

MN CSPD Recruitment and Retention Team

Results and Findings

MN CSPD-RR Team:

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Introduction and Purpose

- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CPSD) is a requirement under IDEA.
- Minnesota is one of states receiving technical assistance from the Early Childhood Personnel Center
- Recruitment and Retention is one of the six focus areas, along with pre-service, inservice, standards, evaluation, and leadership
- RR Team is a diverse group including educators, parents of children with disabilities, researchers, early childhood personnel leadership
- Our task as RR Team:
 - Look at the **system** of recruitment and retention for professionals working with children with disabilities in early childhood
 - Make recommendations about how it could be improved

Recruitment and Retention - the Importance of Differentiation

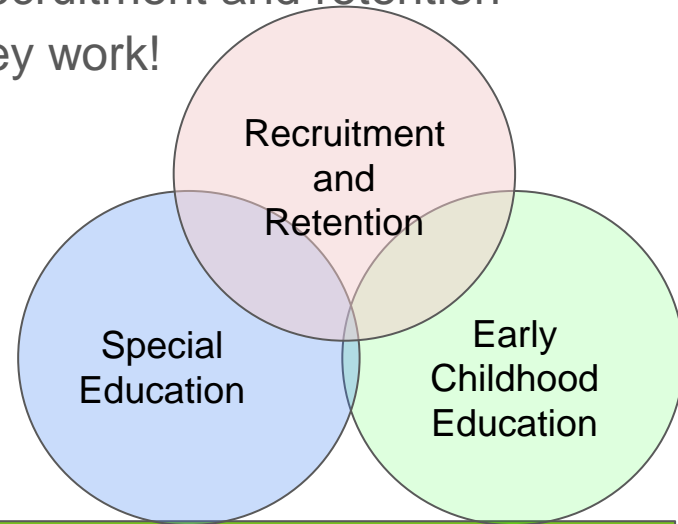
- Different systems
- Different approaches
- Different points of access
- Different research
- If we only address one or the other we will not solve the problem

Our Process

- Began with a question: what are the evidenced based practices around recruitment and retention in early childhood serving students with disabilities?
- What can we add to the conversation that hasn't already been said?
- Look at prior work:
 - B-8 Team
 - Childrens' Cabinet
- Literature review:
 - Broad brush approach including all allied professions

Findings

- Many studies about recruitment and retention
- Many studies about special education
- Many studies about early childhood
- Not much research about the intersection of the three
- Many descriptions of TEACH, REETAIN, and other recruitment and retention programs, but not a lot of evidence about whether they work!
- Conclusion: There is a need for additional data



Survey Process and Methodology

- Research questions:
 - Why do people go into early childhood special education?
 - Why do they stay?
 - If they leave, why?
 - Is there more that could be done to both recruit and retain?
- Survey open to anyone in any of the related fields from January - April 2021
- Did not want to duplicate other efforts
- Focus on those who were in the field as well as those who had left it
- Indebted to colleagues at Minnesota Department of Education who helped spread the word
- Primary outreach method was MDE outreach to registrants in recent professional development opportunities

Survey Results - Demographics

~450 respondents

97% White (non-Hispanic)

95% still in the field

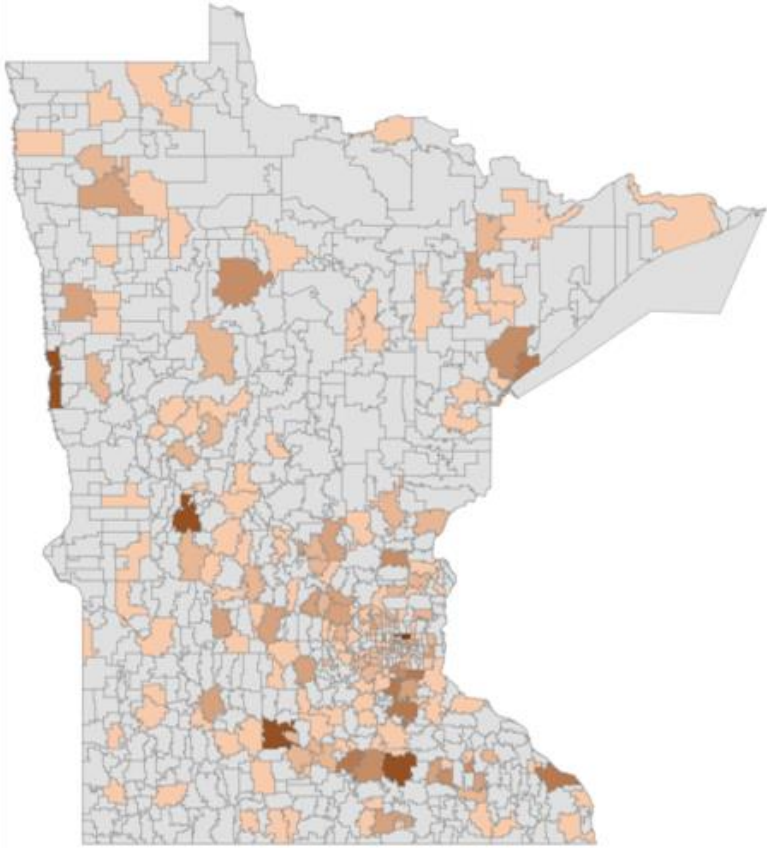
77% earning \$75,000 or less; 6% earning \$25,000 or less

73% currently holding license they use in their current role

63% Master's degree as highest level of education

60% 41 years old or older

Survey Results: Respondent Home Zip Codes



Home zip codes

Number of respondents in home zip code

1 8

A horizontal color gradient bar representing the number of respondents. The bar starts with a light orange color on the left, labeled '1', and transitions through darker shades of orange and brown to a dark brown color on the right, labeled '8'.

