
Staff Update

School Paraprofessionals Staffing

September 24, 2014

Legislative Program Review
and Investigations Committee

Connecticut General Assembly

2013-2014 Committee Members

Senate

John A. Kissel, *Co-Chair*

John W. Fonfara
Steve Cassano
Eric D. Coleman
Anthony Guglielmo
Joe Markley

House

Mary M. Mushinsky, *Co-Chair*

Christie M. Carpino
Brian Becker
Marilyn Giuliano
Brenda L. Kupchick
Diana S. Urban

Committee Staff on Project

Catherine M. Conlin, Chief Analyst
Susan Phillips, Legislative Analyst II

Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol Room 506
Hartford, CT 06106



School Paraprofessionals Staffing

Background

The program review (PRI) committee approved a study of school paraprofessionals staffing in May 2014. The study was requested by the Connecticut chapter of American Federation of Teachers, which represents a great number of paras in many Connecticut school districts. The union and others have raised the issue that districts may be assigning school paraprofessionals in ways that render paras unable to effectively perform their core duties, including those that are required by special education students' individualized education plans.

Earlier in the 2014 legislative session, unions representing paraprofessionals had advocated for passage of HB 5523, which would have created a task force to examine such issues, and their staffing levels in general. There was a public hearing on the bill but it did not pass.

The PRI study's focus is on instructional professional staffing policies and practices in Connecticut K-12 public schools. The study is examining numbers of paras working in school districts, the range of duties and functions they perform, and whether those have changed over time.

In Connecticut, paraprofessionals are not certified, and only paras working in schools or programs that receive federal Title I funds are required to meet federal qualifications. While many districts and schools use the Title I standards for all paraprofessionals, it is not a requirement. Similarly, there are no state requirements for ongoing professional development of paras.

In 2006, PRI conducted a study of paraprofessionals focusing on the issues of qualifications and certification. While credentialing of paraprofessionals is not a major focus of this study, how paraprofessionals are assigned, directed, trained, supervised, and evaluated are all key questions in the study scope.

Main Points

There is no one definition of school paraprofessional, or para. Various definitions and titles exist, depending on federal and state law and regulation, and local district policies, job descriptions, and contracts.

Connecticut State Department of Education collects data on the numbers of FTE non-certified instructional staff (NCIS) in all districts. The categories of NCIS include those assigned to: special education; Pre-K and kindergarten; library/media; ESL/Bilingual; and regular education.

The data indicate that **there are a total of 14,450 NCIS working in the districts in 2013, an increase of about 13 percent from 2003, but a decrease of 2 percent from the 14,741 employed in 2010.**

Most of the increase in NCIS has been in special education, where the number of FTEs has risen about 30 percent, from 7,319 in 2003 to 9,562 in 2013. At the same, the number of paras assigned to other areas and regular education has decreased by about 20 percent.

Since 2004, there has also been an increase in the number of special education teachers (5 percent), while the numbers of special education students has declined by about 3,350 (5 percent). Thus, the ratio of special education students to both special education teachers and special education paraprofessionals has decreased over a similar period – in the case of teachers from 8:1 in 2004 to 6:1 in 2013, in the case of paras, from 5:1 to 4:1.

Results from a recent survey of paras conducted by UConn's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities indicate that **54 percent of paras responding had been working for 10+ years; 41 percent had a BA or higher, while 16 percent had only a high school or equivalency diploma.**

In the vast majority of school districts, paras are unionized, with various unions representing paras.

According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, **Connecticut teaching assistants (including paras) are paid an annual average salary of \$29,230, about \$5,000 more than the national average.** The average para salary is about 42 percent of the \$68,580 salary of an elementary general education teacher and 41 percent of the \$71,810 paid to a special education teacher.

Next Steps

Surveys of school districts' human resources and special education departments will seek data about: actual numbers of full- and part-time NCIS, their job titles, the students and/or classrooms they support; and numbers and types of grievances raised, injuries reported, and workers' compensation cases filed. Further data analysis will focus on contract provisions, job descriptions, and school and district staffing patterns.

Acronyms

ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis
BU	Bargaining Unit
BLS	Bureau of Labor Statistics
CREC	Capitol Region Education Consortium
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FTEs	Full Time Employees
IA	Instructional Assistant/Aide
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
LEA	Local Education Authority
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MERA	Municipal Employee Relations Act
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
NCIS	Non-Certified Instructional Staff
OCR	Office of Civil Rights
PPT	Planning and Placement Team
PD	Professional Development
RESCs	Regional Educational Service Centers
RtI	Response to Intervention
R/S	Restraint and Seclusion
SRBI	Scientific Research Based Intervention
SDE	State Department of Education
SEA	State Education Authority
SERC	State Education Resource Center
TA	Teachers' Aide/Teacher Assistant
TWNDP	Time with Non-Disabled Peers
UCEDD	University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
WC	Workers' Compensation

*Many of these terms are more fully defined in the attached Glossary.

Paraprofessional Staffing Study

Applied Behavior Analysis ABA	A form of behavior therapy often used to treat individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in which environmental stimuli are manipulated in order to produce a desired response. By breaking complex skills into small steps, individuals can systematically learn to respond and behave in socially appropriate ways.
Bargaining Unit BU	A group of employees recognized by the employer as sharing common interests for purposes of collective bargaining and represented by a labor union.
Bureau of Labor Statistics BLS	Federal government agency which collects and publishes data about labor economics, including wages paid by job classification.
Capitol Region Educational Consortium CREC	The RESC serving the greater Hartford area.
Collective Bargaining Agreement CBA	Negotiated contract between a bargaining unit of employees and the employer.
Due Process	Parents of students receiving services pursuant to IDEA may disagree with the LEA about the appropriateness of an IEP. When this is the case, IDEA provides for a dispute resolution process, implemented and overseen by the SEA, which can culminate in a due process hearing before an impartial hearing officer whose final decision can be appealed to state or federal court.
Education Paraprofessional	Term used to distinguish paraprofessionals working with students as part of the instructional process from those who might work in schools in capacities where such interaction is not required (e.g., custodians, bus drivers, secretaries).
Elementary and Secondary Education Act ESEA, Title I	Initially enacted in 1965, federal law intended to direct resources at ensuring quality educational services to all U.S. students. Title I specifically targets funds to schools in which a high percentage of students are from low income families.
Free and Appropriate Public Education FAPE	The central articulated right of each child with a disability pursuant to IDEA. An education provided, at public expense, to meet the individual needs of each student with disabilities.
Full Time Employees FTEs	Typically reported as a count of all full time positions of a certain kind, as distinguished from a count of individuals holding that kind of position.

Guidelines for Training and Support of Paraprofessionals	Promulgated by CSDE in 2012 to assist districts in ensuring that requirements of both Title I and IDEA were met in terms of the hiring, supervision, evaluation and use of paraprofessionals in Connecticut schools.
Highly qualified	Means that instructional staff person meets qualifications for position (either teacher or paraprofessional) outlined in federal law for either Title I or IDEA.
Inclusion	The concept that students with disabilities should be integrated with their non-disabled peers; also referred to as mainstreaming. Philosophically, inclusion is not merely the practice of having students placed with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent possible; inclusive education contemplates modification of the general education program and environment for all students as necessary to achieve maximal learning in the general education environment for students with and without disabilities.
Individualized Education Program IEP	The annual individualized plan developed by PPT for each student identified as requiring special education pursuant to IDEA.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA	A federal law that establishes the rights of all children with disabilities to receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.
Instructional Staff	Includes both certified teachers and non-certified instructional staff.
Least Restrictive Environment LRE	Further right of each child with a disability pursuant to IDEA to receive FAPE in the environment most closely resembling the environment he or she would receive education in the absence of any disability.
Local Education Authority LEA	A public or private entity providing public education services to students from one or more municipalities.
Municipal Employee Relations Act MERA	State law (Conn. Gen. Stat. § 7-467 et seq.) governing the relationship between municipal employers and employees.
No Child Left Behind Act NCLB	Most recent (2002) reauthorization of Title I of the ESEA. Provides direct guidance as to qualifications and roles for paraprofessionals.
Non-Certified Instructional Staff NCIS	Set of SDE categories for non-certified school employees who work in supporting direct instruction to students.
Office of Civil Rights OCR	Office within the USDOE responsible for hearing complaints of violations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
ParaPro Assessment	An assessment that must be passed to satisfy requirements of Title I (and many school districts) if a person seeking employment as a paraprofessional does not have the equivalent of two years of college credits.

