

Strand Title:
**Recruiting, Developing, and
Retaining Highly Qualified Special
Education Teachers**

Strand Leaders:

Mary Brownell, University of Florida

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Securing and Keeping Quality Special Education Teachers: Lessons From the Research

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University of Florida,

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Naomi Tyler, Vanderbilt University

Bonnie Billingsley, Virginia Tech

Overview of This Session

- Teacher Quality
 - Mary Brownell, University of Florida
- Alternative teacher preparation & retention
 - Paul Sindelar, University of Florida
- Cultural & linguistic diversity in the special education teacher workforce
 - Naomi Tyler, Vanderbilt University
- Understanding & improving teacher retention
 - Bonnie Billingsley, Virginia Tech

Tough Challenges

- Ensuring that students with disabilities make adequate yearly progress when state and federal budgets are dwindling
- Securing adequate numbers of highly qualified teachers in the face of chronic shortages
- Implementing effective preparation, induction, and retention strategies when states are fiscally strapped and the need for qualified teachers is enormous

How Well are Students with Disabilities Doing?

- Students with LD have access, but are they doing well?
 - 65% of students with LD receive mostly whole group instruction
 - Participation rates in class activities are 50% less than those of general education peers
 - Accommodations they receive are questionable

How Well are Students with Disabilities Doing?

- Students with LD have access, but are they doing well? (cont)
 - 30% to 60% of students with LD score as low on standardized achievement tests as 15 % of the typical population
- 75% of students with disabilities score below the 50th percentile
- Students living in poverty and those of color are most at-risk

SEELS and NLTS2 data bases (SRI International)

Why Qualified Special and General Education: Teachers Matter!!!

- IDEA demands substantive access to the general education curriculum, not just the opportunity to participate
- NCLB and IDEA demand that students with disabilities make adequate yearly progress in the general education curriculum

What Kinds of Teachers Will We
Need to Achieve these Objectives?

What Do We Know about Quality Teachers

- Knowledge of Subject Matter
- Knowledge of Content Specific Pedagogy
- Strong classroom management skills
- Deep knowledge of the students
- Ability to respond to student needs

Brownell et al., in press; Brownell et al., 2007; Goldhaber; 2002; Hill et al. (in press) Rice, 2003; Seo et al., 2008; Seidel & Shavelson, 2007

Why We Should be Concerned about Our Special Education Teachers?

- Special education teachers often do not have subject matter background, or more importantly, the content specific pedagogical knowledge to adequately serve students

Need to Address Problems of Teacher Quantity & Quality

- ▶ Insufficient supply of special education teachers, especially those with content knowledge (Boe, analysis of SASS data)
- ▶ New teachers have insufficient knowledge and skills to meet the complex demands of teaching students with disabilities (Bishop et al., 2009; Seo et al., 2008)
- ▶ Turnover of special education teachers is high, especially in high poverty and remote rural schools (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008)
- ▶ Increasing numbers of students with disabilities compared to typical students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009)

How can we secure & retain a
highly qualified and diverse
special education teaching force?

Program Designs Features That Improve Retention

Paul Sindelar

University of Florida

Conventional Wisdom

- Alternative route programs are too short to prepare competent teachers
- Alternative route teachers are greater attrition risks
- Extensive preparation improves qualifications and preparedness

Too Short?

- Rosenberg et al. (2007)
 - In a survey of 100+ alternative route programs, most were...
 - Offered by colleges and universities (> 75%)
 - Equivalent to on-campus degree programs (nearly 75% offer at least the option of obtaining a degree)
 - Very few programs were fast track (~11%)
- Sindelar, Daunic, & Rennells (2004)
 - AR program teachers were competent but in some ways less competent than graduates of traditional programs

More Likely to Leave?

- Assertion seems to be based on (Darling-Hammond, 2000)
 - Compared UG programs, Holmes Group graduate programs, and Teach for America
 - Retention 3 years out: Holmes > UG > TFA (~33%)
 - But TFA entails only a 2-year obligation
 - What's surprising is that one third remained in teaching beyond their obligation

Extensive Preparation?

