



Attract - Prepare - Retain

The listing below represents considerations for the utilization of Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) funding as it relates to the attraction, preparation, and retention of special education personnel.

Attract

- Provide opportunities for secondary students to have authentic interactions with students with disabilities in school and out of school (i.e., Peer Buddies, Best Buddies, Unified Sports)
- Create a “Grow Your Own” program at the secondary level for future professions in the field of special education
- Provide scholarship monies to high school students who are planning a future in special education
- Host a disability awareness day
- Highlight jobs in the field of special education at career fairs
- Offer American Sign Language as an elective and/or language credit
- Offer a high school elective course on working with and teaching students with disabilities
- Advertise and provide sign-on bonus pay for new teachers, related service providers, and/or paraprofessionals
- Provide bonus pay for current staff who “successfully recruit” new staff
- Reimburse future and current teachers and administrators taking the PRAXIS
- Reimburse and/or provide tuition reimbursement for emergency certification or adding on special education certification
- Create new pathways for paraprofessionals to become licensed teachers
- Pay a special education cooperating teacher a stipend to support a student teacher
- Offset costs associated with building relationships with higher education and teacher prep programs to attract high quality candidates
- Increase pay for substitutes

Prepare

- Set up a mentoring program for new special education personnel
- Offer paid internships for school psychologists
- Hire former/retired special education personnel to mentor novice personnel
- Create (or partner with other LEAs to develop) a robust induction program that establishes a focus of everyone meeting the needs of students with disabilities
- Incentivize special education personnel to attend conferences and other professional development sessions
- Offer tuition reimbursement for current teachers to receive additional PA certification areas or their PA Supervisor of Special Education certification
- Provide funding to Intermediate Units to prepare special education personnel in specified areas
- Provide compensation and/or incentives to parents who work with students with disabilities and explore possible special education positions

Retain

- Provide “bonus” pay for new teachers at the end of the first semester and at the end of the first year
- Provide “bonus” pay for veteran teachers at the end of established milestones (i.e., 5-year, 10-year, 15-year)
- Offer an additional prep period for special educators to collaborate with regular educators, write IEPs, etc.
- Hire other personnel for “duty periods” to alleviate special education personnel from those duties
- Hire additional special educators to ensure a focus on teacher workload not caseload
- Compensate special education personnel for additional responsibilities (i.e., tutoring, assisting with scheduling)
- Provide timely resources and support to special education staff to better meet the needs of students with disabilities
- Foster a climate of one system of support for students with disabilities by providing professional development to all staff:
 - Pay costs associated for professional development focused on meeting the needs of students with disabilities
 - Pay costs associated with principals attending professional development events related to special education (i.e., PaTTAN series – Principals Understanding and Leading Special Education, PULSE)
 - Pay costs associated with special education administrators’ participation in the PA Fellowship Program (PFP) offered by PaTTAN
- Celebrate special education personnel and student successes regularly by providing gifts and/or incentives, recognizing at board meetings, showcasing in a newsletter to the community, etc.
- Hire “materials specialists” to create accessible materials in lieu of special education teachers