Survey Results: Current roles - select all that apply

43% Early childhood special education teacher

19% Early interventionist

16% Program director, principal, or other administrator

14% Speech-language therapist or assistant

13% Coach/mentor/master teacher

12% Home visitor

Survey Results: Previous roles - select all that apply

39% Early childhood special education teacher

31% Home visitor

28% Lead teacher (child care, preK, Head Start, general education)

24% Early interventionist

19% Coach/mentor/master teacher

19% Early childhood family education teacher

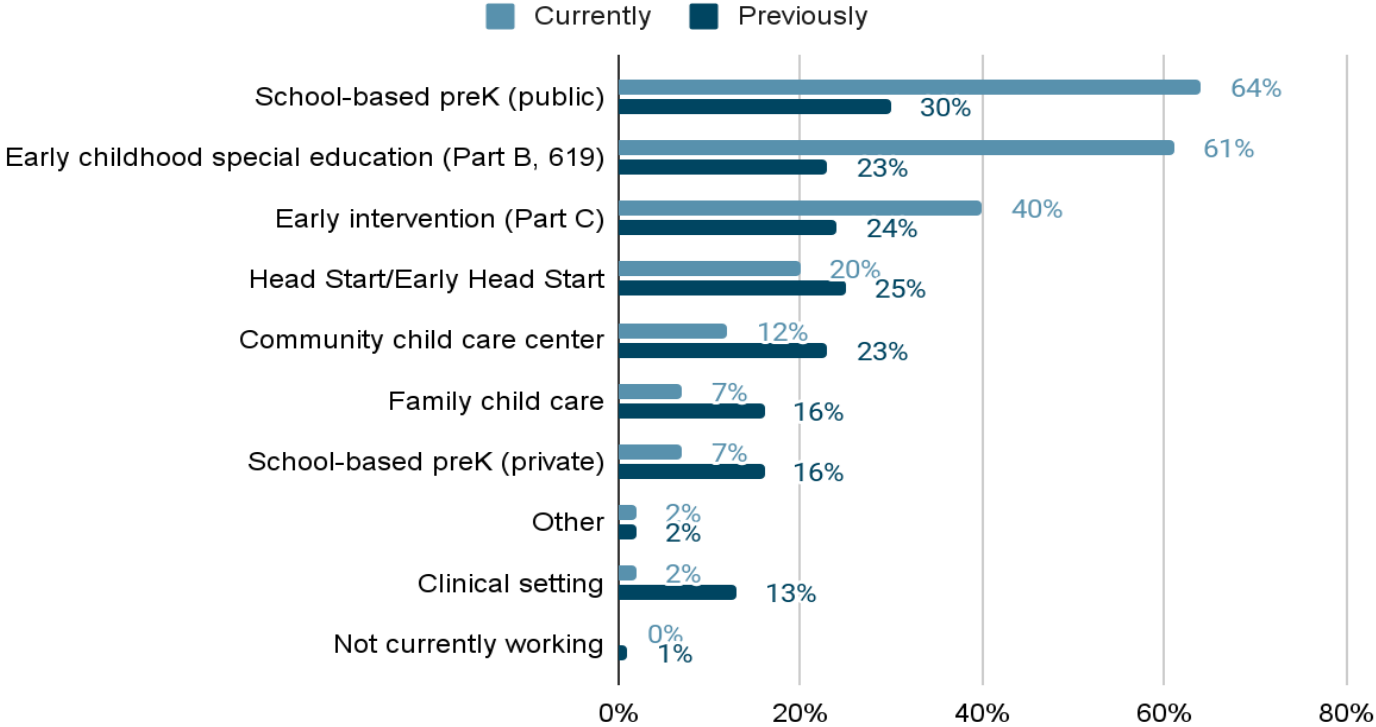
17% Speech-language therapist or assistant

14% Early childhood special education paraprofessional

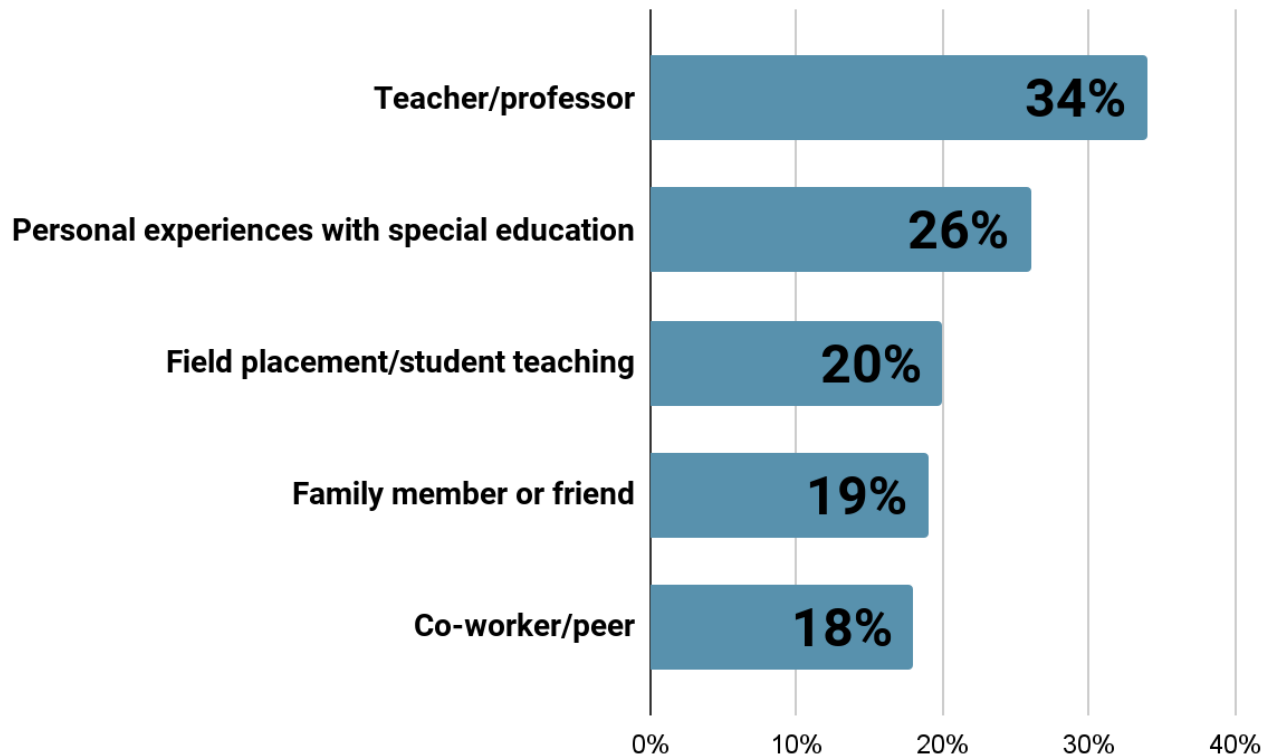
13% Program director, principal, or other administrator

