

## **Part B Personnel Data Notes**

### **2015-16 Reporting Year**

This document provides information or data notes on the ways in which states collected and reported data differently from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) data formats and instructions. In addition, the data notes provide explanations of substantial changes or other changes that data users may find notable or of interest in the data from the previous year.

#### **Alaska**

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Alaska attributes the increase in the number of not qualified special education paraprofessionals for ages 6-21 in 2015-16 to a change in our Title I schools. The overall count of Title I schools stayed virtually the same from 2014-15 to 2015-16, but the number of schoolwide schools increase by 7%. All paraprofessionals working in a Title I schoolwide school have to meet more stringent requirements to be qualified than those working in non-Title I schools. In a targeted assistance Title I school, only those paraprofessional being paid in whole or in part by Title I are considered Title I professionals and must meet the more stringent requirements to be qualified. In short, due to the increase of schoolwide Title I schools in 2015-16, more paraprofessional were held to the more stringent requirements for being qualified than in the previous year. These districts continue to work with their paraprofessionals to assist them in meeting the more stringent requirements.

#### **Arizona**

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Based on analysis of related service provider data reported on Counselors / Rehabilitation Counselors and Physical Education teachers / Therapeutic Recreation Specialists for the 2014-2015 school year, several public education agencies (PEAs) were targeted for follow up to ensure validity and accuracy of reported data. As a result of the targeted technical assistance provided, these data for the 2015-2016 school year are reflective of current practice, thus the significant decrease in these two personnel categories was expected.

#### **Delaware**

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Refined filtering and selection that ties staff specifically to their certifications and their position code has improved the link between their current role and specific service to SWD.

#### **Florida**

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FDOE MIS staff work closely with district MIS staff and the FDOE program office during the reporting periods to ensure data are correct.

## **Georgia**

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The Georgia Professional Standards Commission issues rules for licensure for para-professionals in Georgia's schools in compliance with Federal legislation. As enrollment of SWD in Georgia increases so does the need for more para-professionals in Georgia's schools and the challenge to find qualified individuals who meet the licensure requirements. Georgia's schools added 162.6 para -professionals to work with young children and were fortunate to find licensed (qualified) personnel, thus the increase in qualified para-professionals for children aged 3-5. These data report that for early childhood para-professionals 98.7% are qualified (947.6 of 959.6).

An additional 1,280 para-professionals were employed to work with school age children with disabilities in Georgia. Of the additional 1,280, the majority are qualified; Georgia saw a large increase in the number of qualified para-professionals, but also an increase in the number and percentage of not-qualified para-professionals. These data report that for school age para-professionals 97.7% are qualified (12,146.3 of 12,426). Georgia's school districts are continually seeking qualified employees to provide services to children.

## **Indiana**

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An LEA in the previous data year (2014-15) reported numbers consistent with total physical education teachers rather than the FTE of those assigned to teach students with disabilities. This error did not transpire this year which led to data inconsistency.

Indiana saw an increase statewide in total number of special education teachers for ages 6 to 21. These FTE positions were filled disproportionately with non-highly qualified teachers.

## **Kansas**

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Kansas had a decrease of 30 FTE 26% in the Physical Therapist category from FY2015. Kansas has confirmed this count to be accurate. This change is reflective of a statewide shortage of related service providers. The shortages can be attributed to funding issues and increased competition from other factors such as private industry and incentives offered by neighboring states.

## **Kentucky**

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In the 2014-15 school year, Kentucky reported 106.21 non-highly qualified special education teachers. In the 2015-16 school year, the number of non-highly qualified special education teachers in Kentucky was 63.02. This was a difference of -43.19 teachers or -40.7%. According to the districts with the largest rate of change, the reason for the reduction is that over the course of the school year, the non-highly qualified teachers became qualified by completing certificate programs.