- Finding from Boe, Shin, & Cook (2007)
 - Extensive preparation related to
 - Fully Certification
 - In-field Employment
 - Stronger Sense of Preparedness
 - Definition of “extensive preparation”
 - At least 5 weeks of student teaching and four TE components from SASS
 - Courses in selecting and adapting instructional materials, and educational psychology; observations of teaching; feedback
 - 10 or more weeks of student teaching

Since We're All Doing It...

- How can we design programs to maximize probability of success?
- Who's likely to complete an AR program and remain in the field?
- Dai, Sindelar, Denslow, Dewey, and Rosenberg (2007)

Whom to Recruit?

- Mid-career changers: Who are the best bets?
 - Paraprofessionals
 - Know a thing or two about the work
 - Trainers will know a thing or two about their potential
 - Opportunity to step up to professional status
 - Often live in the communities where they are employed
 - Other mid-career changers: Some are better suited for teaching than others, depending upon...
 - Previous careers
 - Experience with children
 - Salary change

Program Design Considerations

- Location
 - Proximity to the schools at which the graduates will be expected to serve
- Income
 - Critical feature of “internship” AR programs: Opportunity to work during training
- Program Length and Requirements
 - Double-edged sword: Long and rigorous programs may discourage most qualified candidates

Program Design Considerations

- Financial Assistance
 - Also a double-edged sword
 - Helps defray lost opportunity costs associated with training
 - However, when participants pay a share of the costs, they value preparation more and feel stronger commitment to the field

Conclusions

- Still a lot we don't know about alternative route preparation
 - In spite of our beliefs about them...
- On the one hand, they're not all they're cracked up to be...
 - Negligible impact on SET shortages
 - Drawn individuals into the field who are more likely to be making more money teaching than less
 - They attract a more diverse participant pool, but only when they're located in diverse communities
- On the other, they're not all the streamlined, fast-tracks envisioned in NCLB

Conclusions

Walsh & Jacobs, 2008

- Not “On the other hand,” but...
- *Because* they’re not all the streamlined, fast-tracks envisioned in NCLB



Update: Diversifying the Special Education Workforce

Naomi Tyler

Vanderbilt University

Why is it important to have a diverse special education workforce?

- Issues of equity and social justice
- Disproportionate representation
- Impact on student learning



Equity and Social Justice

- “Our teachers should be excellent, and they should look like America.”

(Former

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley, 1998)



Demographics

	Students 2005-2006	Special education students 2005- 2006	Teachers 2003-2004
White	57.1	58.4	83.7
Hispanic	19.8	17.3	6.0
African American	17.2	20.6	7.4
Asian/PI	4.6	2.2	1.6
Native American	1.2	1.5	0.6

Changes in the Workforce Diversity

	Teachers 1993-1994	Teachers 2003-2004	% change
White	87.3	83.7	-3.5
Hispanic	4.1	6.0	+1.9
African American	6.7	7.4	+0.7
Asian/PI	1.1	1.6	+0.5
Native American	0.7	0.6	+0.1

Disproportionality

- Cultural mismatch in the classroom
- Potential impact on referrals for special education

