

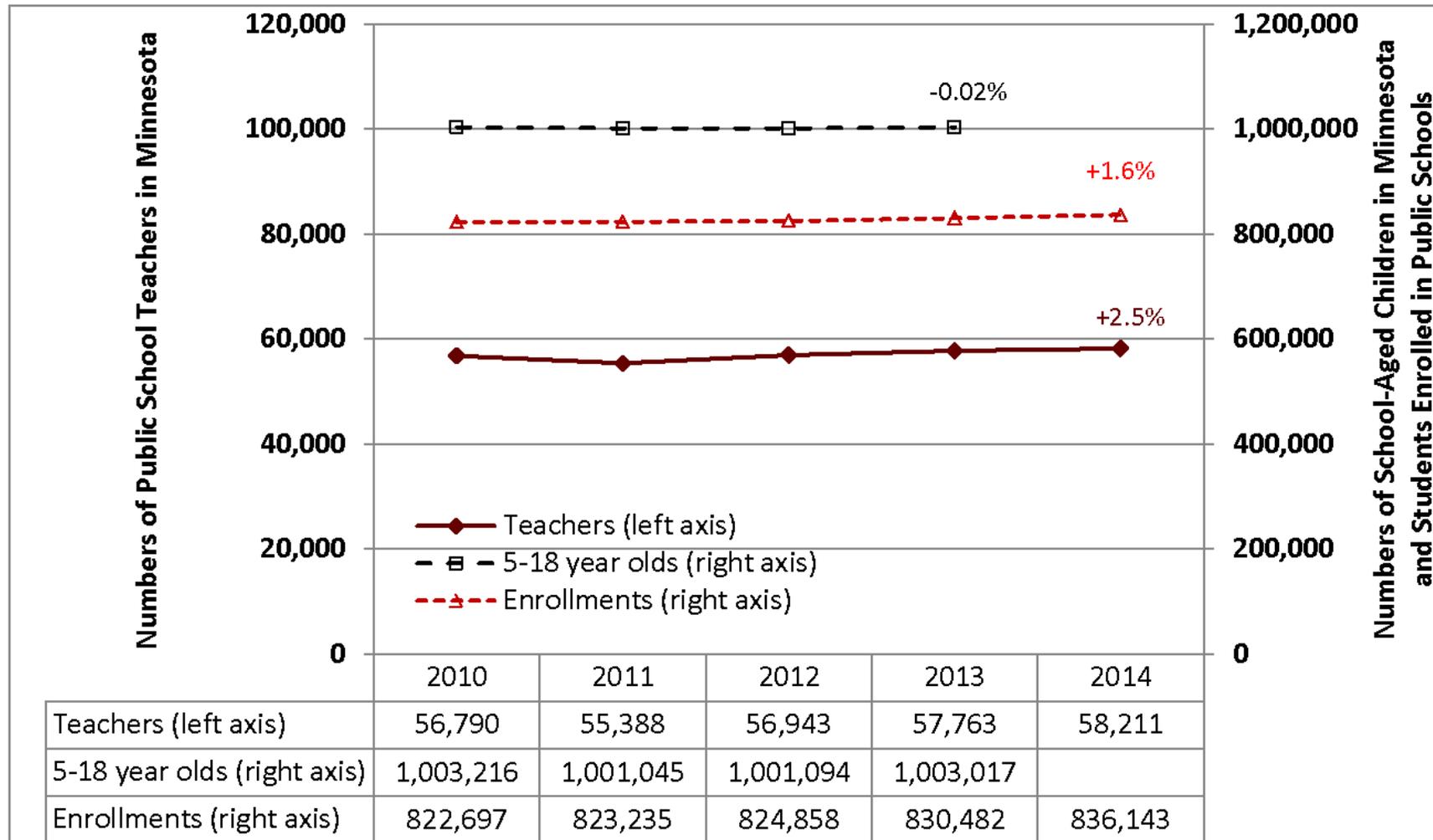
# Innovative Para to SPED Teaching Initiative

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WHAT IS DRIVING THE  
INITIATIVE?

