TEACHER TURNOVER IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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OVERVIEW

• Shortage and turnover trends
• Costs of turnover
• Contributors to turnover
• How to improve retention
TEACHER SHORTAGE TRENDS

• Chronic
• Pervasive
• Growing
• Inadequate supply
• Inadequate diversity
TURNOVER & TEACHER SHORTAGE
## TURNOVER RATES

Boe, Cook, & Sunderland (in press)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Switch/transfer</strong> to general education</th>
<th>8.27%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exit</strong> to non-teaching positions</td>
<td>6.74%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Move or migrate</strong> to other special education positions</td>
<td>7.85%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>22.85%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
INCREASING TURNOVER
Boe, Cook, & Sunderland (in press)

- 18.8% (1991-92)
- 21.4% (1994-95)
- 27.7% (2001-02)
TURNOVER COSTS

- Financial
- School
- Inclusive reform
- Student
- Teacher
COSTS UNEQUALLY DISTRIBUTED
Fall & Billingsley (2007)

• Administrators in high poverty schools
  – Significantly higher turnover rates
  – Significantly higher vacant positions

• How districts address shortage
  – Employ uncertified/substitute teachers
  – Raise caseloads
  – Increase paraprofessionals
RESEARCH ON TEACHER TURNOVER

• Ask teachers why they left
• Investigate factors associated with leaving
  – Teacher characteristics
  – Teacher preparation/induction
  – District/school characteristics
  – Work conditions
REASONS FOR LEAVING

• Special educators leave for:
  – Personal reasons
  – Work-related reasons
  – Other reasons (e.g., retirement, involuntary)

• Special educators more likely to leave due to dissatisfaction
TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS & TURNOVER

• Strong support
  – High turnover rates among new teachers

• Some support
  – Higher leaving rates among whites and females (Guarino et al., 2006)
  – No consistent findings about race and gender in special education
HIGHER TURNOVER AMONG THOSE WITH LESS PREPARATION
Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Preparation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extensive</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little / No</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WORK CONDITIONS & TURNOVER

• School climate
• Leader support
• Collaboration
• Job design
• Resources
• Compensation
CONCLUSIONS

Teacher Shortage +
High Turnover +
New Demands =
MAJOR CHALLENGE!
LABOR MARKET THEORY OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND*

• Individuals will enter/remain if most attractive activity available
  – Overall compensation

• Adjust attractiveness of the job

• Elements of attractiveness become the policy levers to increase retention

*Applied to teacher supply, demand and retention by Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006
REFERENCES


