

**FACT SHEET**

January 2019

**The Shortage of Special Education Teachers and Higher Education Faculty**

* **I**n 2015-16 there was a national shortage of about 60,000 teachers.
* While STEM fields and foreign languages experience significant shortages, special education is the field with the greatest shortage, with 48 states and DC reporting shortages.
* In the last decade there has been a 17% decrease in the number of special education teachers.
* As a result of the special education teacher shortage, districts often have no choice but to employ totally unqualified substitutes in special education teaching positions, sometimes on a long-term basis; one district is using Kelly Temp workers.
* Ninety percent of high poverty schools experience teacher shortages.
* In the last 5 years enrollment in teacher preparation programs nationally, is down 35%.
* Teacher replacement costs, fueled by teacher turnover and shortages, are approximately $8 billion per year.
* Teachers of color leave schools and the teaching profession at a rate higher than white teachers: 18.9% v. 15% respectively.
* Those prepared through alternate pathways that require less coursework and student teaching experiences are 25% more likely to leave their teaching positions and the profession than those who are well prepared.
* Reasons for teachers leaving include poor compensation, lack of administrative support, dissatisfaction with working conditions, dissatisfaction with testing and accountability pressures and lack of opportunities for advancement.
* Some states and geographic regions report more extensive shortages than others.
* A shortage of special education faculty in higher education contributes to the special education teacher shortage and further limits the capacity of higher education to address this significant problem.
* Between 2012 and 2017 there was a 17% reduction in the production of new special education doctoral degrees.
* Since 2009 there has been a 19% reduction in the number of special education doctoral programs.