Figure 1. The Number of Teachers in Minnesota Public Schools: 2009–10 to 2013–14



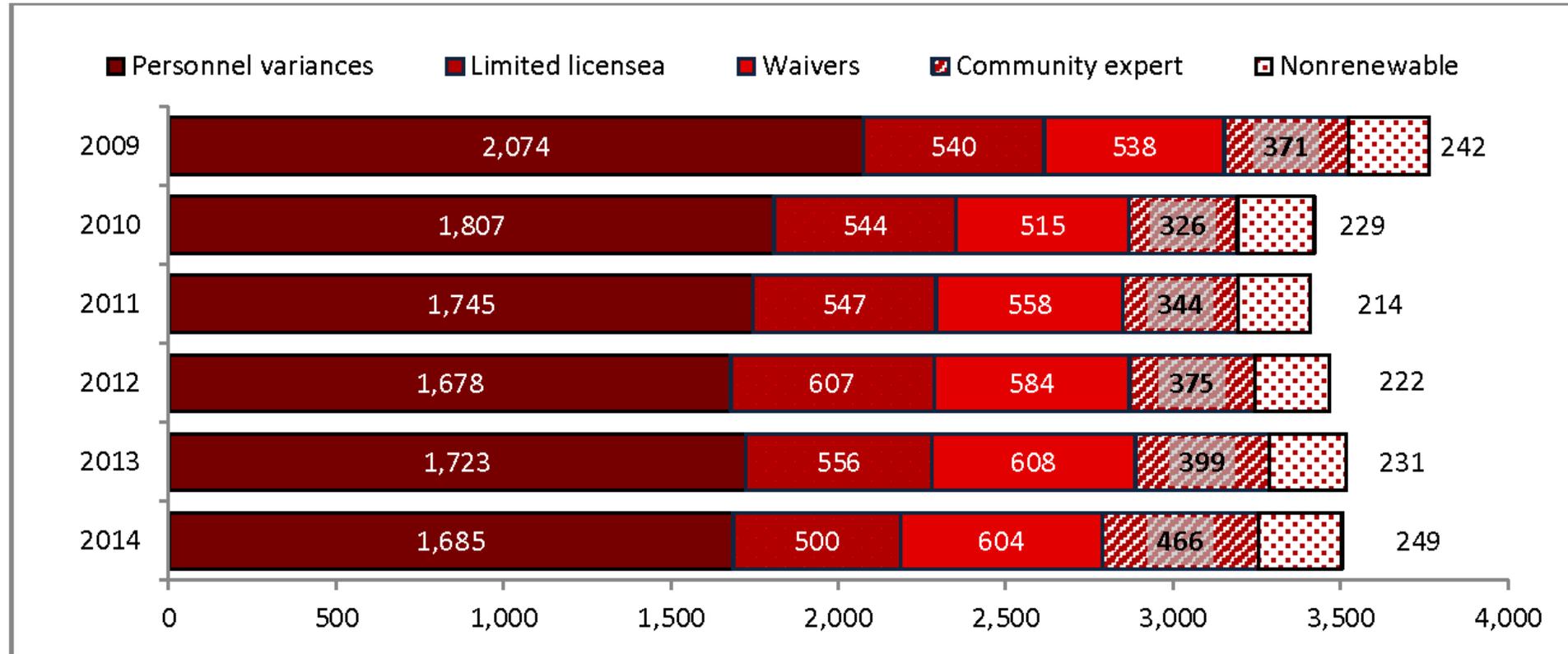
Note. These include long-term substitutes but do not include short-call substitutes (a substitute fulfilling one assignment for less than 15 consecutive days). Prepared from the STAR system and the U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, intercensal population statistics from 2010–13, found at <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/state/asrh/2013/files/SC-EST2013-AGESEX-CIV.csv>.