11% K-12 special education teacher

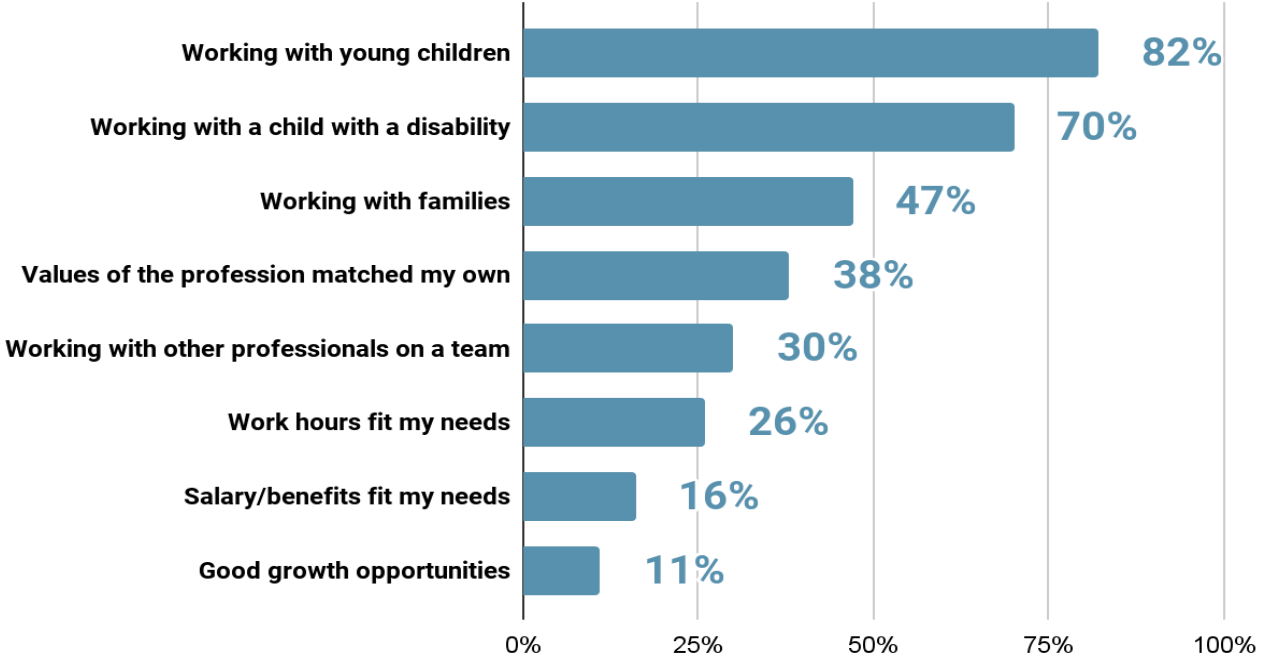
Survey Results: What types of early childhood settings have you worked as a professional in early childhood special education? *Select all that apply*



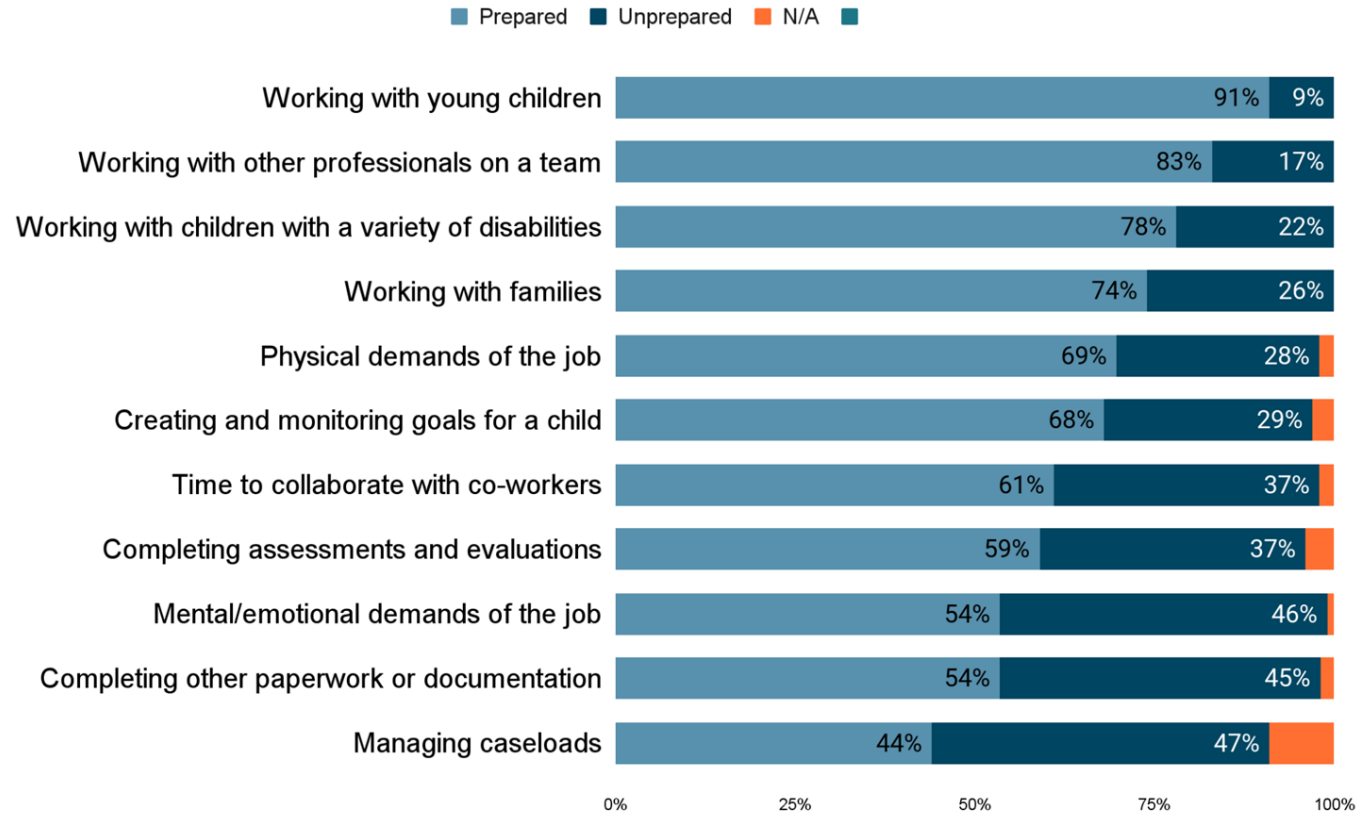
Survey Results: How did you first learn about a career in early childhood special education? *Select all that apply*