## **Maryland**

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The 61% increase in Maryland's Personnel count from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 for teachers of children ages 3 through 5 not highly qualified reflects the challenges of large urban school districts to recruit and

retain preschool special education teachers. The State required these Districts to submit staffing plans that identified personnel needs, resources, and strategies to address those needs. Many of these teachers were in the process of becoming highly qualified in the targeted area within the three year period that was specified under the law, prior to the amendment of the ESSA in December 2015.

The 24.5% increase in Maryland's Personnel count from 2014-2015 to 2015-2016 for teachers of students ages 6 through 21 not highly qualified reflects the challenges of large urban school districts to recruit and retain special education teachers. For accountability and the identification of root causes for the increase, Maryland requires the District to submit staffing plan that delineates personnel needs, resources, and strategies to address those needs. Many of these teachers and related personnel were in the process of meeting the highly qualified standards in the targeted subject area within the three year period that was specified under the law, prior to the amendment of the ESSA in December 2015.

## **Minnesota**

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Increases in 'Not Highly Qualified' for special education teachers is due to an increase in the number of special education teachers employed in Minnesota as well as higher numbers of teachers reported by districts as not highly qualified in the state's Staff Automated Report (STAR) system. Examples for areas of increase falling under the not highly qualified category include limited license, variances, community experts, and non-renewable license.

## **Nevada**

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Data Group ID 486, File Spec. 070: The increase in the number of special education teachers working with students ages 6-21 who were not highly qualified is related to significant special education teacher shortages in Nevada.

Data Group ID 647, File Spec. 112: The increase in the number of paraprofessionals working with students ages 3-5 who were qualified is related to recruitment and training efforts.

## **North Carolina**

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North Carolina believes that the significant decrease in personnel reporting is due to more intensive training and resources provided by the Part B Data Manager to districts over the 15-16 school year.

## **North Dakota**

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The significant changes reported in the data between FFY 2014-15 and FFY 2015-16 reflect statewide changes in the services of Special Education Paraprofessionals. ND observed significant increase in the number of Qualified Special Education Paraprofessionals for ages 3 through 5 (13.0%) and 6 through 21 (8.6%) during the FFY 2015-16. This means quite a number of unqualified paraprofessional worked toward and earned "Qualified" status within the one year period. However, the changes may be unstable due to several others factors, including the need for the services of Special Education Paraprofessionals at a given time period and their availability.

## Oklahoma

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We suspect that the disparities in personnel counts between 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 are due to three factors:

1. the state's use of a new reporting location mechanism that may have confused some district personnel (several districts had noticeably incorrect FTE counts);
2. updated reporting guidelines that clarified how to calculate FTEs (directors have told us that historically they did not understand how to count FTEs and over-reported their related services personnel counts); and
3. state-wide budget concerns that have forced changes in personnel.

During the past year, we have further clarified how to identify and calculate related services' FTEs through new written guidance and training. We have already noticed much improved data quality in the 2016/17 data and believe it will continue to be more accurate as districts more consistently follow the guidance provided.

We suspect that the disparity in the 3 through 5/not qualified paraprofessional counts between 2014/15 and 2015/16 years is due to an increase in child count. The total increase was similar to the other categories of paraprofessionals, demonstrating that districts are hiring more paras in general

## South Carolina

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Not Qualified Paraprofessionals (ages 6-21) – The reduction in this category was due to a reduction in the number of group home aides that were no longer serving an area of the state and thus necessitated removal of staff under this category from Table 2 reporting data.

Highly Qualified Personnel, Ages 3 to 5 – South Carolina has been transitioning to reporting speech language pathologists as a part of Section A because "Speech Language Impairment" is one of the IDEA categories of disability. The state thus has moved this information from a separate section into section A which accounts for the increases noted.

Not Highly Qualified Personnel, Ages 6 to 21 – The increase in teachers in this category is due to a reported shortage of highly qualified special education teachers where positions needed to be filled by substitutes as needed.

Counselors and Rehabilitation Counselors – The decrease in this category is due to 19 districts statewide with reductions in the number of counselors providing these services to special education students.