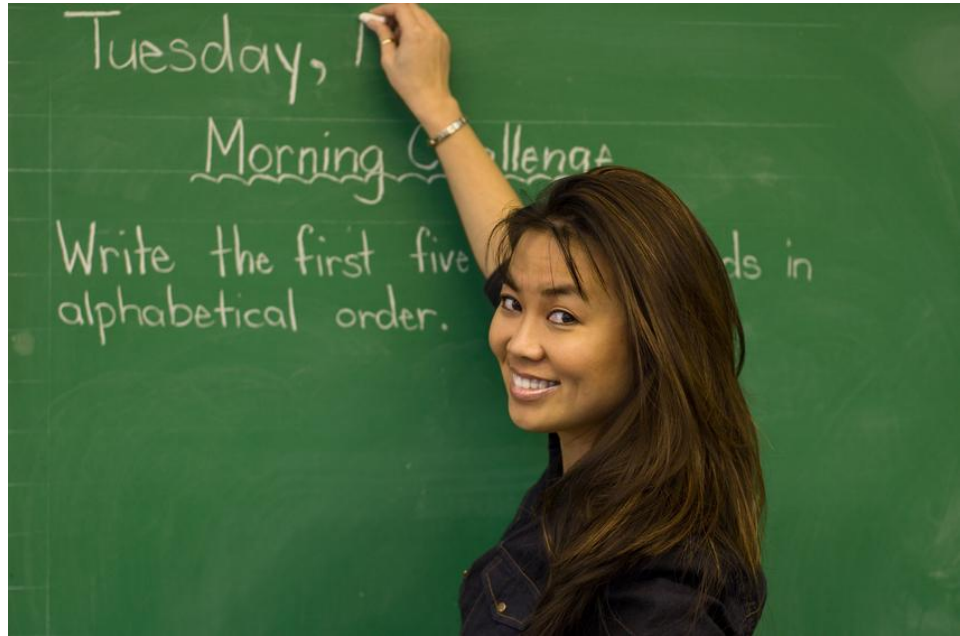


Impact on Student Learning

Cultural translators/ mediators

Linguistic translators

Enhanced educational experiences for *all* students



Recruitment: Early support for students and families

- High-school course selection
- Future Teachers clubs
- College application/admission procedures
- Financial aid



Recruitment: College selection

- Current students (word of mouth)
- Media campaigns
- On-campus activities
- Showcasing diversity



Retention: College

- Mentors
- Cohorts
