

## **The Critical Shortage of Special Education Personnel in Michigan**

May 9, 2014

### **Background**

Michigan schools have struggled to hire and retain qualified special education staff for over twenty years. According to the US Department of Education (USDOE), this is not solely a Michigan problem. There is a long-standing nationwide shortage of personnel qualified to perform specialized instructional services in schools.

There are many factors driving this tightening of supply including the approximately 13% of special education teachers that choose to leave the field and request that their special education endorsement be removed from their certificates. The challenge of providing special education in today's climate of increasing accountability and declining resources at the classroom level is challenging. Addressing these factors will require both long term and short-term solutions.

According to the State of Michigan there were 211,380 special education students enrolled in the state for the 2012-2013 school year constituting 13% of the total student population. Each one of these students has unique needs that require individual planning and specialized services in order to benefit from their instruction. **If schools are unable to fill vacancies for special education professionals, access to a quality education suffers for our most at-risk students.**

Currently there is no legislation that addresses this issue. The current authorization that allows a critical shortage list to be developed expires at the end of the current school year. This is a chronic problem and there is every indication that it will get worse. Michigan's children deserve better.

### **The Data**

The Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE) identified critical shortages of personnel as a priority for action and collected information from membership in a survey conducted in February 2014. The survey was distributed to 648 members and had a return rate of 24.5%. Specific results of this survey are attached.

Respondents from across the state indicated current shortages exist in all of the following areas and are expected to continue through 2014-2015:

- ☐ Speech and Language providers
- ☐ School Psychologists
- ☐ Audiologist
- ☐ Occupational Therapist
- ☐ Physical Therapist
- ☐ Teachers of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ☐ Teachers of Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- ☐ Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment
- ☐ Teachers of Students with Cognitive Impairment
- ☐ Teachers of students with Physical Impairment and Students with Other Health Impairment
- ☐ Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Disabilities
- ☐ Teachers of Students with Emotional Impairment
- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education Teachers
- ☐ School Social Workers
- ☐ Special Education Directors & Supervisors
- ☐ Orientation & Mobility Specialists
- ☐ Sign Language Interpreters