Paraprofessional	A non-certified school employee who either works with students or provides other support services within the school environment. Term may include both instructional and non-instructional paraprofessionals.
Planning and Placement Team PPT	A group of individuals including parents, teachers, school administrators, the student if over age 14, and other knowledgeable individuals who together determine the specific educational needs of the student and develop, review and revise the student's IEP. This includes determining the environment(s) in which education will take place and the staff supports needed.
Professional Development PD	Pre-service or in-service training offered to both certified and non-certified school staff to increase capacity to provide effective educational services.
Regional Education Service Centers RESCs	Public education agencies whose purpose is to provide programs and services to support and benefit collaborating groups of public school districts. Connecticut's six RESCs offer many different types of services and run magnet and special education schools throughout the state.
Response to Intervention RtI	A framework of assessment and intervention to identify students struggling with basic skills and provide evidence based intervention while monitoring progress in order to discontinue intervention when no longer necessary or provide more intensive intervention if initial interventions do not result in improved performance.
Restraint and Seclusion R/S	The physical restraint of a student to prevent serious injury of self or others and the placement of the student in an environment away from other students. Restraint and/or seclusion are most often employed in connection with students who manifest disruptive and dangerous behaviors.
School District	Includes not only municipal and regional school districts, but also charter schools, RESCs, and some others entities providing public education.
School Paraprofessional Advisory Council	Established by the legislature in 2007. Currently consists of 19 members, meets quarterly, submits recommendations to the Commissioner of Education as to training needs and effectiveness of training of paraprofessionals, and provides reports to the General Assembly.
Scientific Research Based Intervention SRBI	Connecticut's term for its approach to RtI. Requires all struggling students, whether or not identified as in need of special education, to receive targeted research based intervention to support learning basic skills and the collection of data to demonstrate either successful remediation or the need to provide more intensive/individualized research based intervention.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	A statute ensuring equal access to programs receiving federal funds, including schools, for individuals with disabilities. Compliance with Section 504 is overseen by the USDOE’s Office of Civil Rights.
Service Categories	Pursuant to the federal IDEA, states are required to track pursuant to which of 12 possible service categories a child with disabilities receives services. Identification of a service category for purposes of IDEA is not equivalent to receiving a medical diagnosis.
Special Education	The provision of education and related services to students with disabilities pursuant to either the IDEA or Section 504.
State Department of Education SDE	State agency acting as the SEA for Connecticut.
State Education Authority SEA	The state agency with responsibility for receiving and distributing federal education funds to LEAs, as well as monitoring compliance with applicable federal law and collecting data to report to federal government. In Connecticut it is the SDE.
State Education Resources Center SERC	A quasi-public agency that is funded almost entirely by the SDE to provide professional development opportunities and disseminate information and resources about research-based and best practices.
Teacher/Instructional Aide/Assistant TA, IA	Most often used as a synonym for instructional paraprofessional or non-certified instructional staff.
Time with non-disabled peers TWNDP	A metric for inclusion recorded as the percentage of time a student with disabilities spends with students who do not have disabilities as compared to time spent in separate settings.
Title I Transition	See: Elementary and Secondary Education Act. There are two periods that can be referred to a “transition” in the context of special education. If a child with disabilities is between the age of 3 and 5, inclusive, he or she is entitled to a FAPE in the LRE, although for children without disabilities the right to public education does not attach until age 6. At the other end of the public education process, IDEA provides that students with disabilities may remain entitled to services to develop skills for transition to independent living even after completing the academic requirements for a high school diploma. Students receiving such post-high school transition services may be referred to as in a “5th year of high school” program.

University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities UCEDD	A center associated with the University of Connecticut Health Center. It is part of a national network of such centers, which conduct research and disseminate knowledge about ways in which to improve the quality of life for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
Workers Compensation WC	System of monitoring and providing benefits to employees injured in the course of employment.

School Paraprofessionals Staffing

Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee Staff Update
September 24, 2014

Study Focus

Examine non-certified instructional staffing policies and practices in Connecticut school districts – K-12:

- ▶ Numbers of paras
- ▶ Duties and functions
- ▶ Any changes over time

Study Scope

- ▶ Staffing policies and practices in Connecticut school districts K-12
 - ▶ Primarily Municipal and Regional LEAs
- ▶ Range of paraprofessional responsibilities
- ▶ Staffing levels and hiring practices
- ▶ Comparison of Connecticut practices with state/federal standards/guidance
- ▶ SDE oversight role
- ▶ Impact: students, class, schools, districts

Update Materials

- ▶ Glossary and Acronyms
- ▶ Work to date
- ▶ What is a paraprofessional?
 - ▶ Definitions
 - ▶ Roles and functions
 - ▶ Terms of employment
- ▶ Use in special education
- ▶ Federal laws, regulations, guidance
- ▶ State regulations, guidelines
- ▶ Next steps

Work to Date

- ▶ Literature reviews
- ▶ Stakeholder interviews
- ▶ Accessed publically available data
- ▶ Data requests to SDE / preliminary analyses
- ▶ Collected collective bargaining agreements (CBAs)

Themes

- ▶ There is no one definition of a school paraprofessional
 - ▶ Clear they are to assist in instruction and NOT to provide direct instruction
- ▶ Over the last decade there has been an increase in the number of instructional paraprofessionals
 - ▶ Most of the growth has been in special education
 - ▶ There has been a decrease in general education, reading and kindergarten
- ▶ In Connecticut, paraprofessionals are not certified
 - ▶ Minimal qualifications in general
- ▶ Vast majority of districts have contracts with paras
 - ▶ Most paras are unionized
 - ▶ Compensation in general is fairly low
 - ▶ Contracts often offer additional compensation for extra duties

Connecticut Public School System Profile (2012-13)

- ▶ **166 School Districts (1,031 schools)**
 - ▶ 149 municipal boards of education
 - ▶ 17 Regional School Districts
- ▶ **3 Endowed Academies (tuition from municipal districts)**
- ▶ **6 Regional Education Service Centers (49 schools)**
 - ▶ Both specialized schools and magnet schools
- ▶ **3 Unified School Districts operated by state agencies**
 - ▶ DOC, DMHAS, DCF – 19 schools
- ▶ **1 School District for State Technical High Schools**
 - ▶ 16 schools
- ▶ **17 Public Charter Schools**

Connecticut Public School Staff and Students (2012-13)

▶ Staff

- ▶ 36,616 General Education Teachers
- ▶ 5,849 Special Education Teachers
- ▶ 14,450 Non-certified Instructional Staff (i.e., paras)
 - ▶ 9,562 special education

▶ Students

- ▶ 550,429 enrolled (ages 3-21)
- ▶ Special education
 - ▶ 69,730 (ages 3-21; 12.6%)
 - ▶ 61,705 (ages 6-21)

What is a Paraprofessional?

- ▶ The use of the term “paraprofessional” is inherently ambiguous
 - ▶ Largest universe is all non-certified school staff (including custodians, bus drivers, kitchen staff, office staff)
 - ▶ Most restrictive definition would be only those individuals with job title “paraprofessional”
- ▶ This study focuses on non-certified staff who work in supporting **instruction** of students
 - ▶ Those reported to SDE by districts as Non-Certified Instructional Staff (NCIS)
- ▶ We will use “paraprofessional” as synonymous with “NCIS”

Range of Positions

SDE Non-Certified Instructional Staff

- ▶ Paraprofessional
- ▶ Instructional Staff
- ▶ Instructional Assistant
 - ▶ Pre-K, K, Regular Program;
 - ▶ Special Education 3-5,
Special Education 6-21;
 - ▶ ESL/Bilingual
 - ▶ Other Program
 - ▶ Reading
 - ▶ Library/Media Support Staff

