



January 2024 Survey
The Impact of Staffing Shortages on
Special Needs Students



Survey Introduction



edWeb, in partnership with STAGES Learning, completed a survey in January 2024 on **The Impact of Staffing Shortages on Special Needs Students**. This survey follows up on a similar survey at the same time last year.

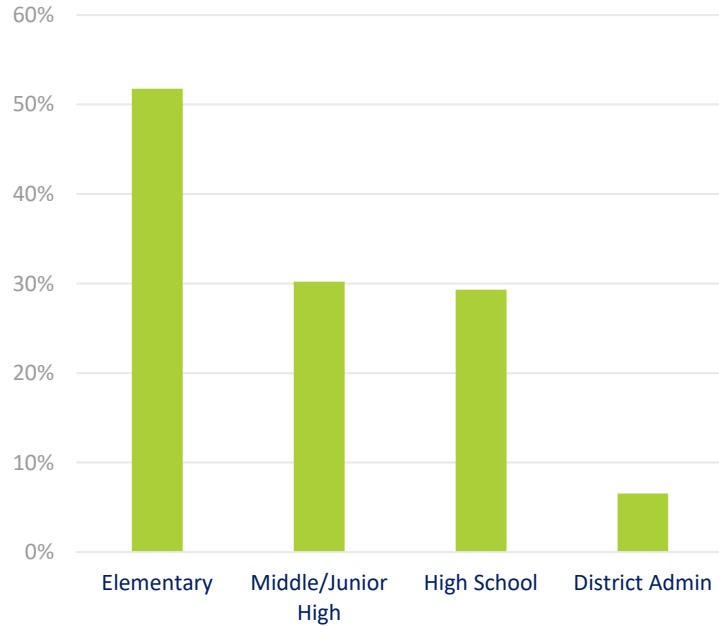
The survey was emailed to 62,476 edWeb members with a role or interest in special education. We received 742 responses, a 1.1% response rate, with no incentive. This is directly comparable to last year's deployment.

In addition to the quantitative results, we received over 500 comments (52 pages) from respondents providing in-depth insights on the staffing issues and impact.

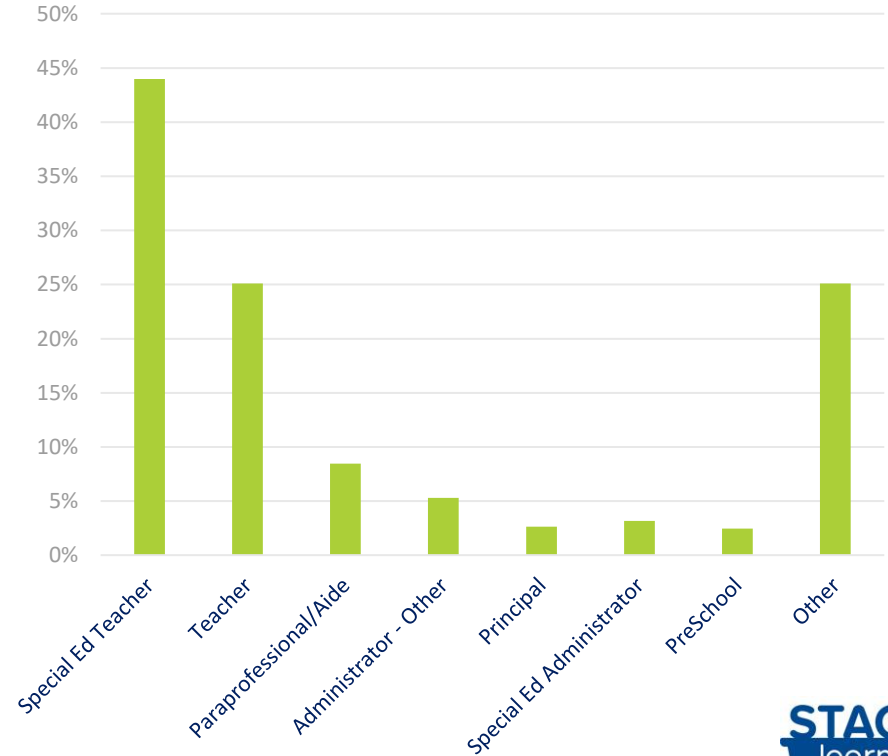
Given the length and depth of the responses, it's clear that there are significant challenges faced in special education, particularly related to staffing and resource availability... In essence, the comments highlight a special education system under strain, with passionate educators calling for systemic changes to better support students and staff. The need for more resources, better training, fair compensation, and a supportive work environment are consistent themes. - ChatGPT