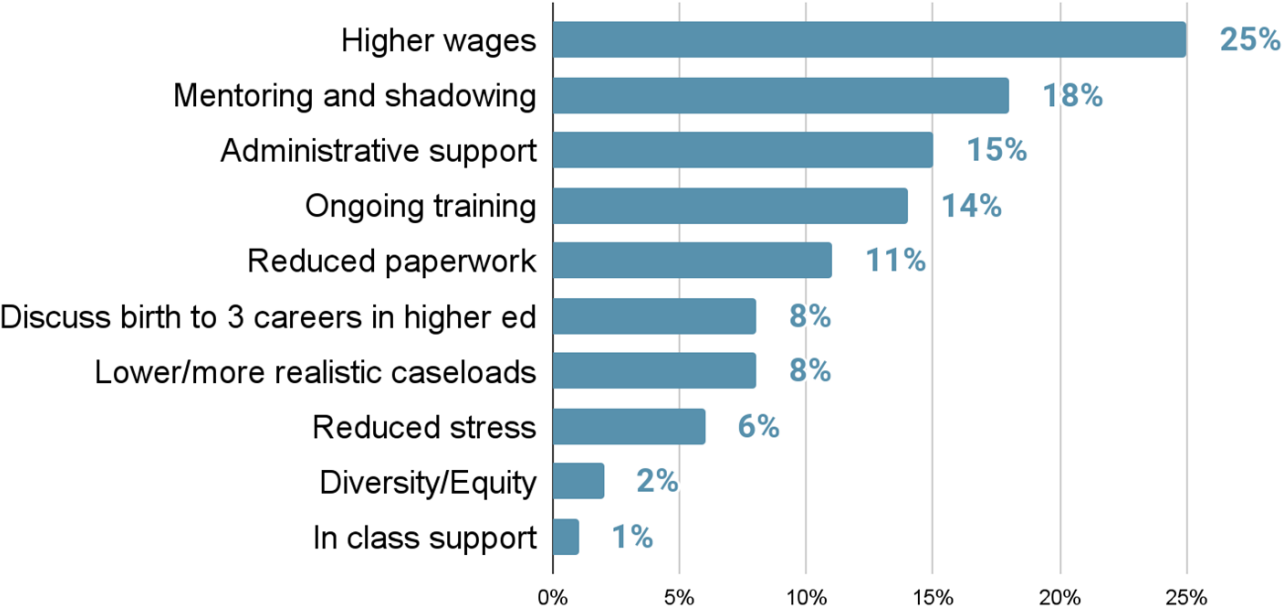
Survey Results: What made you interested in starting a career in early childhood special education? *Select all that apply*



Survey Results: Thinking back your experiences in early childhood special education, how well prepared were you for the following types of activities when you first started in this career?



Survey Results: If there is one thing you could do to improve recruitment and retention of early childhood professionals, what would it be? *Open-ended*