- Diverse faculty
- Cultural sensitivity



All Teachers

Culturally sensitive

Culturally responsive instruction



Understanding & Improving Special Education Teacher Retention: A Focus on Early Career Educators

Bonnie S. Billingsley, Professor
Virginia Tech

Purposes

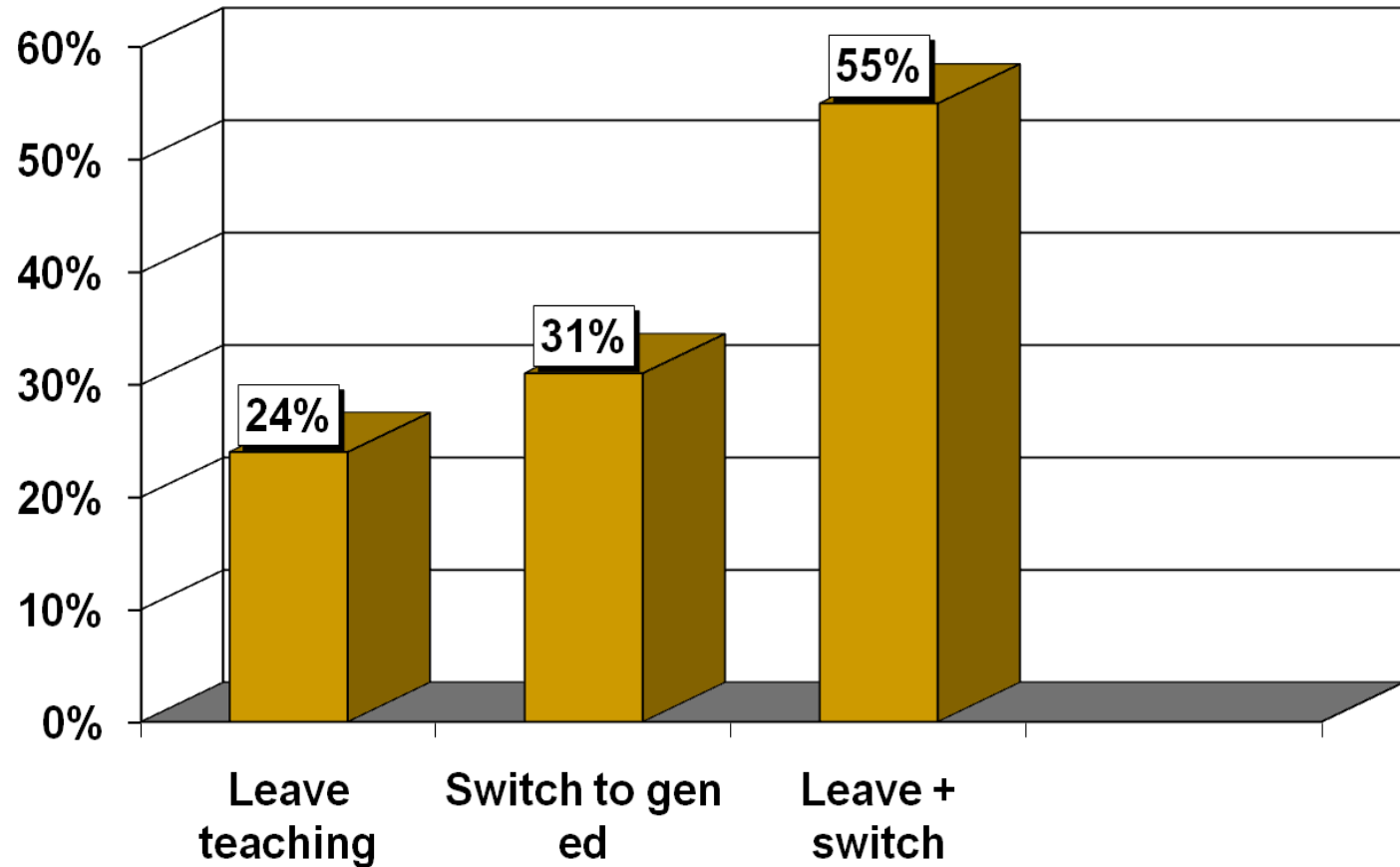
- Provide a framework for thinking about retention
- Identify four risk factors for early career teacher turnover & commitment
 - Relate these risk factors to high poverty schools
- Consider implications for retention