Most Common Job Titles Found in Contracts

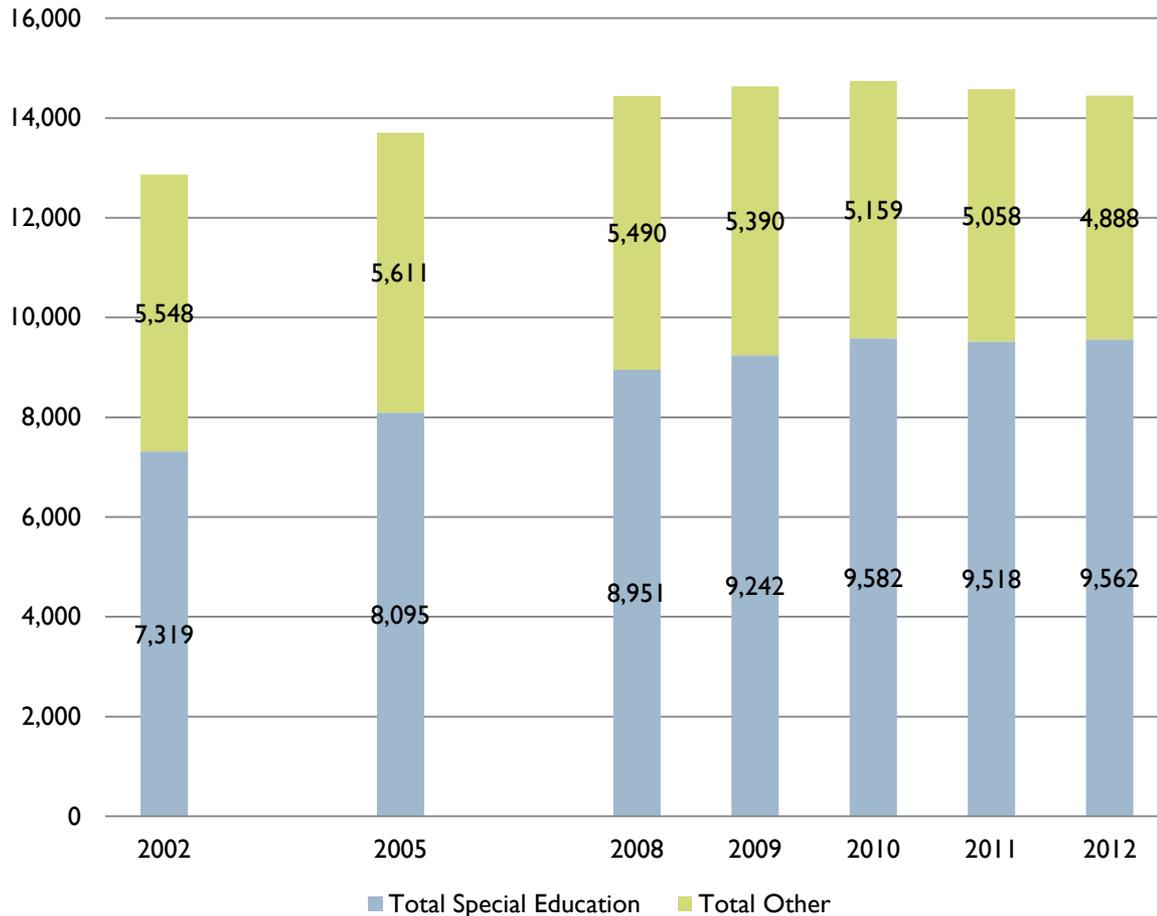
- ▶ Academic Assistants
- ▶ Tutor
- ▶ ABA Instructional Assistant
- ▶ Home School Liaison
- ▶ Job Coach
- ▶ Paraeducator
- ▶ Teaching Assistant
- ▶ Resource Room Aide

How Many Are There? What Do They Do?

- ▶ Work directly with students, with and without disabilities
- ▶ Number has increased significantly
- ▶ Marked increase in special education
- ▶ This increase is in contrast to number of students in special education and number of special education teachers

SDE Counts of Non-Certified Instructional Staff

Trend Line Comparison, Special Education and Non-Special Education NCIS (2002-12)



- From 2002 to 2010, special education NCIS increased 30% while non-special education NCIS decreased
- Although number of NCIS has leveled off, in 2012 66% of all non-certified instructional staff were working with students with disabilities whereas only 57% were doing do in 2002

Note: This is FTEs

Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2002-2011; SDE Data Tables 2011-2013

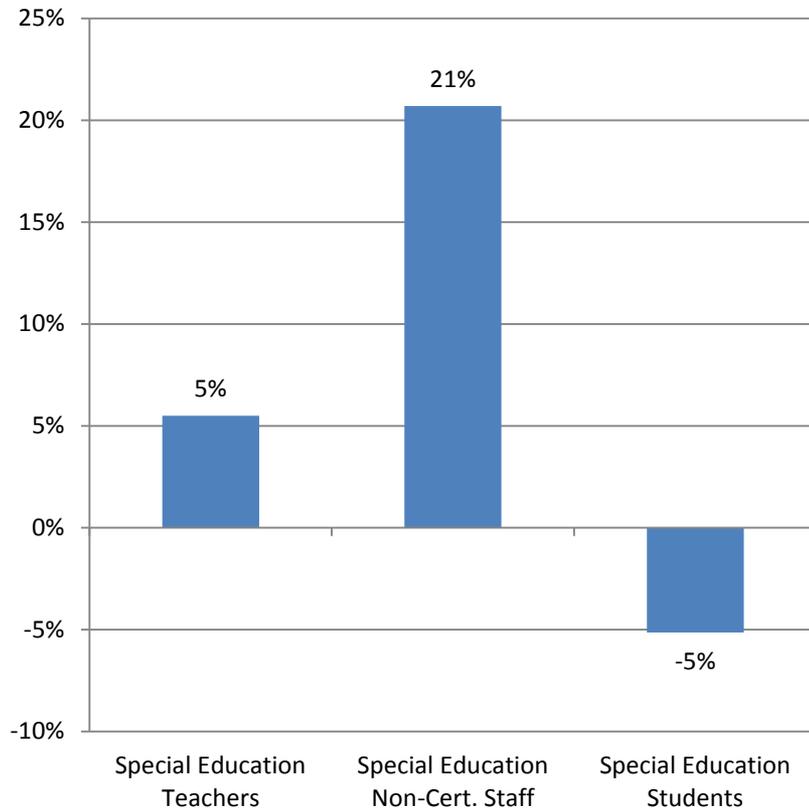
Percent Change in Types of NCIS (CT)

Type of NCIS	Number in 2002-03	Change 2002-03 to 2012-13	Number in 2012-13
Special Ed	7,319	30.6%	9,562
Pre-K	744	8.5%	807
Other Program	749	2.4%	766
ESL/Bilingual	247	2.0%	252
Kindergarten	758	-12.1%	666
Reading	587	-17.7%	483
Regular Ed	1,662	-19.3%	1,342
Library/Media	801	-28.6%	572

Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2002-2003; SDE Data Table 2012-2013

Changes in Special Education Students and Instructional Staffing (2004-2012)

Percent Change



Numeric Change

	2004-05	2012-13
Special Education Teachers	5,572	5,878
Non-Cert. Special Education Staff	7,923	9,562
Special Education Students	65,050	61,705

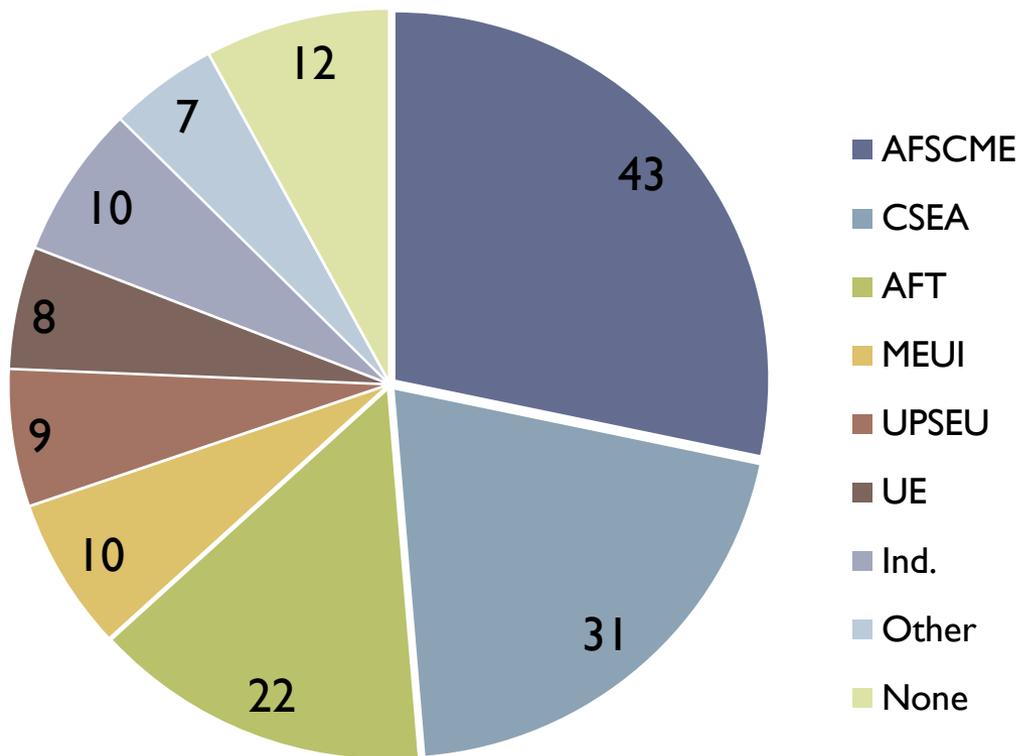
Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2004-2005; SDE Data Tables 2012-2013



What are Working Conditions?