**Table 2. The Number of Total Teaching Licenses by License Area: 2009–10 to 2013–14**

License Area	School Year 2009 10	School Year 2010 11	School Year 2011 12	School Year 2012 13	School Year 2013 14	Change From 2009 10 to 2013 14
Agricultural ed./Natural resources	659	645	669	666	698	39 (5.9%)
Business	1,640	1,600	1,543	1,490	1,394	-246 (-15.0%)
Career and technical education	394	391	401	392	381	-13 (-3.3%)
Computer/Information technology	342	354	355	349	339	-3 (-0.9%)
English/Comm arts/Literature	9,027	8,872	9,182	9,247	9,132	105 (1.2%)
Family/Consumer science	1,245	1,173	1,120	1,052	1,002	-243 (-19.5%)
Health/Safety/Physical education	11,703	11,403	11,282	11,086	10,824	-879 (-7.5%)
Industrial/Technology	785	782	766	745	720	-65 (-8.3%)
Mathematics	4,715	4,675	4,951	5,141	5,179	464 (9.8%)
Natural Sciences	6,389	6,345	6,565	6,651	6,722	333 (5.2%)
Pre-K/Elementary	31,660	31,335	32,537	33,310	33,446	1,786 (5.6%)
Social sciences	5,949	5,871	6,082	6,184	6,225	276 (4.6%)
Special education	20,412	20,171	20,728	20,705	20,548	136 (0.7%)
Trade/Industrial	210	201	189	177	156	-54 (-25.7%)
Visual/Performing arts	4,894	4,858	4,900	4,975	4,935	41 (0.8%)
World Language/Culture	4,242	4,197	4,401	4,519	4,487	245 (5.8%)

*Note.* These are counts of licenses, not teachers. Teachers may hold more than one license. Natural sciences include life sciences, physics, general science, chemistry, physical sciences, science 5–9, science 5–8, earth and space science, and general science.

**Figure 3. BOT Special Permission Trends in All Licensure Areas: 2009–2014**



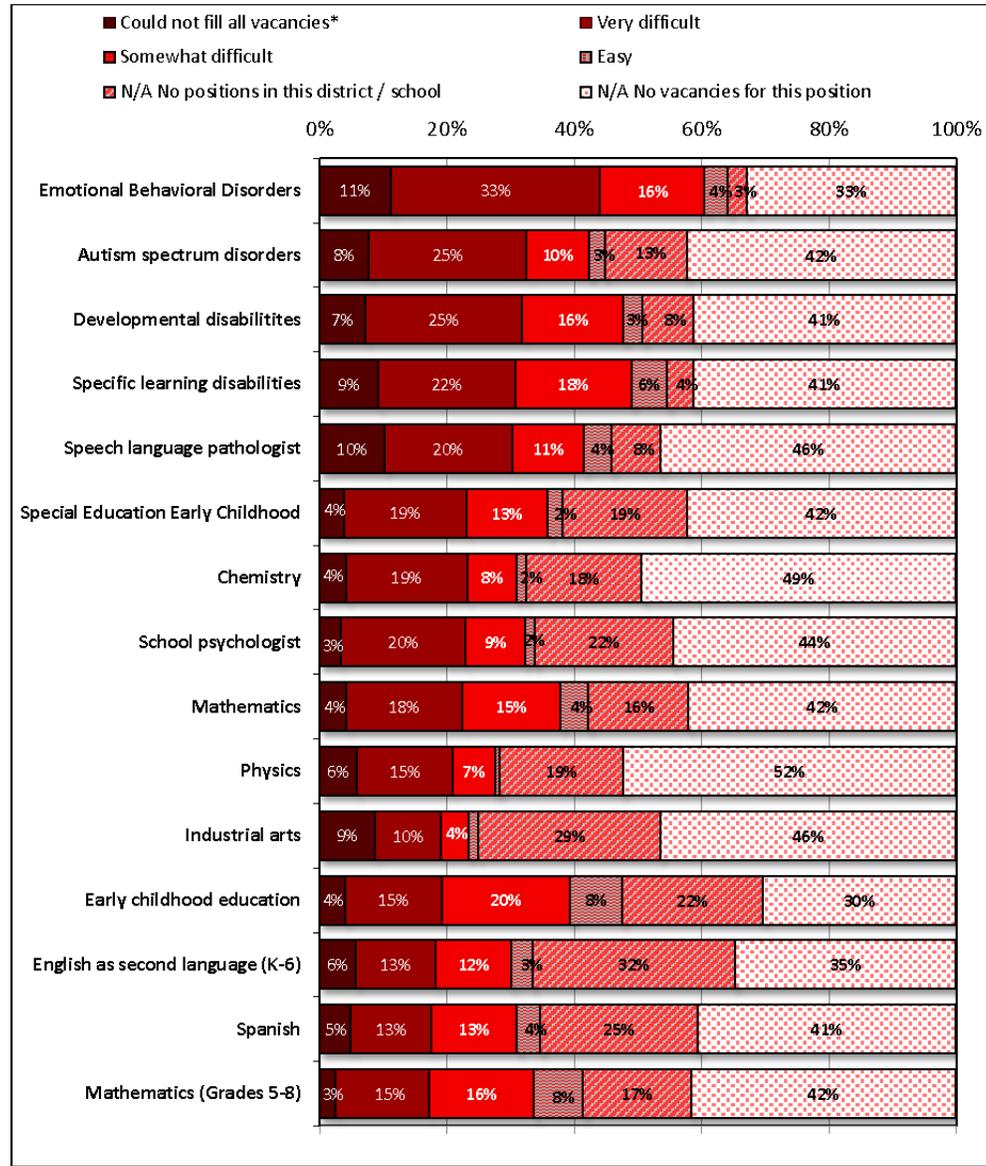
Note. Prepared from BOT special permissions files, 2008–09 through 2013–14 school years.