Labor Market Theory of Supply & Demand*

- ▶ Individuals will enter/remain if most attractive activity available
 - Overall compensation (broad idea)
 - “Sense of success” (Johnson, 2004)
 - “Intrinsic rewards” (Lortie, 1975)
- ▶ Adjust attractiveness of the job
- ▶ Elements of attractiveness become the policy levers to recruit & retain

*Applied to teacher supply, demand and retention by Guarino et al., 2006

1. New Teachers at Risk of Leaving



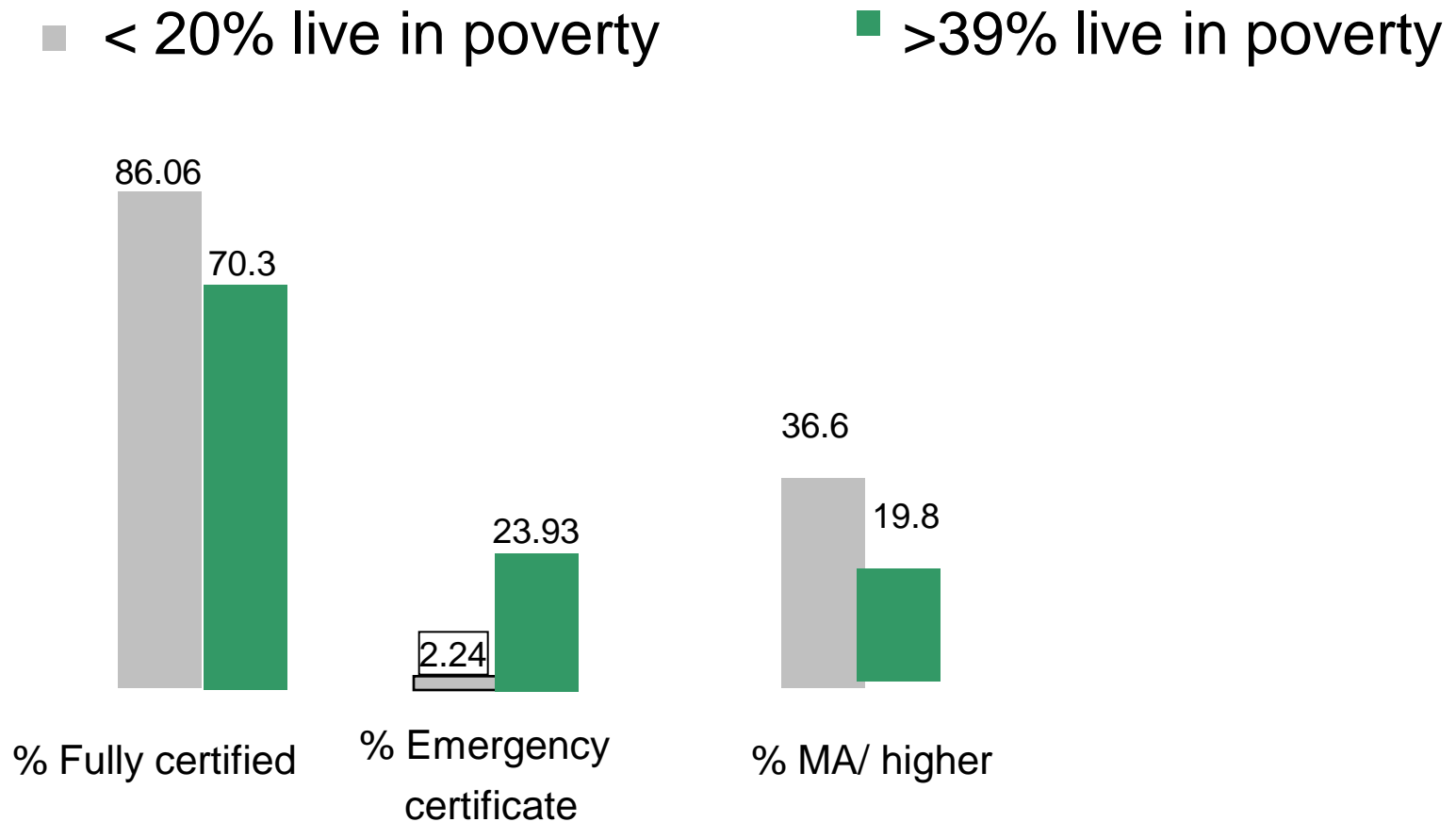
Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2006

2. Less Preparation Linked to Leaving

- High percentages of unqualified early career SETs (Billingsley, 2002)
- “Attrition percentage for beginning teachers with little or no preparation was twice as high as for teachers with extensive preparation” (Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2006)
- SETs who switch to GET have lesser qualifications (Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2005)
- In special education lack of certification linked to leaving (Boe et al., 1999; Miller et al., 1999)

Early career teachers in high poverty districts had fewer teaching credentials

(Fall & Billingsley, 2008)