## Current Needs/Recommendation

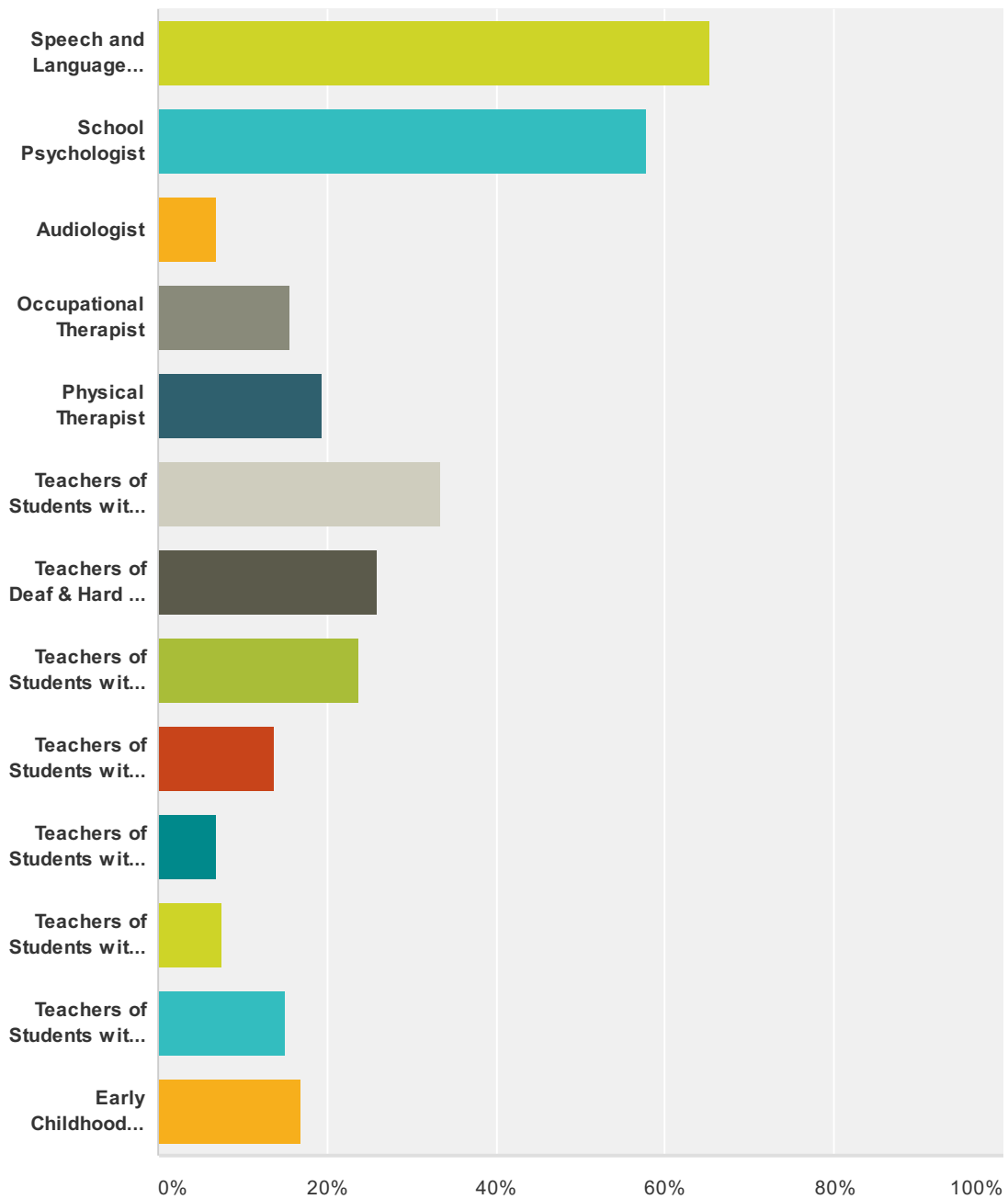
MAASE strongly urges support for one of the following pieces of legislation: **SB 907**, HB 5264 or HB 5181 as an essential first step in addressing this issue. Legislation such as this is necessary to direct the Michigan Department of Education to develop and submit to the USDOE a list of critical shortages for educational personnel on an annual basis.

## References

- MiSchool Data Portal. 2012-2013 Special Education Data Portraits: Disability Snapshot. Retrieved on February 26, 2014 from <https://www.mischooldata.org/SpecialEducationEarlyOn/DataPortraits/DataPortraitsDisability.aspx>
- National Coalition on Personnel Shortages in Special Education & Related Services, (2010) *Understanding Shortages of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel*. Retrieved on February 26, 2014 from <http://specialedshortages.org/2010MayDialogueGuideFinal.pdf>
- The IRIS Center for Training Enhancements. (2005). *Teacher Retention: Reducing the Attrition of Special Educators*. Retrieved on February 26, 2014 from [http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tchr\\_ret/](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/tchr_ret/)
- US Department of Education, (2013) *Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing*. Retrieved on February 26, 2014 from <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oep/pol/tsa.pdf>

# **Q1 In which of the following categories of staff did you experience shortages in 2013? (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 159 Skipped: 17



Answer Choices	Responses	
Speech and Language Providers	65.41%	104
School Psychologist	57.86%	92
Audiologist	6.92%	11
Occupational Therapist	15.72%	25