Profile of Survey Respondents

Grade Level

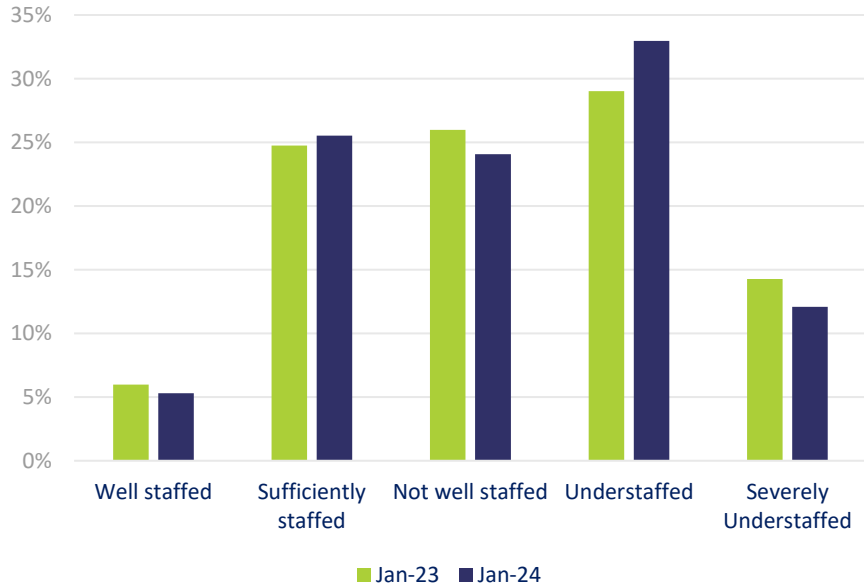


Role

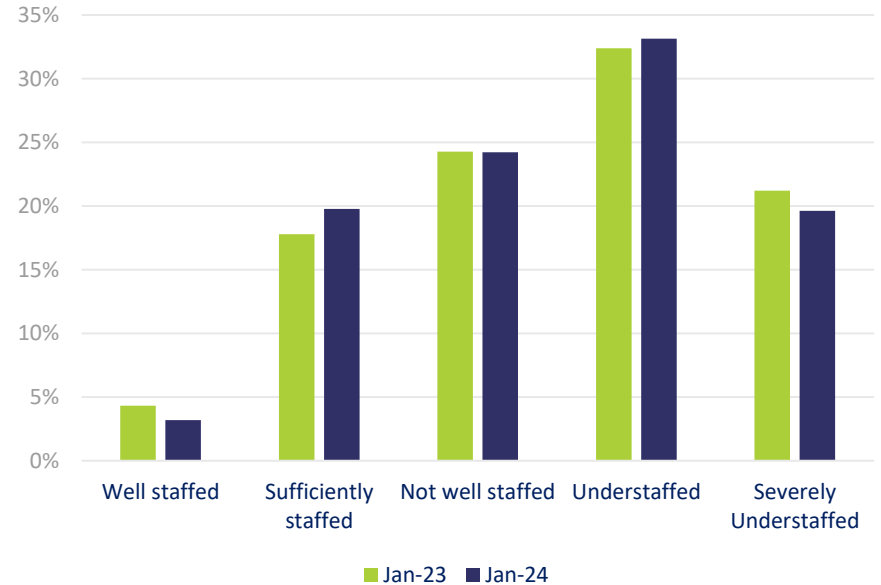


How would you describe the staffing shortages for your students receiving special education services?

