ABOUT THE ORIGINAL STUDY

Examining the Supply of New Special Educators: Variations by Institutional Characteristics and For-Profit Status

Study authors: Tuan D. Nguyen, Elizabeth Bettini, Allison F. Gilmour, and Christopher Redding

Why It Matters

Persistent special educator shortages require attention to the institutions preparing new teachers. This study examines changes in production across institution size, sector, and for-profit status.

Data and Sample

The study uses national IPEDS and Title II data to examine special educator preparation from 2010–2020. The two sources measure related but distinct forms of completion and do not directly establish how many graduates enter teaching.

Key Findings

- Special educator production fell from early-2010s peaks and later leveled off below those peaks.
- Declines were concentrated in small- and mid-sized institutions, raising concerns for regions dependent on those providers.
- For-profit providers became an important source of new special educators; production counts alone do not establish preparation quality.

Policy Implications

- Attend to the viability of small- and mid-sized preparation programs and the local districts that depend on them.
- Strengthen attention to institutions that can prepare special educators of color, including historically Black colleges and universities.
- Study the quality and consequences of for-profit preparation and appropriate safeguards; do not infer effectiveness from provider volume.

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