ✓ Four of the five states interviewed had systems in place that were designed primarily to address personnel issues.
- ✓ None of the systems were specific to special education but all were capable, to a certain extent, of addressing special education issues.

Element 2:

The system should be integrated across the various agencies and organizations that are involved with personnel development efforts.

- ✓ All five states depend on multiple subsystems across agencies that contain the needed data information associated with personnel issues.
- ✓ Some states utilize a general school-based data system that included personnel information while others had dedicated personnel/human resources components.

- ✓ All states have a separate certification/licensure office that maintains certification information.
- ✓ One state has a separate IHE-level system.
- ✓ In all cases, the states are able to share information across subsystems.

Element 3:

The system should include information regarding the supply and demand of special education personnel.

- ✓ Only one of the larger states has a system that allows them to track and monitor supply data from IHEs.
- ✓ Some ‘small’ states indicated that they generally have working knowledge of how many candidates are enrolled in IHEs because they have such close working relationships with the limited number of IHEs that are producing special education teacher candidates.
- ✓ Three of the states indicated they can track LEA vacancies in addition to non-HQT status at a level that would allow them to analyze shortage areas.

Element 4:

Incorporate data regarding working conditions and support for beginning special education personnel that contribute to retention, attrition and mobility trends at the state and local levels.

- ✓ None of the states are currently collecting information on working conditions although one state had used surveys of new teachers in the past and another state planned to address working conditions in surveys in the future.
- ✓ Three of the states currently have the capability to collect data and generate analysis reports on attrition, retention and mobility rates. One state contracts with a university to conduct and analyze an annual survey on teacher supply.

Element 5:

Streamline stakeholder ability to access up-to-date personnel data required for personnel management, policy decisions and shifting reporting requirements.

- ✓ Four of the states provide ‘query’ capability or on-line report capability for key state and LEA stakeholders.
- ✓ At least one state intends to improve that capability by providing sophisticated business tools for end-users to develop and run their own queries and data analysis reports.

Element 6:

Embrace the opportunity to take account of stakeholders' changing data needs, incorporate their continuous input and involve them up front in the decision-making process.

- ✓ All of the states have ongoing stakeholder input, including special education, for future enhancements of their systems.
- ✓ However, special education representation was not always requested for initial design work.

Summary comments

We appreciate the contributions of DE, FL, GA, MI and WY state data systems staff who shared information regarding their MIS systems. When asked if they had learned any critical lessons regarding state data management that may be useful to other states, the following insights were offered:

- ✓ Stakeholders, including state agency, IHE and local education staff, need to be at the table from the very beginning, otherwise there is the potential for wasted effort and useless data.
- ✓ Having a well thought out 'call center' or 'help' capability is crucial to successful implementation of the personnel data management system.
- ✓ Establishing protocols to ensure the security and confidentiality of all data collected is critical.
- ✓ Strict guidelines for data entry and on-going, periodic data checks for accuracy help ensure high quality, accurate personnel data.

The National Center to Improve the Recruitment and Retention of Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities (Personnel Improvement Center). A Cooperative Agreement, H325C080001, between the US Department of Education and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

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