- ▶ Most unionized
- ▶ Wages vary by district and role
- ▶ Stipends and longevity payments may be provided
- ▶ Opportunities for paid professional development vary

Union Representation By Number of CT Districts



Source: PRI Staff Analysis of CBAs

Union Representation

- Most districts have CBAs with paras
- Only 12 districts are not unionized
- Three unions represent over half of all districts (62%)

Compensation of Paras

- ▶ Most CBA compensation schedules use an hourly wage

District Starting Wages for Regular Paras	
Starting Salary	Number of Districts
\$12 hr. or less	29
>\$12 - \$14 hr.	54
>\$14 - \$16 hr.	22
>\$16 - \$18 hr.	19
>\$18 - \$20 hr.	3
>\$20 hr.	11
N=138	

Source: PRI Staff Analysis of CBAs

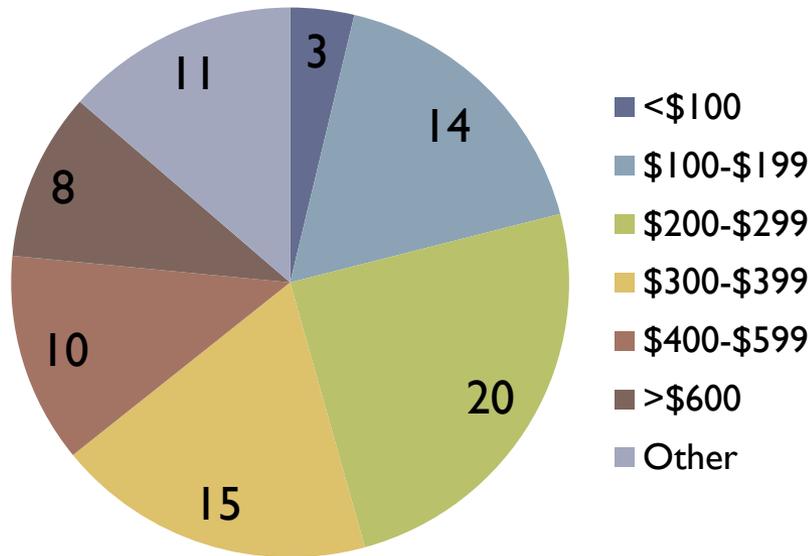
Compensation: Stipends

Stipend – additional \$ for performing a duty or having a qualification:

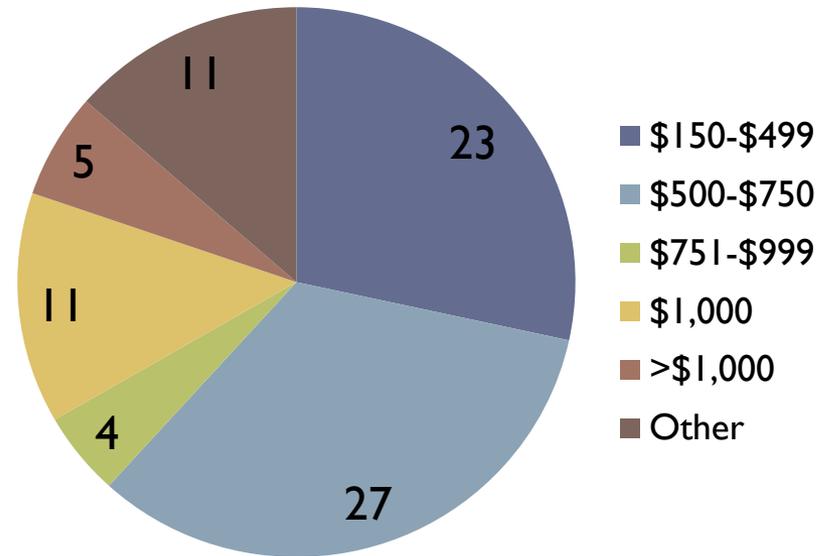
- ▶ 24 contracts specialized training (ABA) or sign language
 - ▶ \$.55 an hour to \$1,000 a year
- ▶ 25 for hygiene – could include feeding, toileting, diapering
 - ▶ \$.50 an hour to \$800 a year
- ▶ 26 for substituting for teacher
 - ▶ Typically 1.5 times reg. pay; \$1.00 hr. to \$60 a day additional
- ▶ 8 included additional \$ for education
- ▶ 2 for perfect attendance

Compensation: Longevity Payments

Bottom Range (N= 81)



Top Range (N= 81)



Source: PRI Staff Analysis of CBAs

What Paras Say About Themselves

UCONN University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities conducted survey of paras in late 2013

- ▶ Overall 2,438 paras responded to survey – results indicated
 - ▶ 54% had been a para 10+ years; 15% for only 1-3 years
 - ▶ 91% NOT certified as teacher
 - ▶ 16% high school/GED; 43% AA or some college; 41% BA or higher
 - ▶ 85% primarily provide services to students with IEP
 - ▶ 37% work with students with a 504 plan
 - ▶ 52% work with students at 4th grade or below
 - ▶ 44% are in general education classroom

What Explains Changes/Trends?

- ▶ Changes in legal landscape (particularly 1997-2002)
- ▶ Changing population profile of students with disabilities
- ▶ Transition
- ▶ Inclusion
- ▶ Economic considerations

Federal Legal Landscape Changed

- ▶ **ESEA/NCLB (Title I)**
 - ▶ Definition of instructional paraprofessional duties
 - ▶ Qualifications
- ▶ **IDEA**
 - ▶ No definition of paraprofessional duties
 - ▶ States charged with establishing standards for training and supervision
- ▶ **Section 504**
 - ▶ Rehabilitation Act
 - ▶ USDOE has issued regulations
 - ▶ Enforced by federal Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

Title I of the ESEA/NCLB

- ▶ Title I of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965)
- ▶ Amended/reauthorized by No Child Left Behind (2002)
 - ▶ Designed to improve academic achievement for all students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds
 - ▶ Concerned about instruction delivery by **highly qualified** staff
- ▶ Paraprofessionals must have:
 - ▶ High school diploma/equivalent
 - ▶ Additional education \approx 2 years study or “rigorous assessment”
 - ▶ Standards applied in 2002 for new hires, and for all paras in 2006
 - ▶ Only if involved in instruction; **NOT** if playground supervision or hall monitor

NCLB Paraprofessional Roles/Functions

- ▶ Provide one-on-one tutoring to student at times not receiving instruction from a teacher
- ▶ Assist with classroom management
- ▶ Instructional assistance in library, media center, computer lab
- ▶ Parental involvement activities
- ▶ Instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher

Title I: Connecticut Paraprofessionals

- ▶ In Connecticut in 2012-13, there were 575 Title I schools in 112 districts
 - ▶ Includes some charter schools, and some RESC magnet schools
 - ▶ Includes 5 of the 20 technical high schools
- ▶ Other schools may have Title I programs
- ▶ Most districts appear to use the NCLB qualification standards for paraprofessionals
 - ▶ Whether consisting exclusively of Title I schools or not
 - ▶ ParaPro Assessment used when college credits lacking

IDEA

- ▶ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- ▶ Current reauthorization of 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act
 - ▶ Free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities
 - ▶ FAPE to be provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
 - ▶ FAPE and LRE are determined for each child through team development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- ▶ 1997 Amendments requires paraprofessionals be trained in accordance with state law, regulation, or written policy

Individualized Education Plan

- ▶ Pursuant to IDEA, students receive individualized services per IEP
- ▶ IEP is developed by Planning and Placement Team (PPT)
 - ▶ Includes parents, teachers, school administrators and others knowledgeable about child's educational needs

Individualized Education Plan

- ▶ IEP may call for non-certified staff in one of two ways:
 - ▶ Personnel required to provide supports called for in IEP
 - ▶ Service implementer for specific services
- ▶ In either case, IEP may include specification of 1:1 for all or part of school day
- ▶ Frequency and duration should be indicated

Due Process

- ▶ Parents or school personnel can advocate for non-certified staff support as part of child's special education program (including asking for a 1:1)
- ▶ If school does not provide and parents disagree, they can file a complaint and ultimately seek hearing to direct school to provide such support
- ▶ School district will have burden of proof in hearing, and thus must weigh costs (both economic and non-economic) of due process against cost to hire staff

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

- ▶ Adopted in 1973 – predates IDEA
- ▶ Broader coverage: any individual with ADA “disability”
- ▶ Substantive right is to equal access
 - ▶ USDOE regulations guide schools/districts
 - ▶ SDE plays no role in monitoring or enforcement
- ▶ No specific reference to paraprofessionals, but could be used to ensure equal access to public education
- ▶ Anecdotally, very small percentage of students at any school are served exclusively pursuant to Section 504

What Roles Do State Agencies Play?