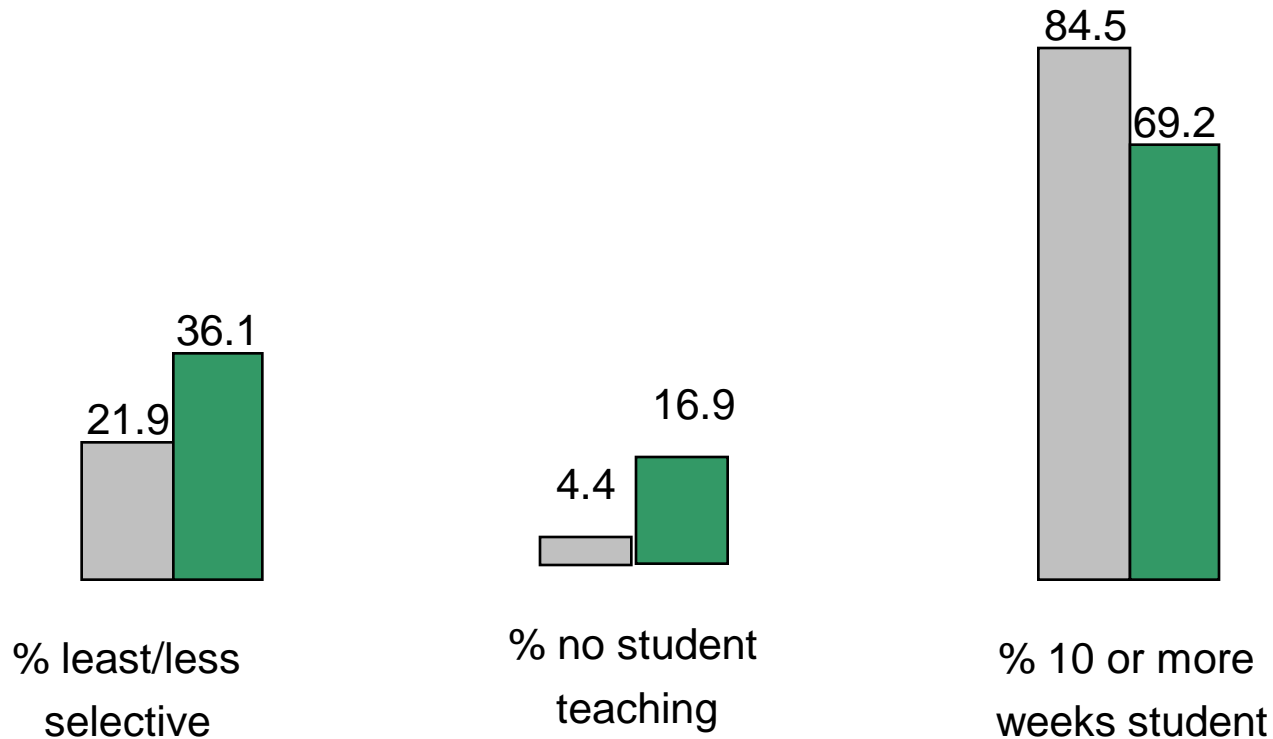


Early career teachers in high poverty districts less prepared

(Fall & Billingsley, 2008)

■ < 20% live in poverty

■ > 39% live in poverty



3. Job Match

- Early career special educators who perceived a good match between preparation & assignments were more committed to their jobs (Fall, Billingsley & Williams, 2009)
- Teachers who were mismatched to their assignments left their jobs (Gehrke & Murri, 2006; Morvant et al., 1995)

4. Work Conditions:

Reasons Teachers Say They Exit Teaching

Boe, Cook & Sunderland, 2008

	Special Educators	General Educators
Escape teaching	37%	24%
Personal	32%	29%
Retirement	17%	29%
Professional development	8%	9%
Involuntary	7%	10%

4. Work Conditions & Commitment

(Fall, Billingsley & Williams, 2009)

- Controlled for teacher characteristics, preparation & district poverty level
- Three work factors related to early career teachers' commitment
 - School support
 - Teacher participation in decision-making
 - Work manageability
- District support was not significant