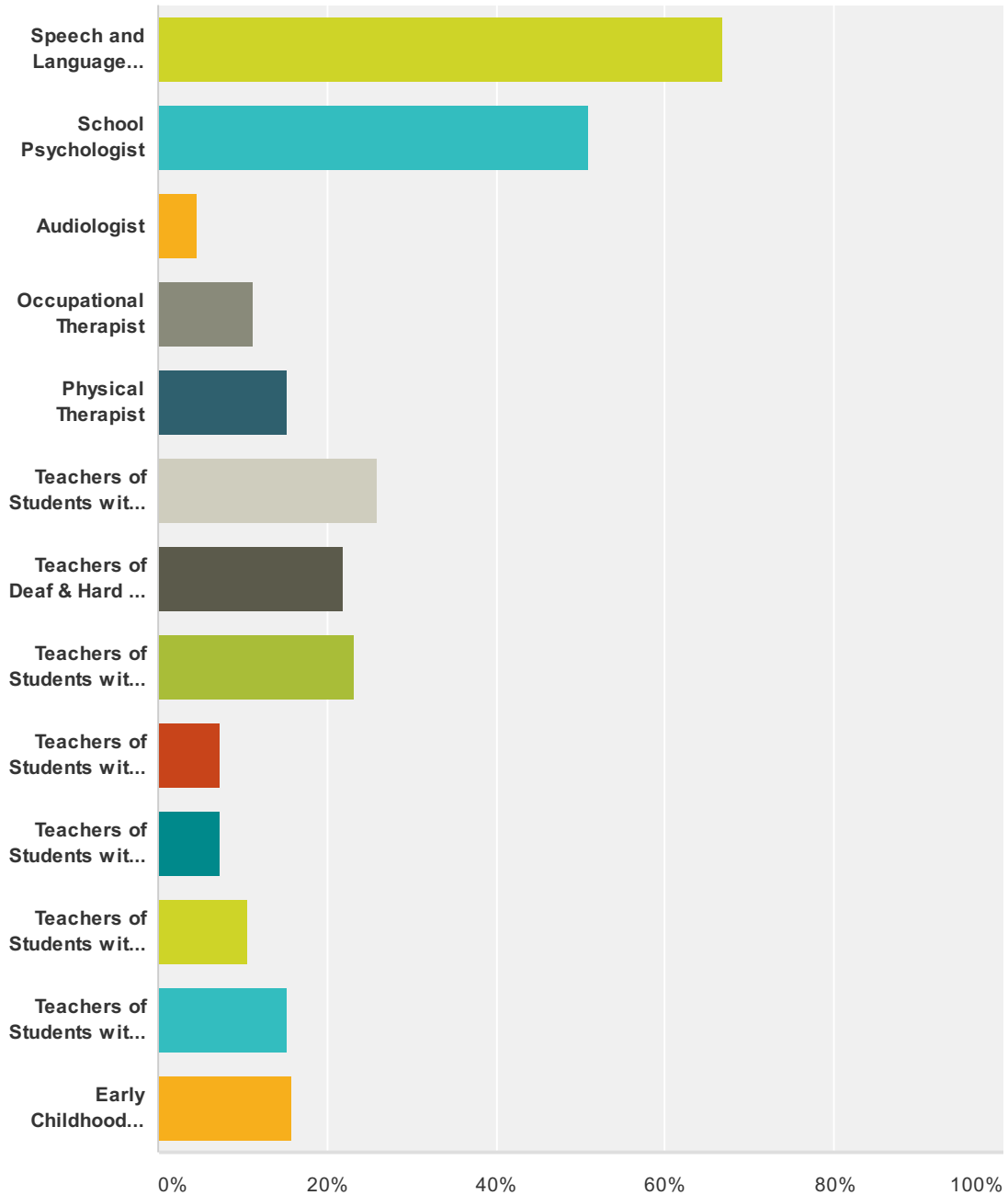
# MAASE Critical Shortage Survey 2-2014

Physical Therapist	19.50%	31
Teachers of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder	33.33%	53
Teachers of Deaf & Hard of Hearing	25.79%	41
Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment	23.90%	38
Teachers of Students with Cognitive Impairment	13.84%	22
Teachers of Students with Physical Impairment and Students with Other Health Impairment	6.92%	11
Teachers of Students with Specific learning Disabilities	7.55%	12
Teachers of Students with Emotional Impairment	15.09%	24
Early Childhood Special Education Teachers	16.98%	27
<b>Total Respondents: 159</b>		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	School Social Workers	2/20/2014 9:08 AM
2	Teacher consultants for AI, HI, VI	2/19/2014 8:09 PM
3	SE Directors	2/18/2014 3:28 PM
4	O & M	2/18/2014 1:37 PM
5	Teacher Consultants	2/18/2014 11:18 AM
6	Our ISD supplies us w/ many of the above.	2/18/2014 10:08 AM
7	none	2/18/2014 9:41 AM
8	Secondary Special Education Teachers	2/18/2014 8:35 AM
9	O & M Specialist	2/18/2014 7:56 AM
10	We have also had shortages in Teachers of English as a Second Language!!!	2/17/2014 10:20 PM
11	Bilingual special education staff	2/17/2014 7:55 PM
12	Orientation and Mobility Services	2/17/2014 4:55 PM
13	Sign Language Interpreters	2/17/2014 4:47 PM
14	School Social Worker	2/17/2014 4:47 PM