**Table 6. The Numbers of Variances and Limited Licenses Granted by Subject Area: 2009–14**

Licensure Subject Area	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Change
Emotional behavior disorders	323	271	279	294	277	223	-31.0%
Learning disabilities	291	287	290	265	243	195	-33.0%
Elementary education	129	175	194	204	184	158	22.5%
Developmental disabilities	189	173	177	145	150	114	-39.7%
English as a second language	94	66	76	86	97	105	11.7%
Mathematics	131	115	88	78	107	95	-27.5%
Communication arts/Literature	71	70	59	83	69	79	11.3%
Early childhood special education	126	95	94	91	71	75	-40.5%
Science 5-8	80	62	45	53	59	69	-13.8%
School psychologist	52	44	53	66	68	65	25.0%
Chemistry	58	45	48	43	61	59	1.7%
Library media specialist	46	31	32	25	40	53	15.2%
Physics	43	39	37	50	50	50	16.3%
Reading	65	97	82	62	49	50	-23.1%
Spanish	87	86	78	64	59	50	-42.5%

*Note.* The subject areas listed in this table represent the 15 subject areas with the most variances and limited licenses granted in 2014. See Appendix H for counts of variances and limited licenses for all subject areas between 2009 and 2014. The table does not include short-call substitutes. Prepared from BOT special permissions files, 2008–09 through 2013–14 school years.

**Figure 5. The Percent Distribution of Responses About the Ease of Filling Vacancies in the Past Two Years Ordered by Difficulty: Fall 2014**



*Note.* \*District responders were asked to mark this option if they had to obtain special permissions to fill a vacancy. License areas sorted based on district hiring officers' perceptions of difficulty in finding qualified applicants for vacancies (sorted from highest to lowest percentage of districts responding could not fill the position or very difficult to fill. Prepared from the MDE supply-and-demand survey, fall 2014.