- ▶ **State Department of Education**
 - ▶ Regulations address “Aides” (2013)
 - ▶ Guidelines for “Paraprofessionals” (2012)
 - ▶ Advisory Council (2007)
 - ▶ Tracking of “Non-Certified Instructional Staff” (since 2002)
- ▶ **Labor Department**
 - ▶ Violations of CBA or MERA enforced by State Board of Labor Relations
- ▶ **Office of Protection and Advocacy**
 - ▶ Role in investigations, research, reporting, and advocacy

State Department of Education

SUPERVISION OF PARAs

- ▶ Regulations governing special education amended effective July 1, 2013
 - ▶ Clarification that aides to be “directly supervised”
- ▶ Guidelines for Training & Support of Paraprofessionals (2012)
 - ▶ Addresses and encompasses both ESEA/NCLB and IDEA requirements
 - ▶ Consistent with 2013 regulations
 - ▶ Clarifies distinction between “supervision” and “evaluation”

State Department of Education

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

- ▶ State statutes require SDE to **promote and encourage PD** for paras with instructional responsibilities
- ▶ Both SDE and State Education Resource Center (SERC) offer training and resources, as do RESCs and other entities
- ▶ Training modules and curricula for LEAs
- ▶ While **no statewide requirements**, CBAs, districts, or IEPs **may establish requirements** of PD and/or training for some or all paraprofessionals

State Department of Education

SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

- ▶ Statutes require SDE commissioner to establish a School Paraprofessional Advisory Council (2007)
- ▶ Expanded in 2013 legislation to 19 members
- ▶ One part-time SDE support staff
- ▶ Council meets quarterly
- ▶ Advises commissioner on training needs and effectiveness of training
- ▶ Report to General Assembly

State Department of Education

DATA COLLECTION

- ▶ **Non-Certified Instructional Staff (NCIS)**
 - ▶ Distinguished from non-certified non-instructional staff
 - ▶ Directions/guidance for data collection uses term “paraprofessional” interchangeably with “non-certified staff”

Other Requirements for Paras

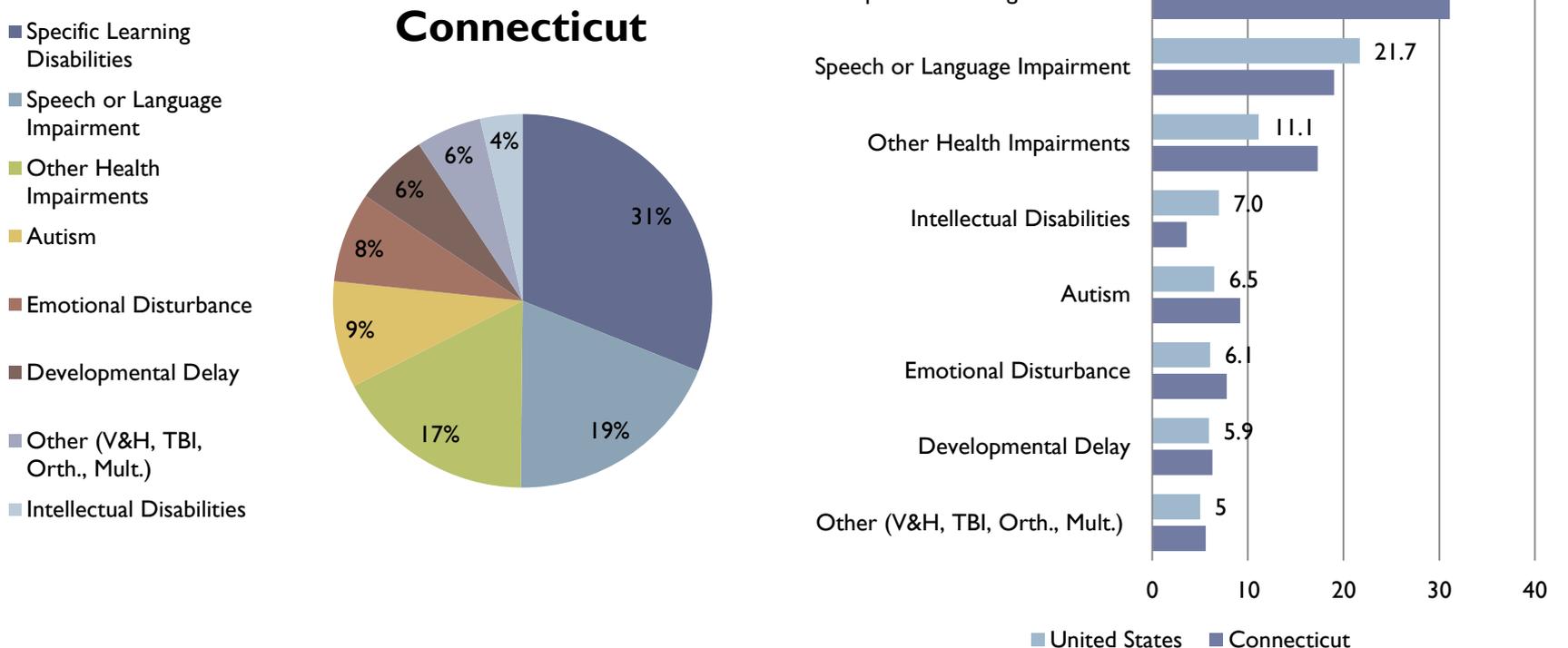
- ▶ Fingerprint and background checks (criminal & DCF)
- ▶ Trained in mandated reporting for child abuse or neglect
- ▶ Restraint/Seclusion training if para will be involved

Changing Population of Students with Disabilities

- ▶ Significant increase in number/percentage of all students with disabilities identified in “autism” service category
- ▶ Smaller increase in “developmental delay”/Pre-K
- ▶ Anecdotally, more students with behaviors posing risk of harm to self or others and requiring 1:1 support

Special Education Student Population (2010-2011) (U.S. and CT)

Distribution of Students Across Disability Categories



Sources: U.S. Data from National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Educational Statistics; Connecticut Data from SDE CEDaR Database

Change Within Disability Categories (U.S. 2002 – 2012)

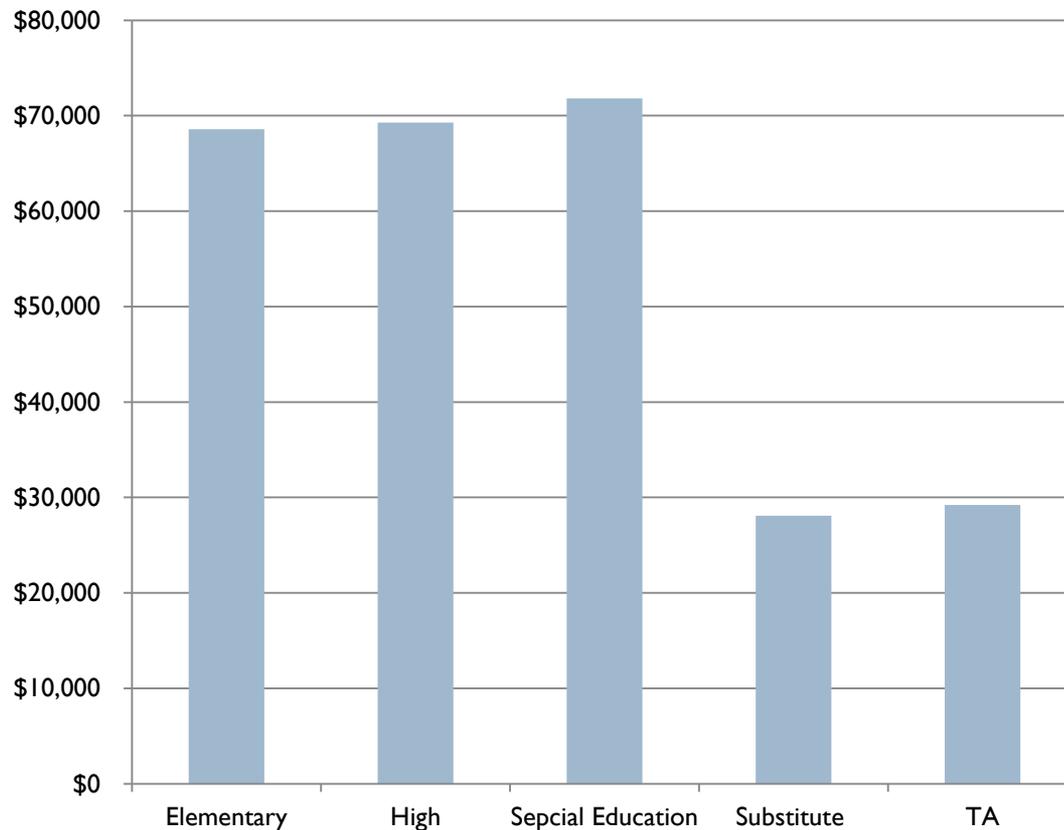
Disability	Percent Change 2002-2012	
Autism		74.6%
Other Health Impairments		52.6%
Developmental Delay		37.7%
Multiple Disabilities	0.0%	
Speech or Language Impairment	-1.4%	
Other (V&H, TBI, Orthopedic)	-6.7%	
Specific Learning Disabilities	-24.2%	
Emotional Disturbance	-29.3%	
Intellectual Disabilities	-41.2%	