15	budget shortages to hire/maintain staff	2/17/2014 4:36 PM
16	Highly Qualified core subject for secondary LD	2/17/2014 4:12 PM
17	none	2/17/2014 3:08 PM
18	Special Education Administrators	2/17/2014 2:45 PM
19	none	2/17/2014 2:44 PM
20	Directors of Special Education	2/17/2014 2:41 PM
21	Para Educators	2/17/2014 2:39 PM
22	ZS-endorsed teachers (GSRP programs)	2/17/2014 2:37 PM

**Q2 In which of the following do you anticipate having vacancies that you may be unable to fill in 2014 without Critical Shortage legislation? (Check all that apply)**

Answered: 151 Skipped: 25



Answer Choices	Responses	
Speech and Language Providers	66.89%	101
School Psychologist	50.99%	77
Audiologist	4.64%	7
Occupational Therapist	11.26%	17

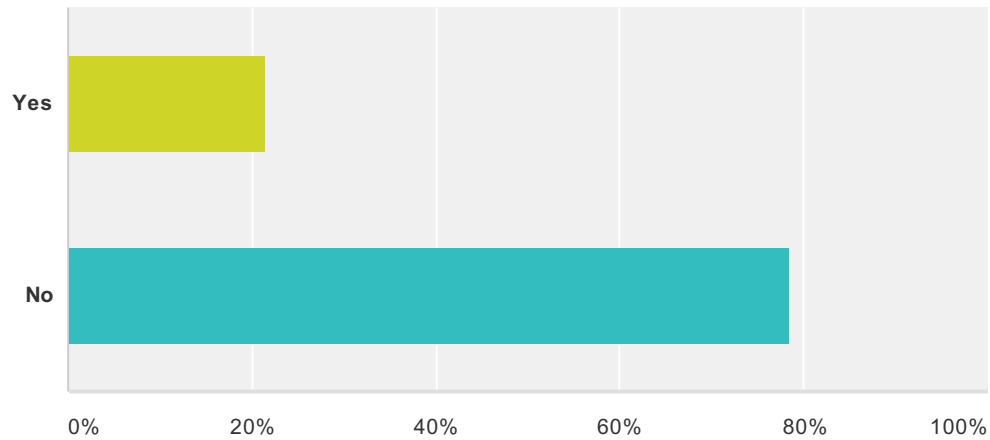
# MAASE Critical Shortage Survey 2-2014

Physical Therapist	15.23%	23
Teachers of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder	25.83%	39
Teachers of Deaf & Hard of Hearing	21.85%	33
Teachers of Students with Visual Impairment	23.18%	35
Teachers of Students with Cognitive Impairment	7.28%	11
Teachers of Students with Physical Impairment and Students with Other Health Impairment	7.28%	11
Teachers of Students with Specific learning Disabilities	10.60%	16
Teachers of Students with Emotional Impairment	15.23%	23
Early Childhood Special Education Teachers	15.89%	24
<b>Total Respondents: 151</b>		