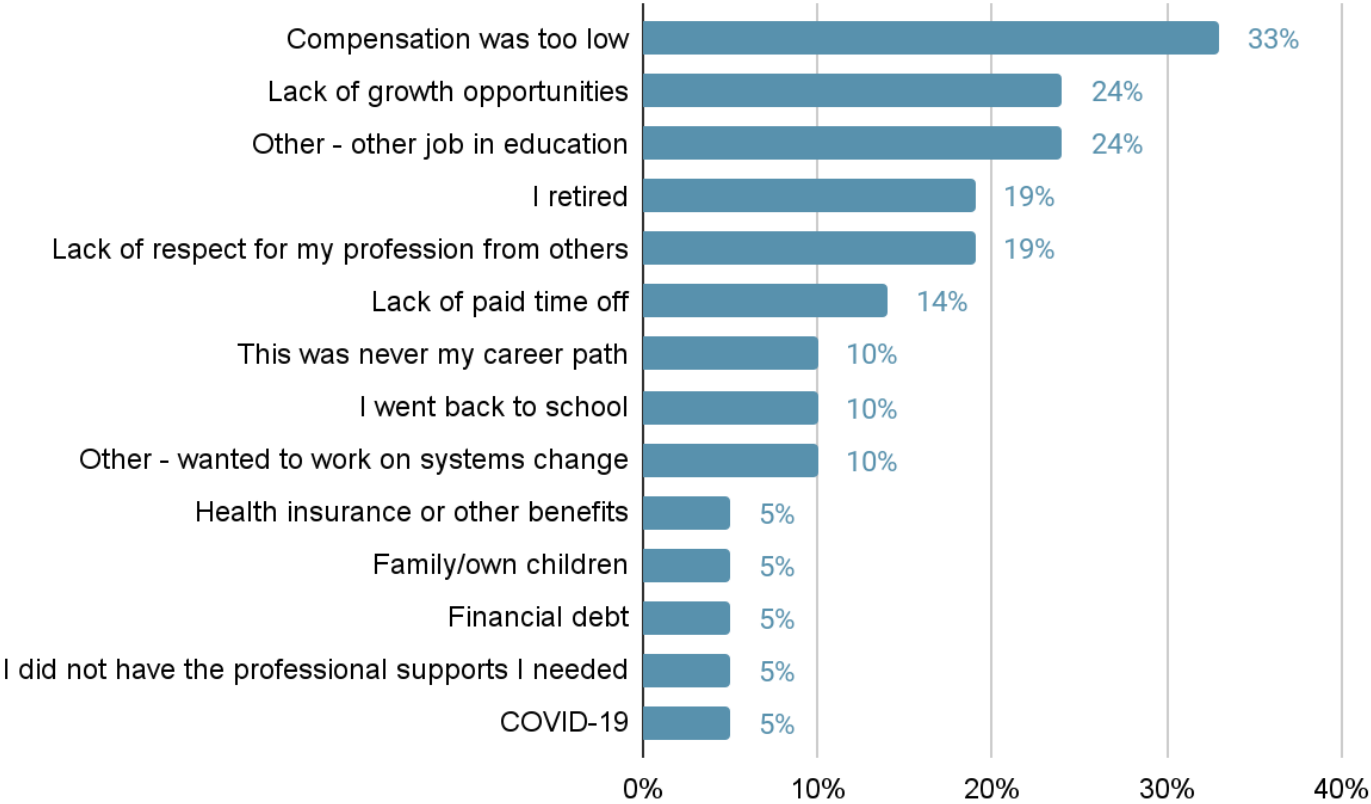


Survey Results: Those Who Left The Field

21 (5%) respondents had left the field

- About $\frac{1}{3}$ working in another related field (general education, psychology, social work)
- About $\frac{1}{3}$ working in their profession, but in another setting (clinical, working with older populations of children or adults)
- Some retired, furloughed, or seeking employment
- Almost all “very satisfied” or “somewhat satisfied” in their new career

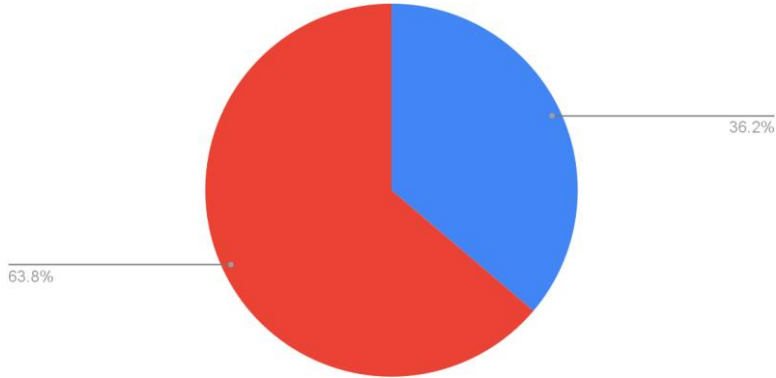
Survey Results: Those Who Left the Field (N=21)



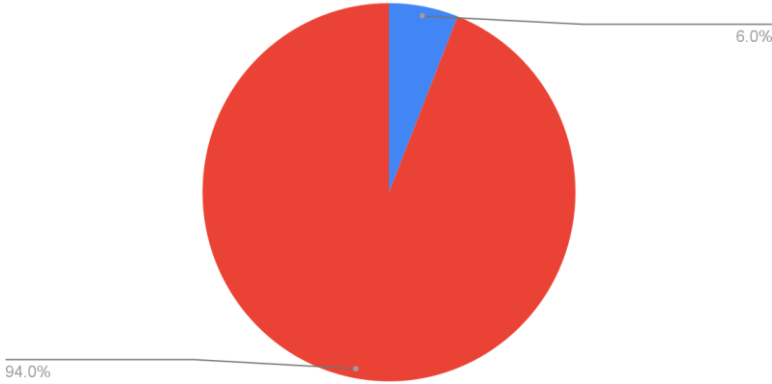
Is additional data needed?

Our survey data does not reflect our students!

What percentage of K-12 students in Minnesota identify as races other than White?



What percentage of K-12 teachers in Minnesota identify as white?