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Educational Statistics

Economic Considerations: Certified and Non-Certified Staff

- ▶ Paraprofessionals are much less expensive than certified teachers
- ▶ In order to be effective, paraprofessionals require training, supervision, guidance from certified teachers
- ▶ Ahead of national trend, Connecticut has had more special education paraprofessionals than special education teachers since late 1990s

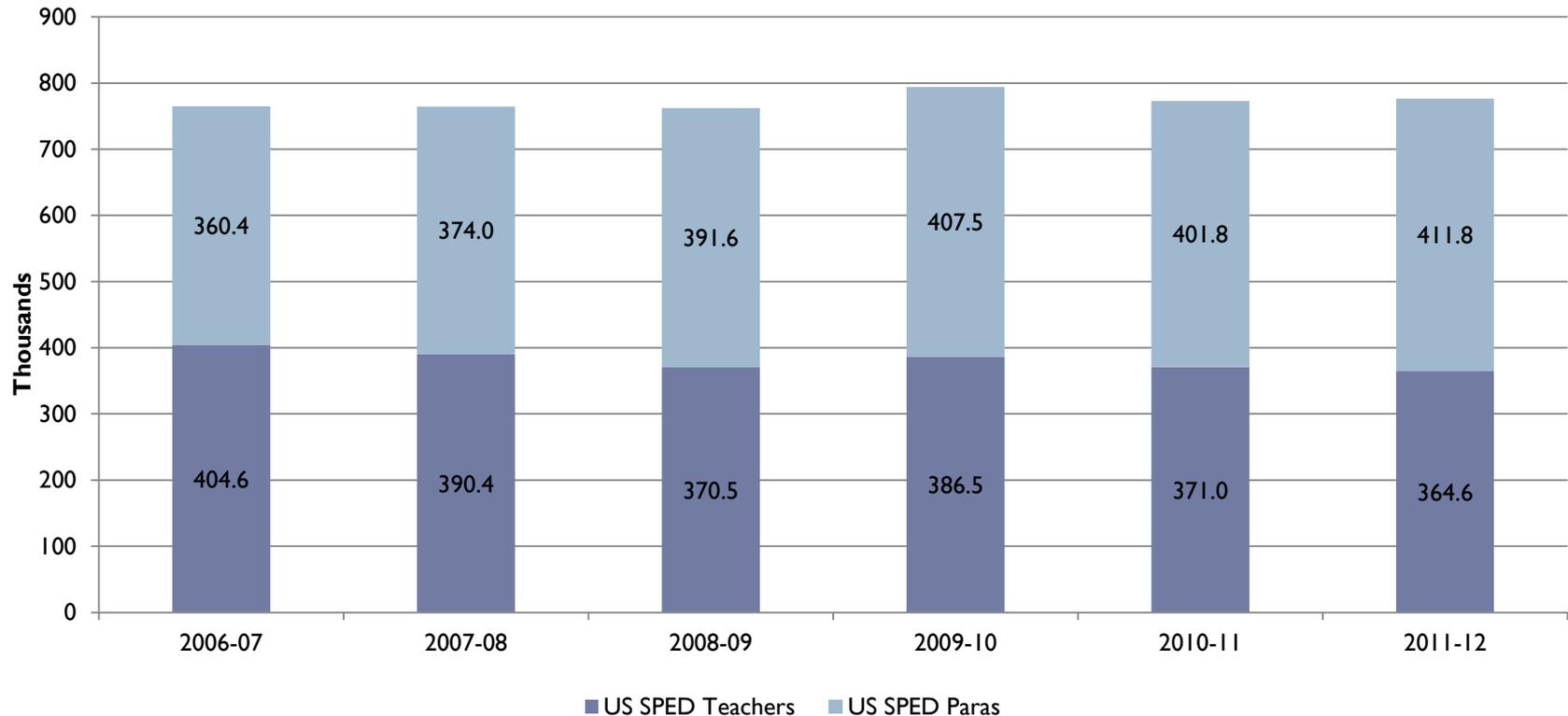
Compensation Comparison in Connecticut



- Average salary of teaching assistant (TA) in Connecticut is \$29,230
- About 42% of elementary teacher and 41% of special education teacher
- Average CT salary for TA higher than national average of \$24,000
- TAs make slightly higher average annually than substitutes

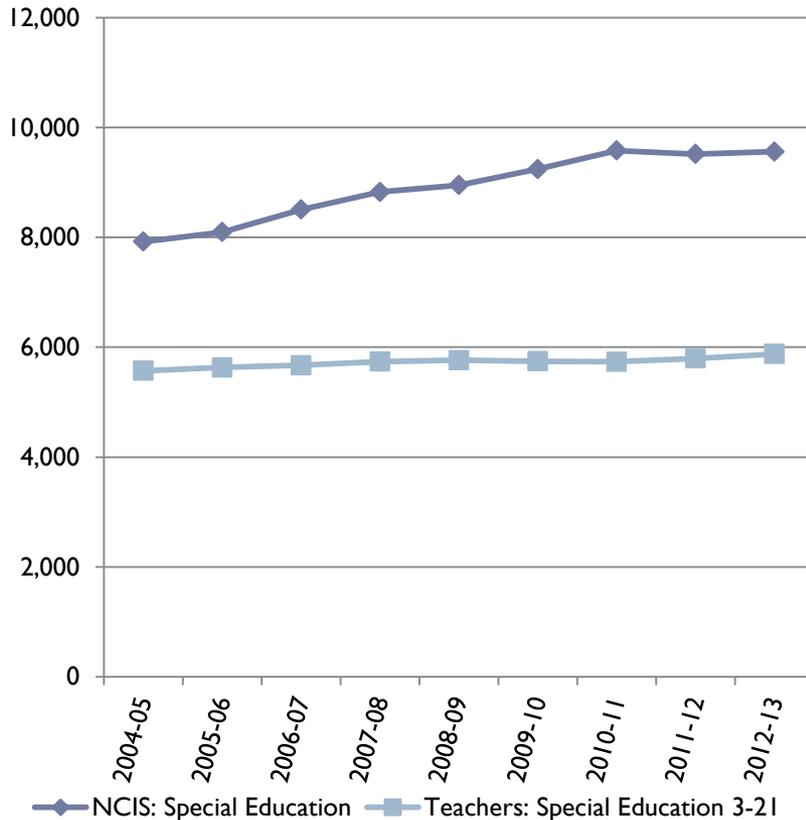
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013

Special Education Instructional Staff 2006-07 through 2011-12 (U.S.)



Source of Data: IDEA Data Center (ideadata.gov).

Special Education Instructional Staff Connecticut



Special Education Instructional Staff that are Paraprofessionals	
2004-05	70.3%
2006-07	66.7%
2008-09	64.4%
2010-11	59.9%
2012-13	61.5%

Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2004-2011; SDE Data Tables Non-Certified Staff 2011-2013 and Certified Staff 2012; IDEA Data Center (ideadata.gov) for Special Education Teachers 2011