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	School Social Workers	2/20/2014 9:08 AM
2	SE Directors	2/18/2014 3:28 PM
3	none	2/18/2014 1:37 PM
4	Teacher Consultants	2/18/2014 11:18 AM
5	Currently contracting services	2/18/2014 11:10 AM
6	Who are HQ in a core content area at the HS level	2/18/2014 10:01 AM
7	none	2/18/2014 9:41 AM
8	Secondary	2/18/2014 8:35 AM
9	O & M Specialist	2/18/2014 7:56 AM
10	Teachers of English as a Second Language!!!!	2/17/2014 10:20 PM
11	Bilingual special education teachers	2/17/2014 7:55 PM
12	Sign language interpreters	2/17/2014 7:25 PM
13	All areas of teachers of Special Education and Social Workers	2/17/2014 5:04 PM
14	Orientation and Mobility	2/17/2014 4:55 PM
15	Sign Language Interpreters	2/17/2014 4:47 PM
16	We have not been able to in years past	2/17/2014 4:46 PM
17	Highly Qualified core subject teachers for secondary LD	2/17/2014 4:12 PM
18	School Social Worker	2/17/2014 3:19 PM
19	Preschool addressing our 1755 needs	2/17/2014 3:18 PM
20	none	2/17/2014 3:08 PM
21	Special Education Directors/ Supervisors	2/17/2014 2:45 PM
22	none - all will be filled	2/17/2014 2:44 PM
23	ZS-endorsed teachers (GSRP programs)	2/17/2014 2:37 PM
24	all positions are currently filled	2/17/2014 2:37 PM

### Q3 Have you utilized the Critical Shortage for Retirees Request Form based on a critical shortage specific to a regional/local shortage?

Answered: 167 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	21.56% 36
No	78.44% 131
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>

#	If Yes, please describe your regional shortage	Date
1	School Psychologist	2/19/2014 8:09 PM
2	Psychologists in the past	2/19/2014 8:48 AM
3	School psych	2/19/2014 8:22 AM
4	I anticipate having to do so next year though.	2/18/2014 8:21 PM
5	Psychologist, SLP	2/18/2014 1:37 PM
6	Speech therapy, VITC, HITC	2/18/2014 12:53 PM
7	Speech Pathology	2/18/2014 11:43 AM
8	If yes, this was completed by our HR Department.	2/18/2014 11:18 AM
9	We were unable to fill a speech and language position.	2/18/2014 10:29 AM
10	Teachers endorsed in Hearing Impairment	2/18/2014 10:22 AM
11	I do not know.	2/18/2014 10:08 AM
12	I'm not sure... not the Director.	2/18/2014 9:18 AM
13	In emergency cases for special education teacher substitutes	2/18/2014 9:09 AM
14	There are very few extra Speech and Language providers in northern part of the lower peninsula.	2/18/2014 7:38 AM
15	Early Childhood Special Education Teachers	2/17/2014 8:04 PM
16	School Psychologist	2/17/2014 7:41 PM
17	Physical Impairment, SLP, School Psych - unable to identify retired ASD teachers!	2/17/2014 6:37 PM

## MAASE Critical Shortage Survey 2-2014

18	Speech	2/17/2014 5:09 PM
19	Speech, OT, teachers of the deaf, teachers for HI	2/17/2014 4:47 PM
20	I am not aware of this form or resource. Our district has had shortages this year of psychologists, PT and Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, but I will let them reply officially. I am responsible for Communication Disorders.	2/17/2014 4:46 PM
21	school psychologists and speech/language therapists	2/17/2014 3:51 PM
22	psychs, ecse	2/17/2014 3:22 PM
23	Shortage in the area of HI TC	2/17/2014 3:21 PM
24	Speech Therapists	2/17/2014 3:05 PM
25	we hired a Teachers of the Cognitively Impaired	2/17/2014 3:02 PM
26	Here in the southwestern part of the state (Cass County) we are very limited in our ability to attract Speech and Language Pathologists. Without the use of retirees we would be out of compliance in meeting IEP goals in two LEAs.	2/17/2014 2:58 PM
27	Speech and Language Pathologists	2/17/2014 2:48 PM
28	Physical Therapist, School Psychologist and Speech & Language Pathologist.	2/17/2014 2:46 PM