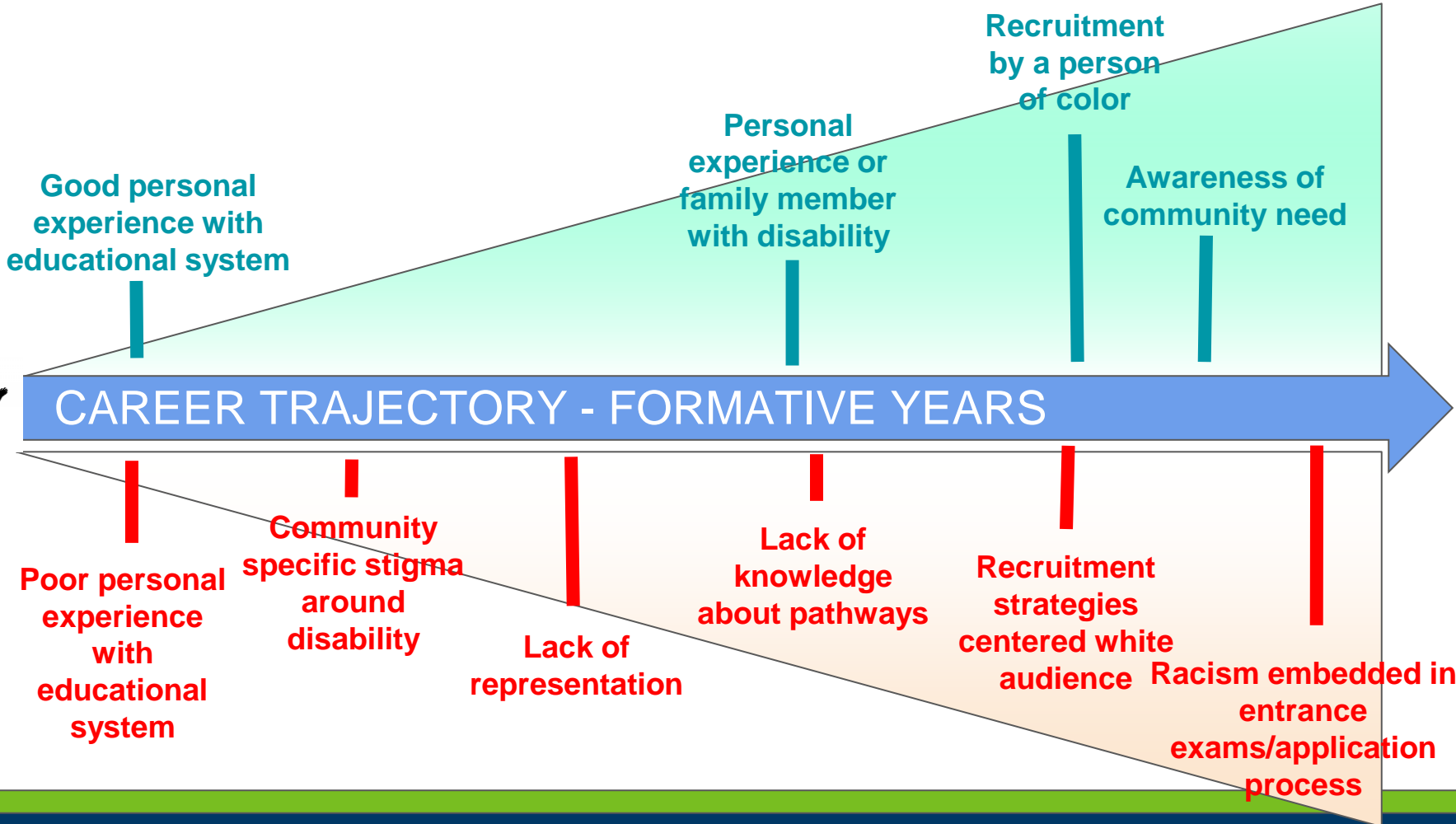
How can we make sure teachers of color are included in our data?

Focus group and interview process and methodology

- 1 focus group, 2 personal interview, n=6
- All identified as people of color
- Two identified as people who have a disability
- All participants either currently or previously working with students with disabilities in early childhood.
- 2 no longer in education, but working in related fields.
- Recruited through personal relationships, Black Men Teach, LEND program and word-of-mouth.

Focus Group and Interview Results

- Identified a series of “launchpads” and “barriers” on career trajectory
- Broke into three categories based on life stage



CAREER TRAJECTORY - FORMATIVE YEARS

Good personal experience with educational system

Personal experience or family member with disability

Recruitment by a person of color

Awareness of community need

Poor personal experience with educational system

Community specific stigma around disability

Lack of representation

Lack of knowledge about pathways

Recruitment strategies centered white audience

Racism embedded in entrance exams/application process

Early experience with teaching

“I think that a lot of communities of color for folks who are interested in teaching [occurs] because they had at least one teacher that meant something to them and they wanted to be able to give that back...Having that positive experience does encourage [the career path] to be replicated by the person who experiences it.”

Representation

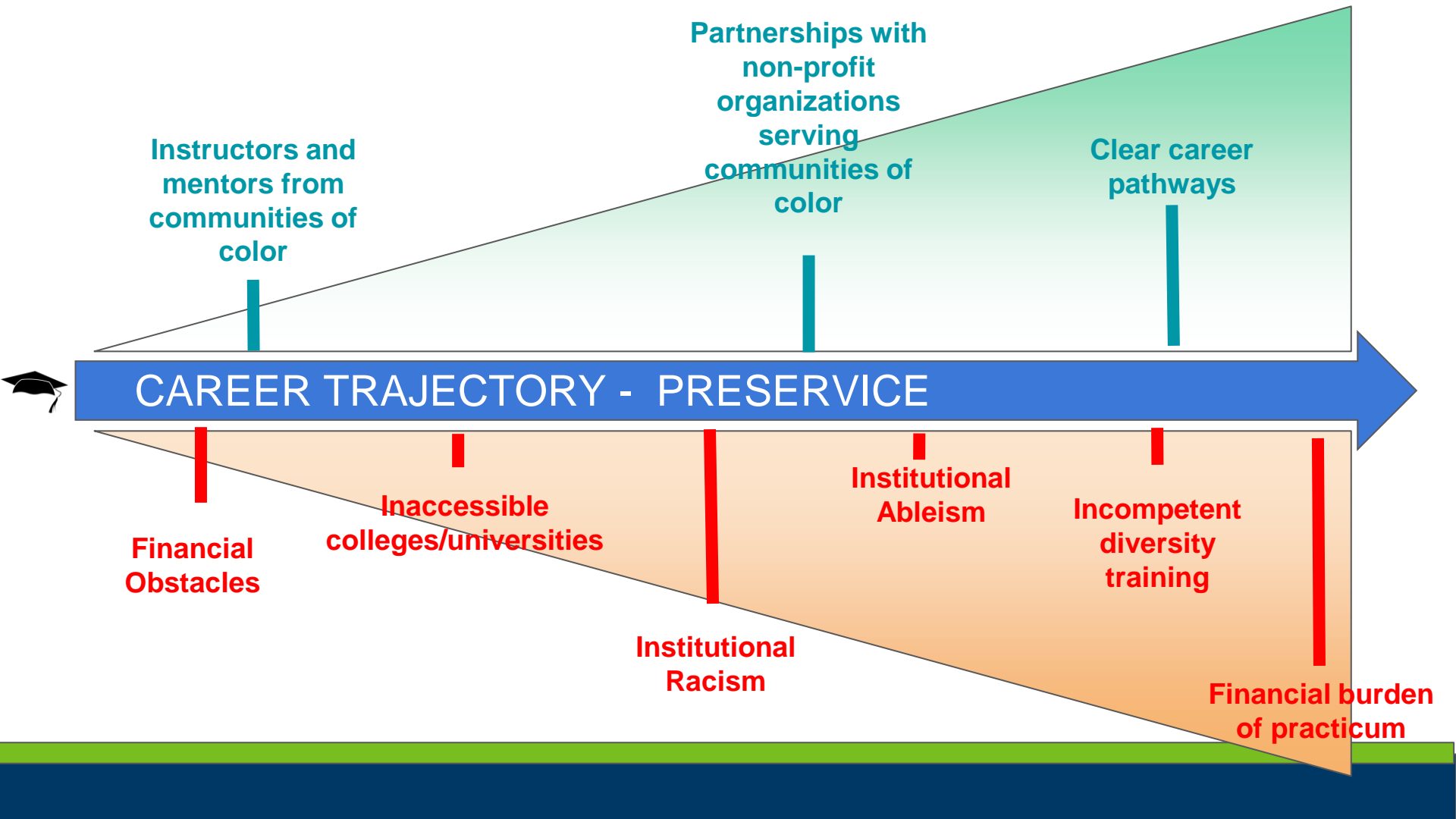
“I don't think a lot of people know that this is an occupation or an opportunity because it's not the thing that is brought in front of their face all the time. So if you can bring it to them sooner, they'll put it into their mind that it's an opportunity later. Unless they've had like a sibling or a family member or they know somebody who's been in the field didn't know this path was even an option.”