Interpreters – The decrease in this category is due to 14 districts statewide with reductions in the number of interpreters providing these services to special education students.

## Tennessee

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For the Personnel Report C070, there was a noted increase in the amount of teachers in the “not highly qualified” category. We believe this increase is twofold: 1) there was an overall increase in the amount of teachers reported in both the highly qualified and not highly qualified category, so the increase may be due in part to that; and 2) the passage of ESSA in the 2015-16 school year led districts to stop reporting teachers as highly qualified, as ESSA did away with that status. Accordingly, we believe that when entering teacher information in our statewide IEP data management system from which special education personnel data is pulled, districts may have: defaulted teachers to “not highly qualified” because they no longer knew what the licensure requirements/qualifications entailed, hired teachers who did not meet the previously established “highly qualified” status as this was no longer required, or selected “not highly qualified” as they were unsure what else to select in light of the new law. The Tennessee Department of Education will be updating this section of our system to provide clarification on the status and licensure requirements and remove the “highly qualified” language.

For the related services report C099, there was an increase in the number of nurses reported. Last year the department placed an emphasis on ensuring that districts accurately reported their personnel data, including related services providers. Often there has been confusion about how to code nurses relative to special education services and they have not always been consistently included in personnel counts. We believe that the increase in the 2015-16 school year is a more accurate figure representing the actual number of nurses/medical personal providing services to students with disabilities. We saw the increase occurred in larger districts who may have been historically under-reporting such information.

## Virginia

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Virginia reported an increase in not highly qualified special education teachers, for ages 6-21, from 283.58 in 2014-2015 to 647.62 in 2015-2016, a 128.4% increase. On June 19, 2015, House Bill 373 discontinued the licensing of Speech-language Pathologists by the Virginia Board of Education and instead, Speech Language Pathologists are licensed by The Virginia Board of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology. An analysis of the data reveal that for 2015-2016, divisions reported speech language pathologists as not highly qualified, as they are no longer licensed by the Virginia Department of Education. In collaboration with the Office of Teacher Education and Licensure, communications and guidance will be provided to LEAs regarding future reporting of Speech Language Pathologists.

Virginia reported a significant increase in qualified special education paraprofessionals for ages 3- 5 from 1589.97 in 2014-2015 to 2324.7 for 2015-2016, an increase of 46.2%. VDOE continues to prioritize early childhood special education initiatives by providing targeted assistance to LEAs through training, support, and guidance such as the Leadership in Effective And Developmentally-appropriate Services (LEADS) initiative. LEADS in Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) is an initiative in the Commonwealth of Virginia designed to create and support a network of statewide leaders responsible for administrative oversight of local ECSE programs. LEADS is led by the Virginia Department of Education’s 619 Coordinator and is supported by the [Virginia Early Childhood Special Education Network \(ECSE Network\)](#).

Virginia reported a reduction in medical/nursing service staff from 178.6 in 2014-2015 to 136.1 in 2015-2016, a 23.8% decrease. An analysis of the data revealed that two LEAs accounted for the decrease, totaling the 42.5 difference between 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. The LEAs attributed the decrease to

more accurate data collection and reporting of their staff through the Master Schedule Collection for the 2015-2016 school year. Guidance has been provided to the LEAs regarding the definitions for the special education related services personnel.

## **Washington**

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After a district level review, it was determined the data for Medical/Nursing staff was incorrectly reported by two extra-large districts in Washington State. The data have been corrected for Medical Nursing Totals, Medical/Nursing Highly Qualified and Medical/Nursing Not Highly Qualified in both the LEA and SEA level files and the files have been resubmitted as of January 5, 2017.

After a district level review, it was determined the data for Teachers, Not Highly Qualified, providing services to students with disabilities ages 6-21 are correct. The increase of FTE was spread over 46 school districts across the State of Washington. No resubmission will be needed.