Teachers

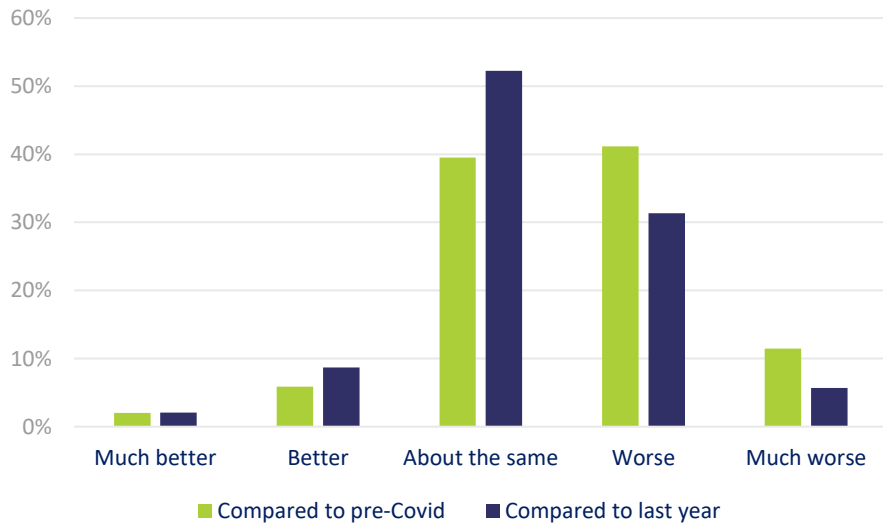


Paraprofessionals

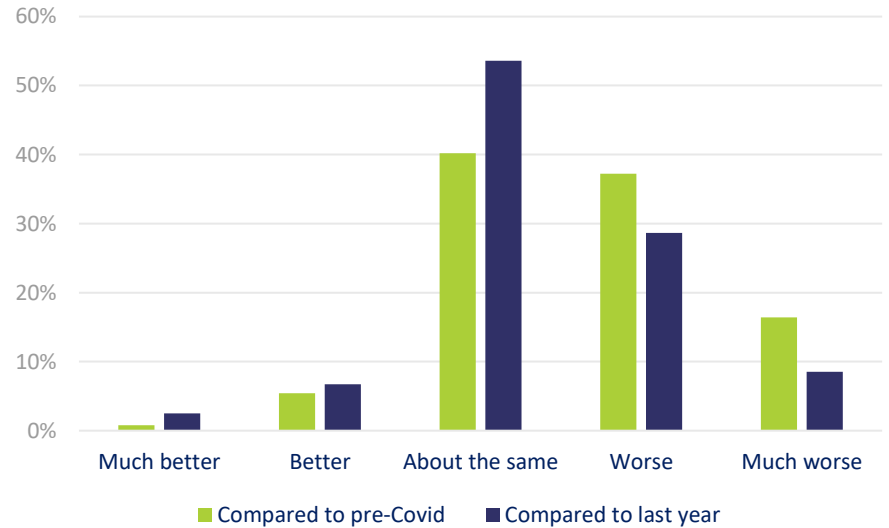


How does the staffing for your special needs students compare to previous years?