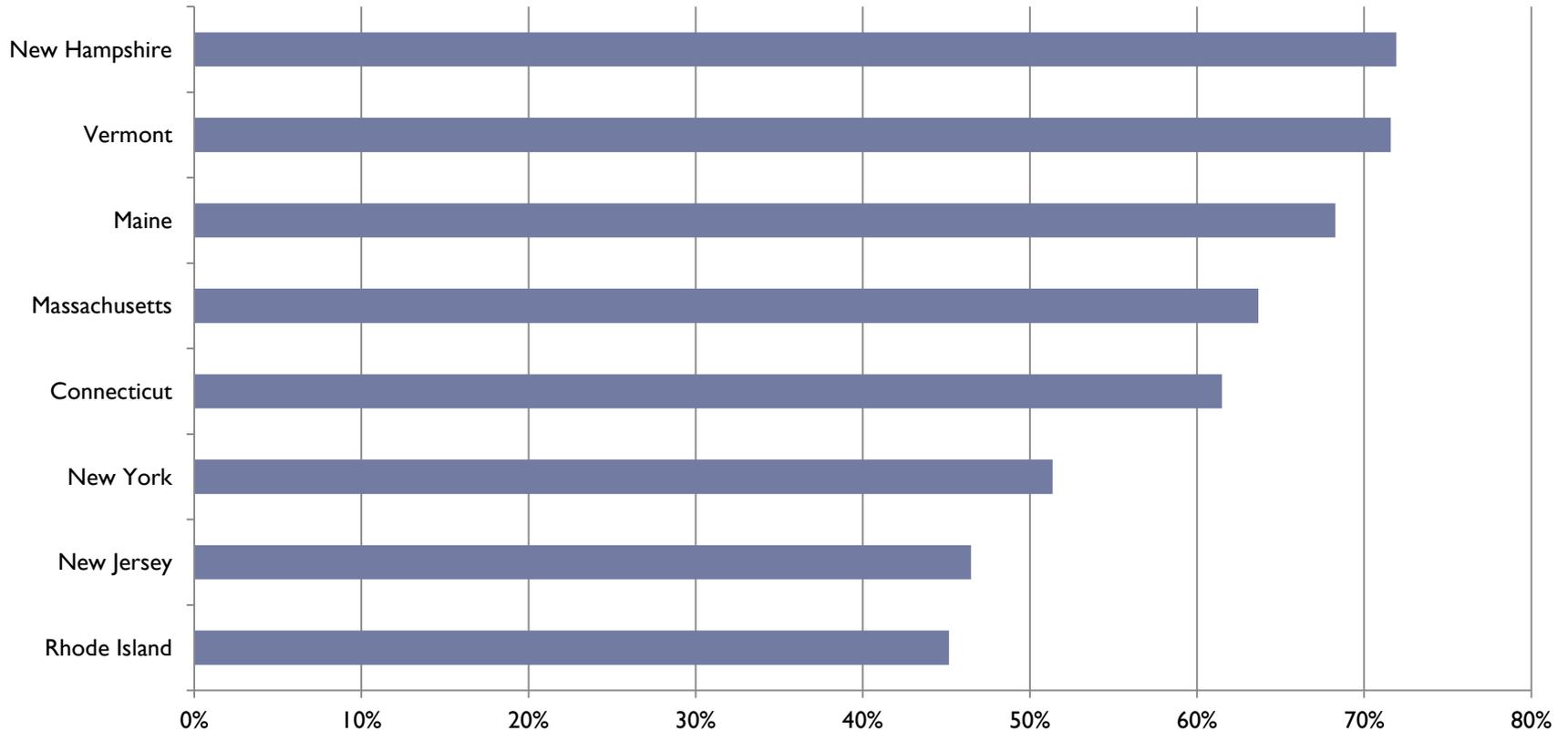
Ratios of Teachers to Students: Connecticut Special Education

Statewide Ratios	2004-2005	2012-2013
All students per special education teacher	104:1	94:1
Special education students per special education teacher	12:1	10:1
Special education students per non-cert. special education staff	8:1	6:1
Special education students per special education instructional staff	5:1	4:1
Special education paraprofessionals per special education teacher	1.4:1	1.6:1
General education teachers per special education teacher	6.5:1	6.1:1

Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2004-2005; SDE Data Tables 2012-2013

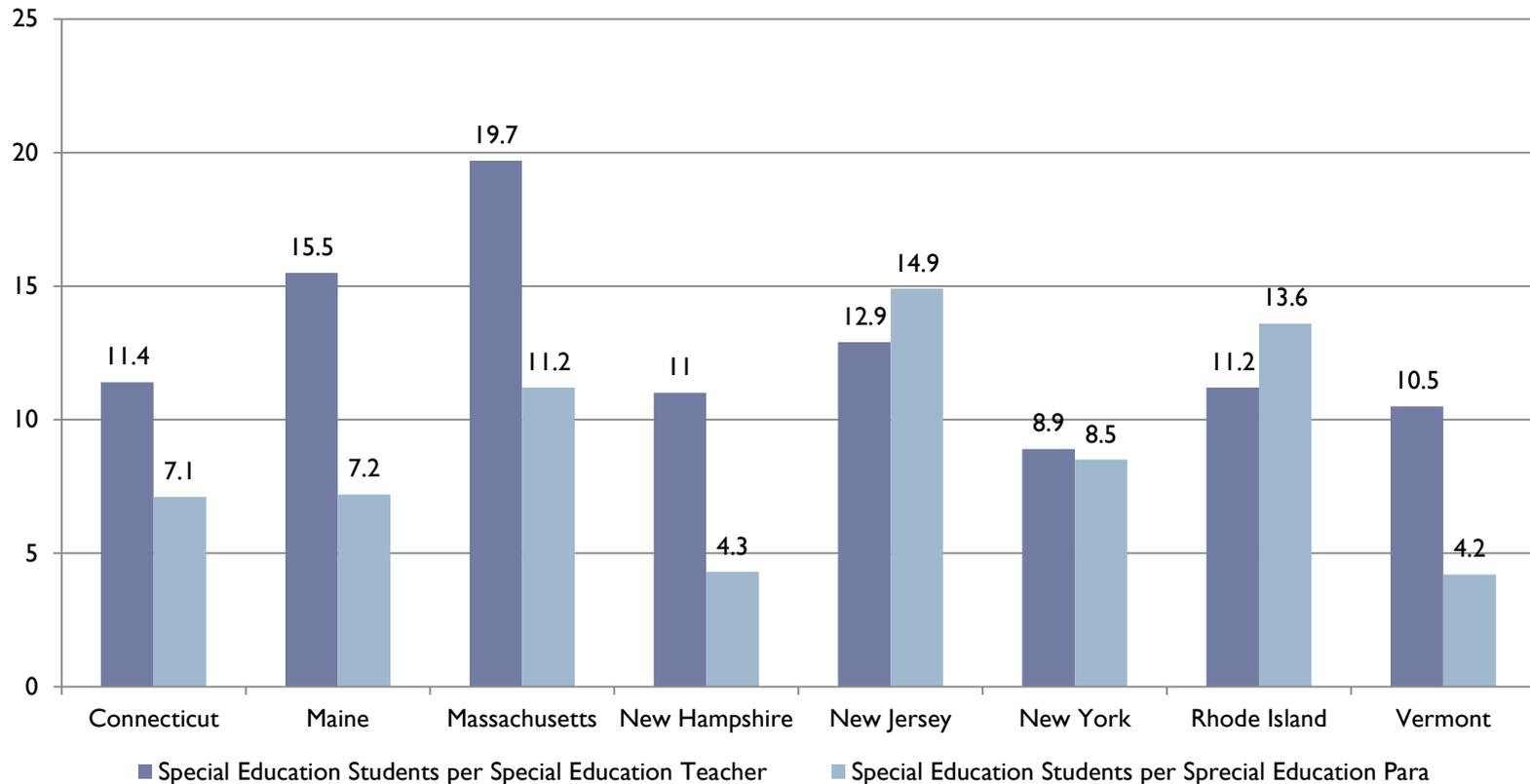


Percent of Special Education Instructional Staff for Ages 6-21 Who Are Paraprofessionals (Oct. 2011)



Source: <https://explore.data.gov/Education/IDEA-Data-2011-SPED-Teachers-and-Paras/ap2x-trxs>

Northeast State Comparison of Para/Student/Teacher Ratios (2011)



Source: IDEA Data Center (ideadata.gov)

Transition and Paraprofessional Data

- ▶ **Transition from Birth-3 into public schools**
 - ▶ Could consider Pre-K paraprofessionals to be special education paraprofessionals
 - ▶ Student data reported for students ages 3-5 and 6-21

- ▶ **Transition from high school to young adulthood for student with disabilities**
 - ▶ 5th year data subsumed into K-12, 9-12 or grade 12 data

Transition (Birth-3)

- ▶ Birth-3 recipients will have an IEP and be entitled to services from public school districts starting at age 3
- ▶ Staff employed by districts to staff Pre-K are identified in state and federal data reports
- ▶ To the extent possible we limit analyses to ages 6-21 or grades K-12

