

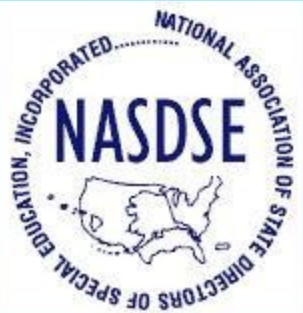


*National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention of
Qualified Personnel for Children with Disabilities –
Personnel Improvement Center (PIC)*

Strategies for Attracting, Developing and Supporting New and Existing Personnel: Stories from the Field

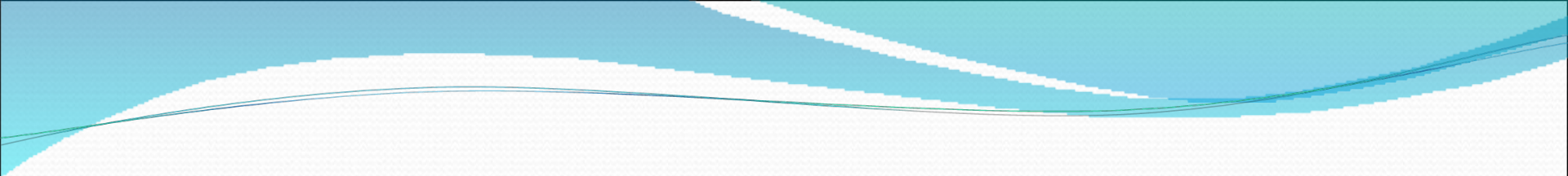
Dr. George Ann Rice, Service Provider

Thursday, May 14th 2009



4 QUESTIONS WHICH DEFINE FOCUS OF THIS WORK

- What are the challenges and barriers, which are preventing your state from having a highly-qualified teacher or specialist in every position?
- What are the existing local, regional, or state resources which, if available to you, would help you meet these challenges and overcome the barriers?

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- Which groups of people in your region or state might be interested in becoming teachers or specialists if you could offer a preparation program which would address their needs as mid-career changers?
 - Why are people in your state leaving special education positions, and what can be done to retain them and to give them more job satisfaction?

Question One

- What are the challenges and barriers which are preventing your state from having a highly-qualified teacher or specialist in every position?

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER THAT
QUESTION?**



Voices from the Field

Challenges and barriers

- Number of out-of-field teachers.
- Isolation of district—location.
- Number of people who cannot pass the PRAXIS I or/and II.
- Beginning salaries
- Competition for specialists/related service providers from private contractors, clinics, hospitals, and rehab facilities.

Challenges and barriers

- Benefit packages are not competitive.
- Undergraduate special education programs are closing.
- Only one or two programs in the State are preparing specialists/related service providers.
- Universities' lack of flexibility in offering preparation program coursework - many offer classes only on campus and at inconvenient times if you do not live in that city.

Challenges and barriers

- Regular K-12 classrooms seem more attractive and fulfilling.
- There is lack of respect from regular classroom teachers and administrators. They do not see students with disabilities as their responsibility or concern.
- Collaborative models can easily result in the special education teachers becoming 'aides' instead of collaborating colleagues.
- Preparation requirements for related service providers continue to increase.

Question Two

- What are existing local, regional, or state resources which, if available to you, would help you meet these challenges and overcome the barriers?

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER THAT
QUESTION?**



- VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Needed resources

- Unique approaches or programs in one region of the state which are unknown to other regions.
- Close working relationships with certain universities, which are willing to take classes to school sites and to be more flexible in offering preparation programs.
- University on-line capacity or potential.
- Community groups with resources.
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Regional Foundations
 - Festival organizing committees
 - Cable television companies with their capacities.
 - Local and regional newspapers.

Needed resources

- Training for RTI
- Federal and State funds which can be used to pay tuition, PRAXIS exams, and books.
- Contact with people facing similar problems in other areas and in other states.

Question Three

- Which groups of people in your local region or state might be interested in becoming one of your needed highly-qualified teachers or specialists/related service providers if they could access a preparation program which would address their needs as mid-career changers?

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER THAT
QUESTION?**



- VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Who might be interested in 'becoming one'?

- Paraprofessionals
- High School students who are interested in becoming teachers
 - Look at Cohorts
 - Look at Dual Credit
- Troops to Teachers Retirees
- Returning National Guard and Reservists
- Spouses of military people at bases and posts.
- Those who have been laid off from their jobs and should have been teachers in the first place.

Who might be interested in 'becoming one'?

- Current volunteers in schools.
- General Studies graduates.
- Those who started but did not complete their programs .
- Parents of special education students.
- Teachers who are certified, but have left special education for regular education.
- Teachers who have retired who might come back in part-time positions.
- People who are certified, but not currently working.

Question Four

- Why are people leaving special education and specialist/related service provider positions in your state and what can be done to retain them and to give them more job satisfaction?

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER THAT
QUESTION?**



- VOICES FROM THE FIELD

How to retain them

- We have to ask them
 - Exit Surveys
 - Focus Groups for those leaving
 - Focus Groups for those remaining
 - Working Conditions Surveys

NEXT STEPS?

Providing Solutions

- Proposed plan, including action steps, to overcome focus challenges and barriers.
- Revision and refinement by action teams (state and district personnel). Goal is always to increase capacity of those participating.
- Establish timelines.
- Establish outcomes by which the work can be evaluated and revised.

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- Time to Share