Teachers



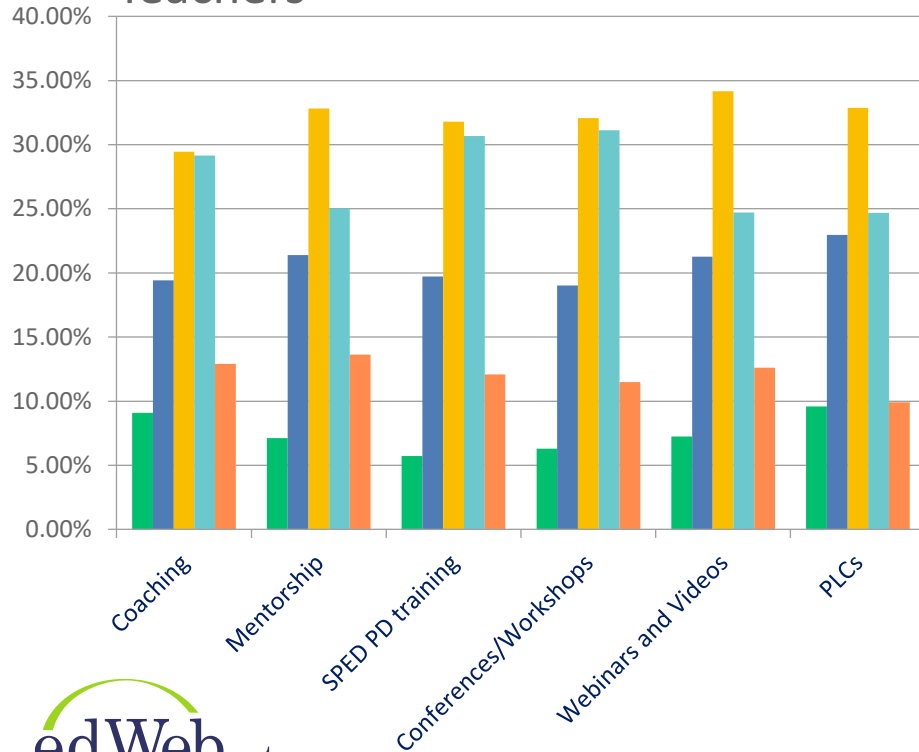
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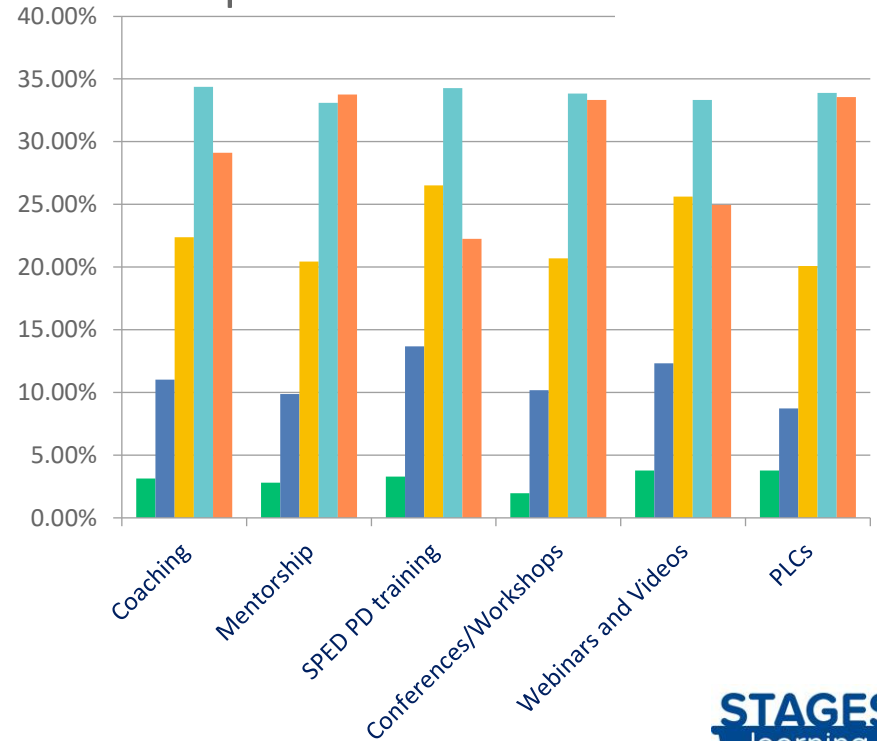
How is your staff supported with professional learning that is relevant and effective?

- Very supported
- Supported
- Somewhat supported
- Poorly supported
- Not supported