Work Problems among Early Career Teachers

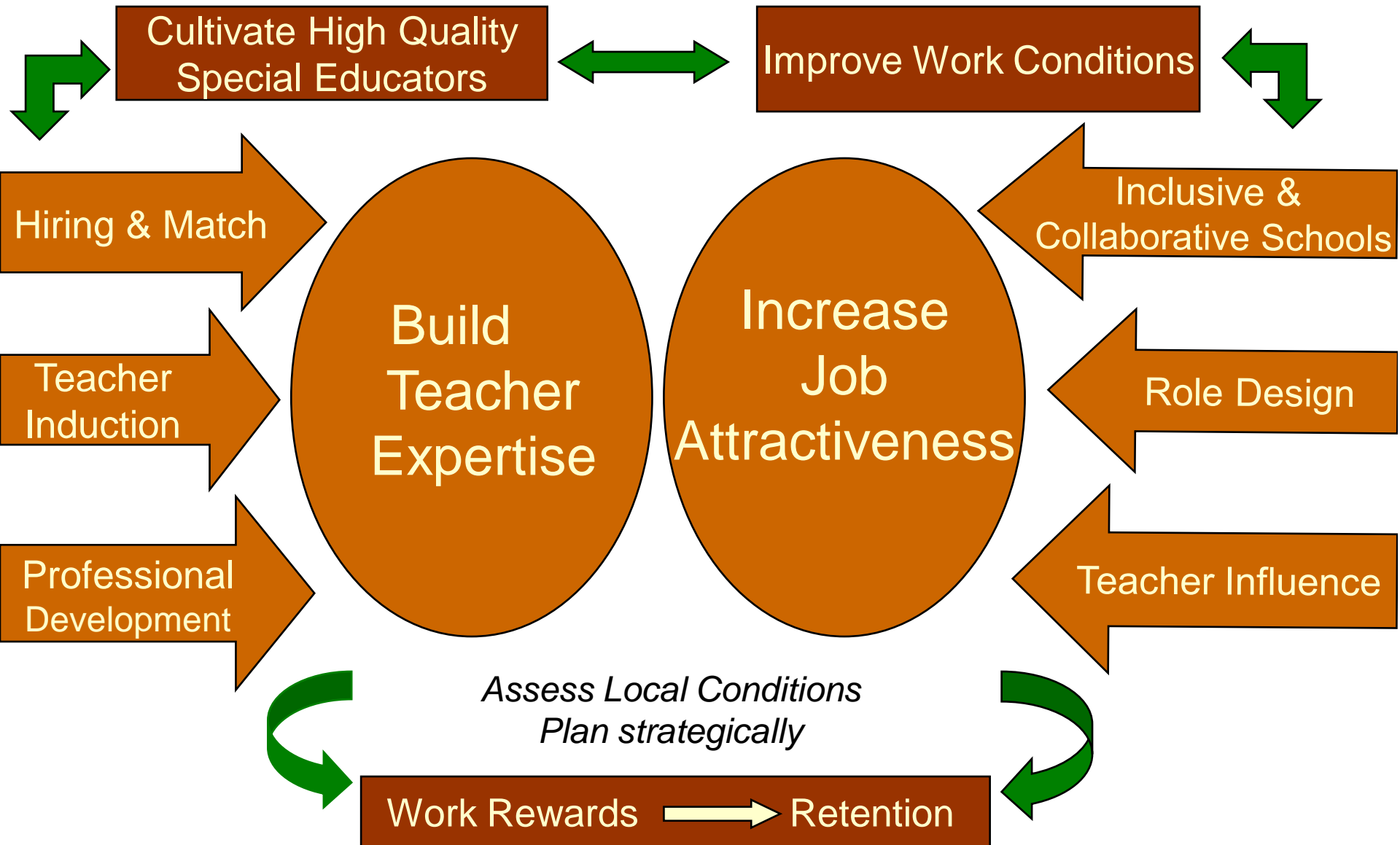
(Billingsley, Griffin et al. 2009)

- Inclusion, collaboration & interaction with adults
 - Sense of belonging
 - Resistance in collaboration
 - Lack of structural supports
- Pedagogical concerns
 - teaching content
 - Materials
- Organizing & managing work

Work Conditions in High Poverty Districts

- When compared to teachers in low poverty districts, early career teachers in high poverty districts (Fall & Billingsley, in press):
 - Viewed their principals and colleagues as less supportive
 - Perceived less involvement in school decisions
 - Reported higher and more diverse caseloads
 - Indicated they had insufficient materials

**A Leader's Model for Cultivating & Keeping
Committed Special Educators
(Billingsley, 2005, revised)**



Our Strand Continues...

(see page 98 of the program)

- 9:45 a.m. Building effective partnerships for recruiting, preparing and mentoring beginning special education teachers (Rosenberg, Gillespie, McCray & Kroeger)
- 11:00 a.m. Teacher induction and mentoring: What we know & steps for future success (Billingsley, Griffin & Kamman)
- 1:15 p.m. Using technology to prepare and mentor beginning special education teachers (Smith, Israel & Mike)
- 2:30 p.m. What helps beginning special education teachers learn to teach? (Kamman, Casey & Leko)
- 3:45 Hanging on to the good ones: Supporting and retaining high quality special education teachers (Banikowski, Fasulo, Mehring, Phillip, & Tines)