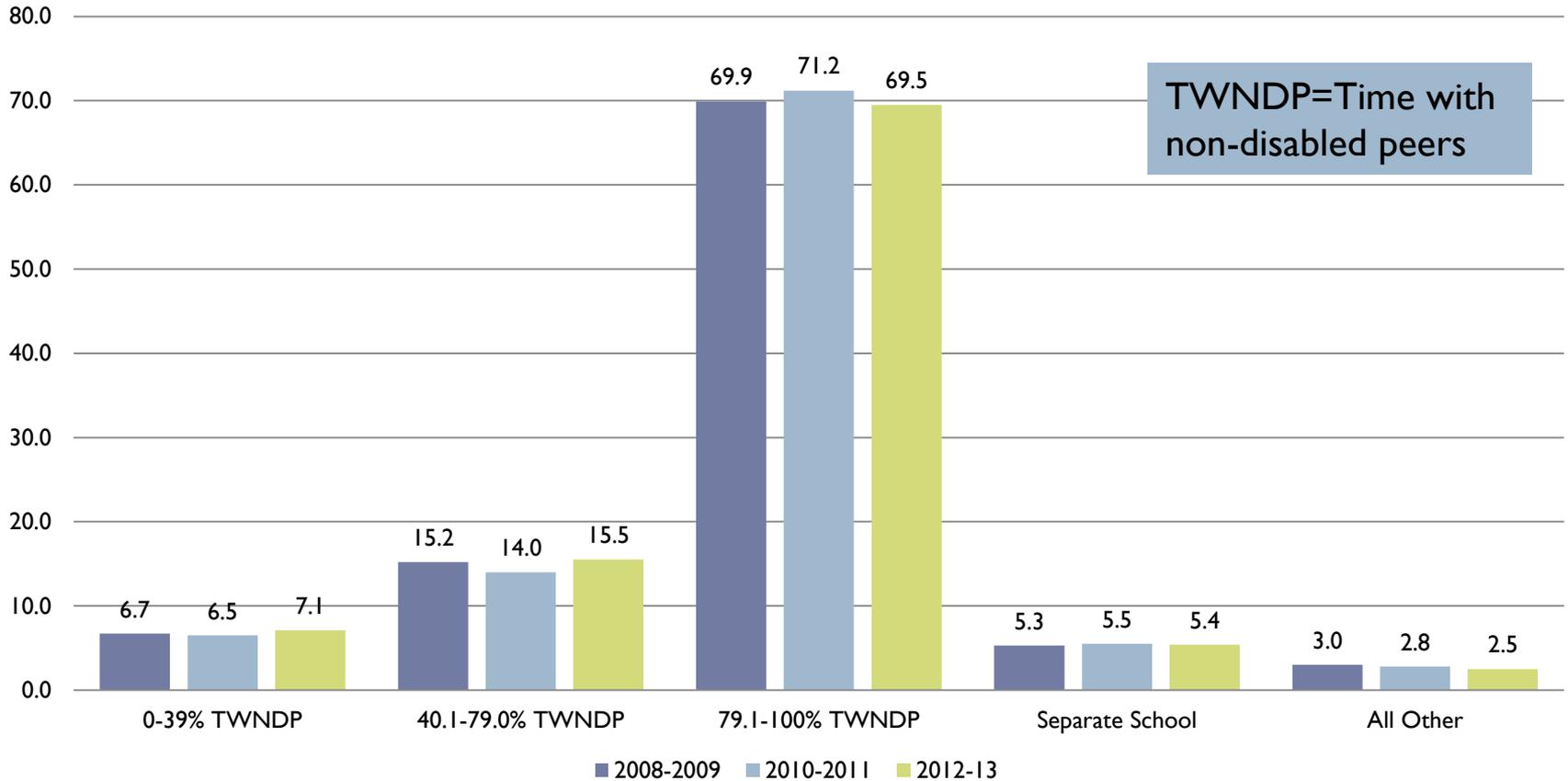
Transition (5th Year Program)

- ▶ Students receiving special education services at or after age 16 must have post-high school transition plan and may continue to receive services even after completing academic requirements for a high school diploma in order to prepare for independent living
- ▶ Students in these programs are included in state/federal data as being in Grade 12
- ▶ Staff employed by districts to support students in 5th year programs are not tracked separately from grades K-12

Inclusion and Paraprofessionals

- ▶ Inclusion is the philosophy and practice of educating students with disabilities in their “home school” and general education settings rather than separate settings
- ▶ Paraprofessionals may be utilized when student poses safety risk or needs on-going individual support
- ▶ Measure of inclusion is % of time students spend with non-disabled peers in general education:
 - ▶ Essentially no change in the percentages of students being educated in general education classrooms 80% of the time or more since 2008
 - ▶ Prior to 2007, data was collected and reported to federal government differently (60% of the time or more)

Inclusion in Connecticut

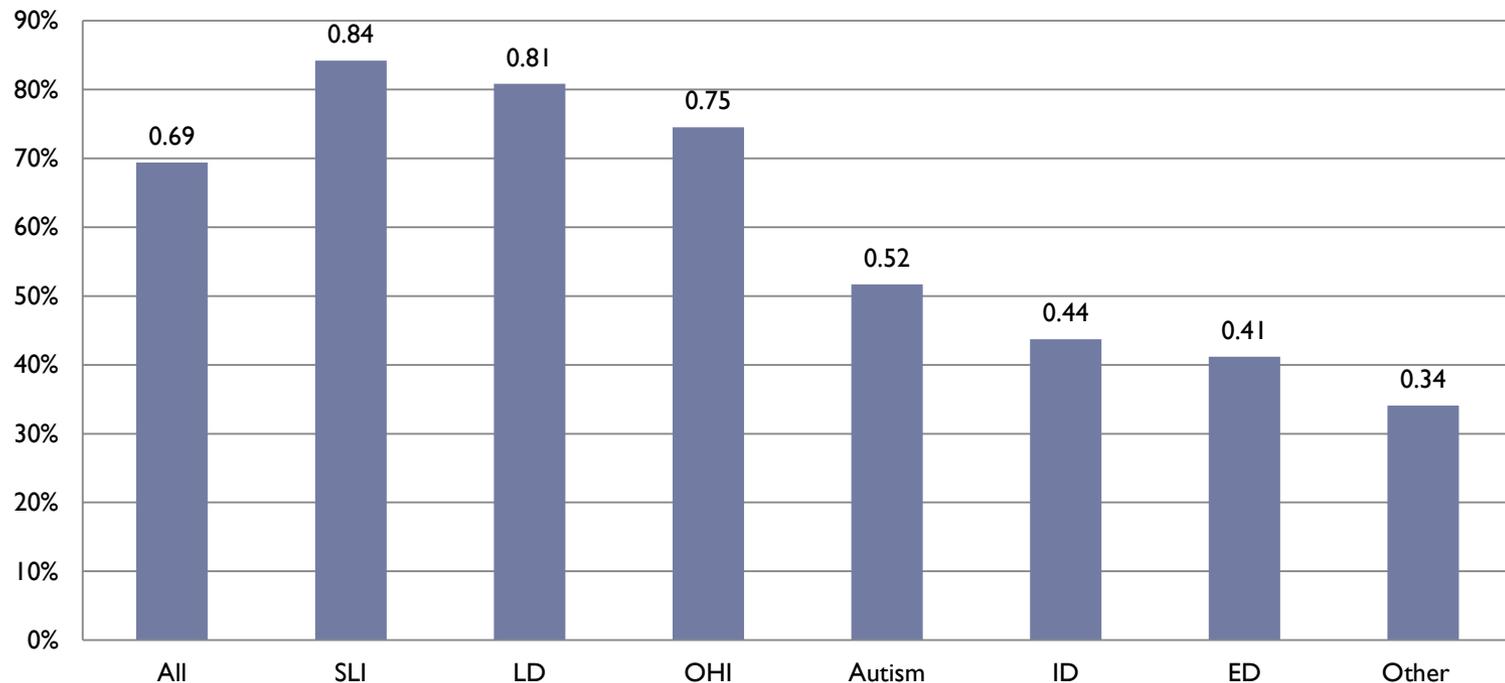


Sources: SDE CEDaR Database 2007-2011; SDE Data Table 2012-2013



Rates of Inclusion by Service Category

Rates for 80% or More TWNDP by Service Category (CT, Ages 6-21, 2012-13)



Source: SDE Data Table 2012-13

Next Steps

- ▶ Survey of all districts regarding overall use of paras:
 - ▶ Full-time vs. part time
 - ▶ Workers' comp. and injuries
 - ▶ Para labor grievances

- ▶ Survey districts about special education paras:
 - ▶ IEPs one-to-one assignments
 - ▶ Grade levels
 - ▶ Classroom environment
 - ▶ Category of disability

Next Steps

- ▶ Further analysis of CBAs and MERA application and job descriptions
- ▶ Schools/District level examination of staffing patterns
- ▶ Determination of best practices of district use of paras and impact

School Paraprofessionals Staffing

Public Hearing September 24, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.
Legislative Office Building - Room 2D

For copies, see PRI Study Page: www.cga.ct.gov/pri/2014_PARA.asp