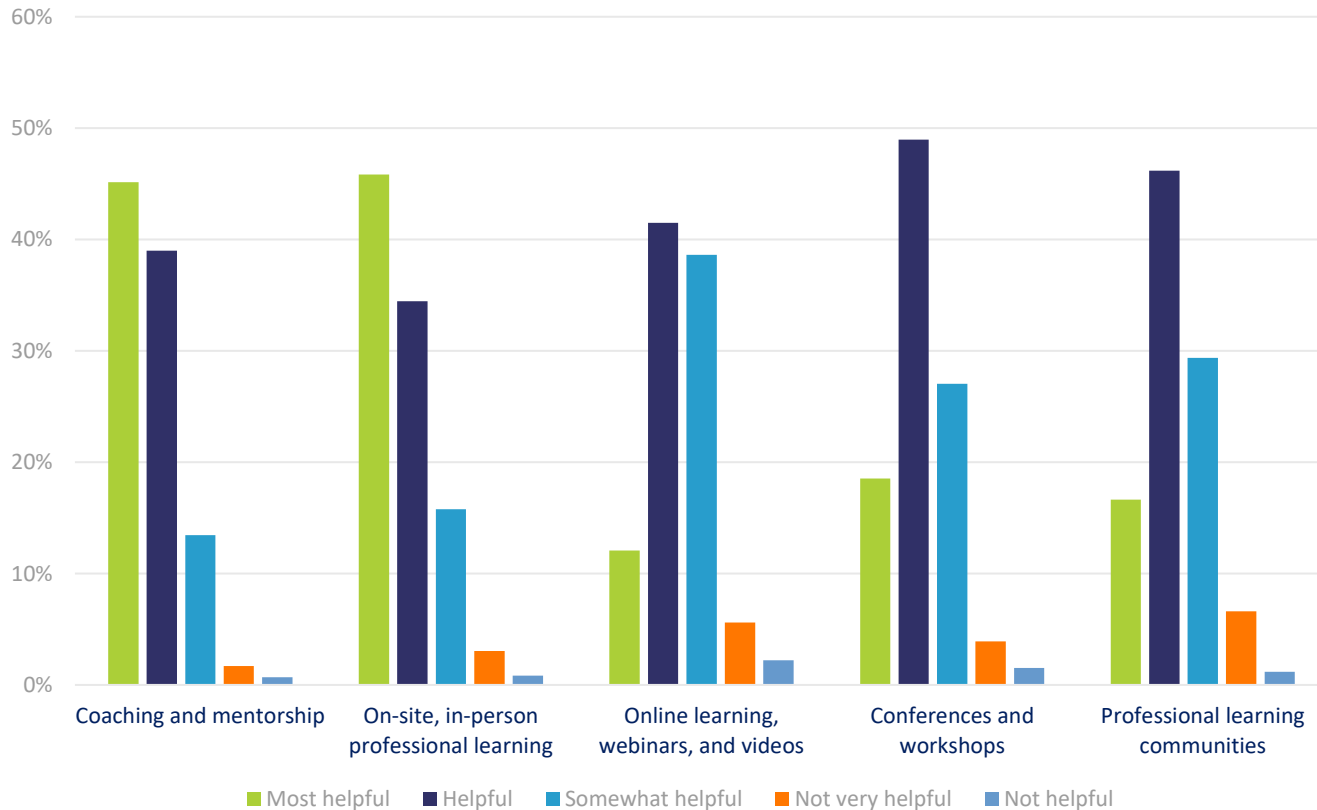
Teachers



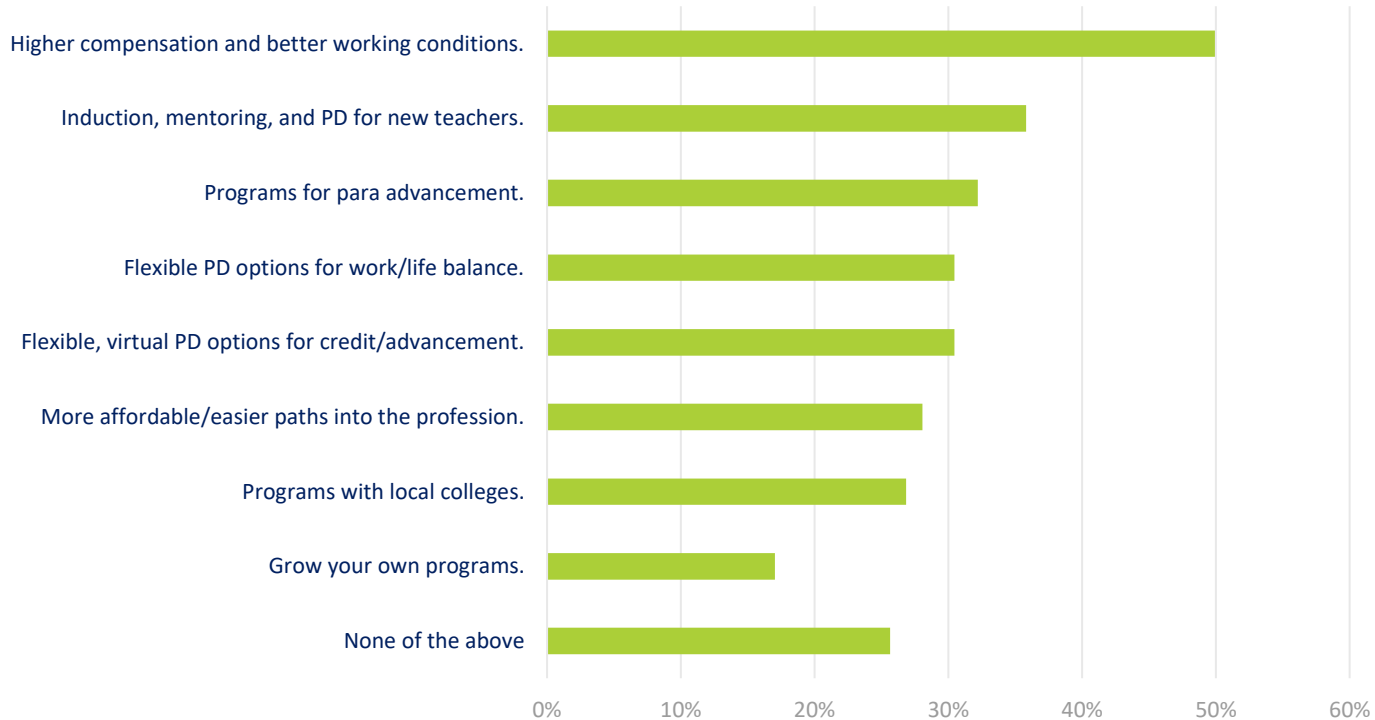
Paraprofessionals



What type of professional learning is most effective to improve educator practices and improve staff retention and recruitment?



Please select any practices you've seen that are improving the staff shortages, motivation, and the outlook for the future.



ChatGPT Summary of 15 Major Issues

- **Staffing Shortages:** There's a critical need for more special education teachers and paraprofessionals. The shortage leads to larger class sizes, less individual attention, and inadequate support for students with special needs.
- **Professional Development:** Both teachers and paraprofessionals require more targeted training to meet the diverse needs of special education students effectively.
- **Compensation and Working Conditions:** Many comments suggest that improved pay and benefits, as well as a balanced workload, could help attract and retain qualified special education staff.
- **Diverse Student Needs:** There's a wide range of special needs among students, including behavioral, emotional, and academic challenges, that require more resources and individualized approaches.
- **Administrative Support:** There's a call for better support and understanding from administrators, particularly regarding the complexities of special education.
- **Resource Allocation:** Educators express the need for better allocation of resources, such as assistive technologies and materials tailored to special education.
- **Inclusion and Integration:** Challenges with effectively integrating special education students into general education settings were mentioned, as well as the need for adaptation in teaching methods.

ChatGPT Summary of 15 Major Issues

- **IEP Implementation:** Meeting the individualized education program (IEP) goals for each student is made difficult due to staffing shortages and time constraints.
- **Educational Pathways:** Concerns were raised about alternate certification pathways and the need for a more robust training system for special education professionals.
- **Parental and Community Support:** Enhanced engagement and understanding from parents and the community could improve the special education environment.
- **Emotional and Mental Health:** The emotional and mental health of students and educators alike are strained due to the high demands and challenging work environment.
- **Recognition and Respect:** A sentiment for greater recognition and respect for the demanding work that special education entails was evident.
- **Legal and Bureaucratic Pressures:** Educators feel burdened by the legal and administrative aspects of special education, which can detract from teaching time.
- **Work-Life Balance:** The difficulty in achieving a work-life balance due to the demands of the profession is leading to burnout and turnover.
- **Student Progress and Outcomes:** The lack of resources and support is impacting student progress, with many not receiving the services they require to succeed.



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