Community-specific stigma

“I come from West Africa. That society is a place where disability is not taken into consideration at all. Everyone shys away from a child with disabilities or people with disabilities.”

Application Process

“There are super hard barriers to being accepted into the program. You have to have a GPA that is this high. You have to have these scores on your standardized tests. You have to have this amount of volunteer work. This many hours of shadowing. And we know these things are barriers for people of color. We know these things are barriers for people from disadvantaged communities. None of these things mean that I’m going to be the best OT. You cut out a lot of people.”



CAREER TRAJECTORY - PRESERVICE

Instructors and mentors from communities of color

Partnerships with non-profit organizations serving communities of color

Clear career pathways

Financial Obstacles

Inaccessible colleges/universities

Institutional Racism

Institutional Ableism

Incompetent diversity training

Financial burden of practicum

Diversity Training

“Race and culture are treated like an afterthought. I remember that race is a thing. Culture is a thing! I remember in one class they had a white person teaching about diversity and I thought ‘What is this????’ Half of the people of color in the class walked out. It was so insulting.”

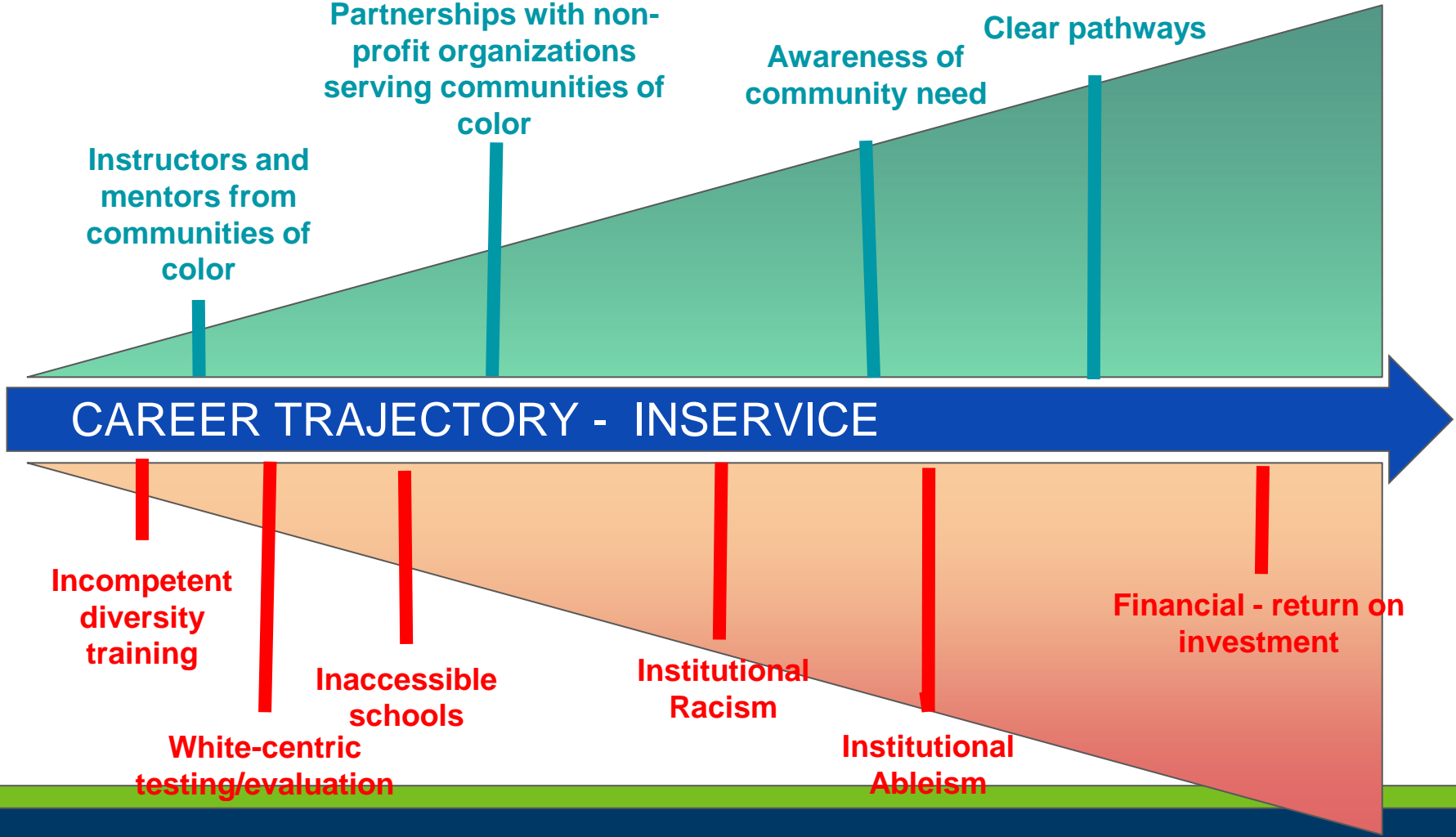
Financial Obstacles

“Six months without pay is a challenge. I do think that there are great benefits for that but everyone doesn't have the family structure, the financial structure or support to maintain and to have a practicum that's unpaid. So if there is an incentive that can be utilized, that's I think that's huge.”

“Student teaching is a barrier for some. Many have to quit their jobs in order to take on a student teaching position, and that is just not feasible for some.”

Ableism

“For me, the biggest (obstacle) ... which is unfortunate, for anyone with a disability, it was the assumption of incompetence. Incapability.”



Climate

“Being one of the only teachers of color in special education, there is just so much working in a large predominantly white population of staff. So many comments, so many people belittling your capacity, your ability, your potential. When you do speak out, being viewed as a threat. Being viewed as the angry Black woman. Fighting for students needs, calling out disproportionality seeing the disparities. Fighting for resources that students need. For me personally, that is almost what drove me out of the field. The mental health toll that it takes. You see young kids of color going down the school to prison pipeline in front of your eyes. And here you are, sitting in front of administrators and colleagues, but now you’re the problem.”

Licensing

“I have a lot of friends that have their master’s degree and finished student teaching but are not tier 3 licensed because of the MTLE’s. That is creating significant disproportionality. Most of the friends that I know are people of color. That really limits their prospects: They don’t have the freedom to apply anywhere they want.”

“The MTLE exams are a barrier. It has really been a struggle for me. The exams are not friendly to people of color.”

School Climate

“...teachers were really looked down upon when they asked someone for help. Like that was a sign of lack of competency. There was no room for curiosity or other learning. Which is really ironic in a school. In the teaching field, when you meet a colleague to ask them ‘How do I do this?’ ‘I am finding this difficult.’ They look at you like you are not supposed to be there. ‘How dare you not know how to do this?’ ”

Community Need

“As to what keeps me in the field? I have two children who are autistic. I have no choice. I can’t afford to quit. I have thought about it twice, because of the anxiety, but I was able to get help from supervisors at the time, and that’s what keeps me going. Honestly, I cannot afford to quit because of the needs of my own children. Because of the needs in my own community. Because of the overwhelming gap — the lack of services in the (XXX) community is something that keeps me up at night.”

“It really feels to me like I could never quit because there is so much work to be done—to advocate, to help parents know what special education is. I could never leave.”

Recommendations and next steps: 8 categories, 41 suggestions!

Career Pathways

Climate

Financial Obstacles

Mental Health

Training/Mentorship

Workload

Anti-ableism

Anti-racism

Career Pathways

- Encourage early exposure to the field of early childhood special education
- Hire entry level teachers
- Encourage alternative pathways to licensure as a means to improve recruitment and retention of staff from diverse backgrounds
- Improve opportunities for upward mobility and career growth
- Build partnerships with trusted community organizations to encourage recruitment from diverse communities

Climate

- Consider Individualized Family Plans for older students (3+) as a mechanism to improve dynamics between families and school staff.
- Improve school climate to be more inclusive of ECSE (remove silos for opportunities for training).
- Provide education on the fact that the presumption of competence must apply to staff as well as students.

Financial Obstacles

- Address cost prohibitions in licensing exams. Provide financial support to cover cost of exams
- Address the financial burdens of field placements
- Provide reimbursement for transportation to and from placements
- Improve teacher wages

Mental Health

- Provide mental health support for teachers and staff
- Improve access to trauma-informed practices and integrate them into school services for both students and staff

Training/Mentorship

- Improve mentorship opportunities for new teachers
- Ensure entry level teachers have access to mentors
- Ensure teachers of color have access to mentors of color
- Explore PEER network program
- Provide time-management training and support for ECSE teachers to help with paperwork management
- Provide support for teachers in budget management/resource management in the context of their role

Workload

- Improve access to wrap-around services for students so that the burdens of assisting students and families with additional needs do not fall on teachers
- Ensure understanding of case management and paperwork--what can we learn from other careers such as social work, etc
- Evaluate how much teacher paperwork is required by the law, and how much is in excess of legal requirements


Anti-ableism

- If we want to recruit teachers with disabilities, we must ensure that schools are accessible
- Involve people with disabilities in Professional Development
- Encourage high school teachers of students with disabilities to talk to their students about careers in teaching.
- Eliminate financial disincentives so that individuals with disabilities will not lose access to services if they are competitively employed.
- Encourage representation of diverse communities (including disability) in marketing materials.
- Recognize that people are multiply marginalized.
- Instruct schools on their responsibilities to comply with ADA for teachers and staff as well as students.
- Recognize that stigma around disability looks different in different communities.
- Address stigma around disability, especially in marginalized communities.

Anti-racism

- Evaluate MTLE and licensing processes for racial/economic bias.
- Evaluate entrance requirements in higher ed for racial/economic bias.
- Evaluate student teaching/practicum requirements for racial/economic bias.
- Increase anti-racism, anti-ableism, implicit bias, diversity, cultural responsiveness training in pre-service and in-service programs.
- Ensure that these programs are taught by people with lived experience.
- Acknowledge that institutional racism, disproportionate school discipline, school to prison pipeline are issues that affect teacher recruitment and retention as well as students.
- Engage in conversations about microaggressions and how to avoid them among staff as well as students.
- Consider the historical trauma of the educational system on communities of color.

“Who better to teach students with disabilities than adults with disabilities? If we want to solve this workforce crisis, we need to dismantle the barriers that are making this field inaccessible to those most qualified to teach.”



Thank you!

To our survey, focus group, and interview participants.

To MDE for assistance with outreach and support.

To the ECPC team for technical support and encouragement.

And especially to the Minnesota CSPD-RR team for their tireless effort and commitment to this work!

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Questions, comments, concerns?