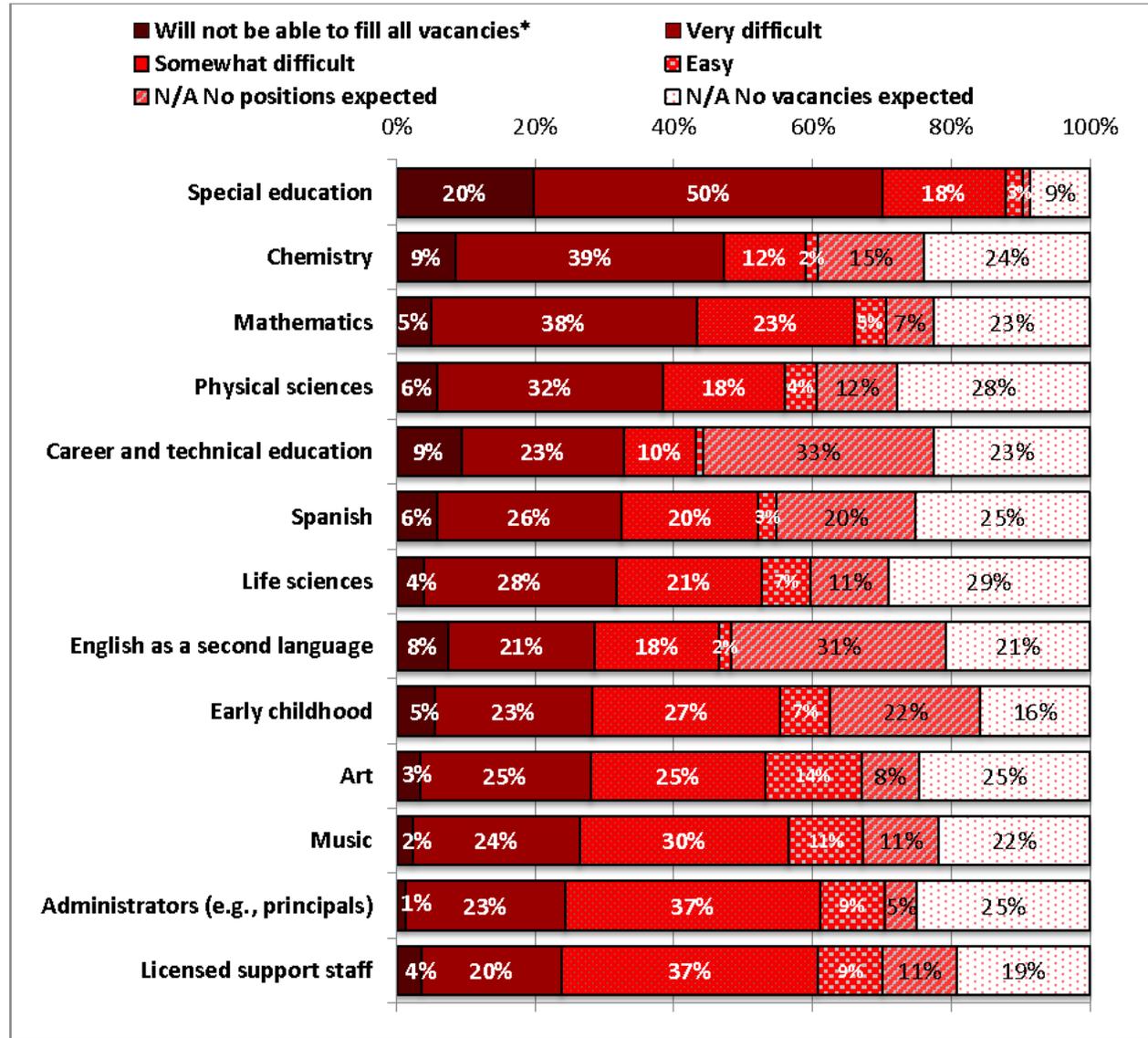
\*Similar analyses were performed after removing districts with no vacancies or no positions. Most of the same shortage areas emerged. See Figure 23 in Appendix B.

**Table 9. The Percentage of Districts That Indicated That They Were Unable to Fill Vacant Positions With Qualified Candidates or Found It Very Difficult to Do So by Region: Fall 2014**

License Area	Overall	01: Northwest	02: Headwaters	03: Arrowhead	04: West Central	05: North Central	06E: Southwest Central	06W: Upper MN Valley	07E: East Central	07W: Central	08: Southwest	09: South Central	10: Southeast	11: Metro
Emotional Behavioral Disorders	44	33	50	66	29	42	55	50	57	50	36	38	32	44
Autism spectrum disorders	33	24	29	40	21	26	55	20	43	35	27	24	29	38
Developmental disabilities	32	29	29	31	18	37	64	40	29	19	32	31	32	37
Specific learning disabilities	31	38	21	46	18	32	27	40	36	23	27	24	27	33
Speech language pathologist	30	29	14	26	21	63	64	20	29	38	18	17	34	25
Special Education Early Childhood	23	38	21	14	14	16	55	0	36	19	23	14	21	27
Chemistry	23	24	29	20	25	26	45	20	14	31	32	24	32	14
School psychologist	23	20	29	23	4	5	28	30	29	27	14	28	13	26
Mathematics	22	19	29	17	18	21	9	30	21	19	18	31	15	26
Physics	21	29	14	11	11	11	46	10	29	12	27	14	23	23
Industrial arts	19	9	43	7	20	18	21	18	10	43	19	18	28	28
Early childhood education	19	48	36	17	29	21	27	30	7	19	36	31	12	6
English as second language (K-6)	18	14	7	11	11	11	45	20	21	31	23	21	20	19
Spanish	18	35	14	14	4	11	18	10	14	19	32	14	23	19
Mathematics (Grades 5-8)	17	33	7	14	18	5	18	10	21	15	14	24	15	19

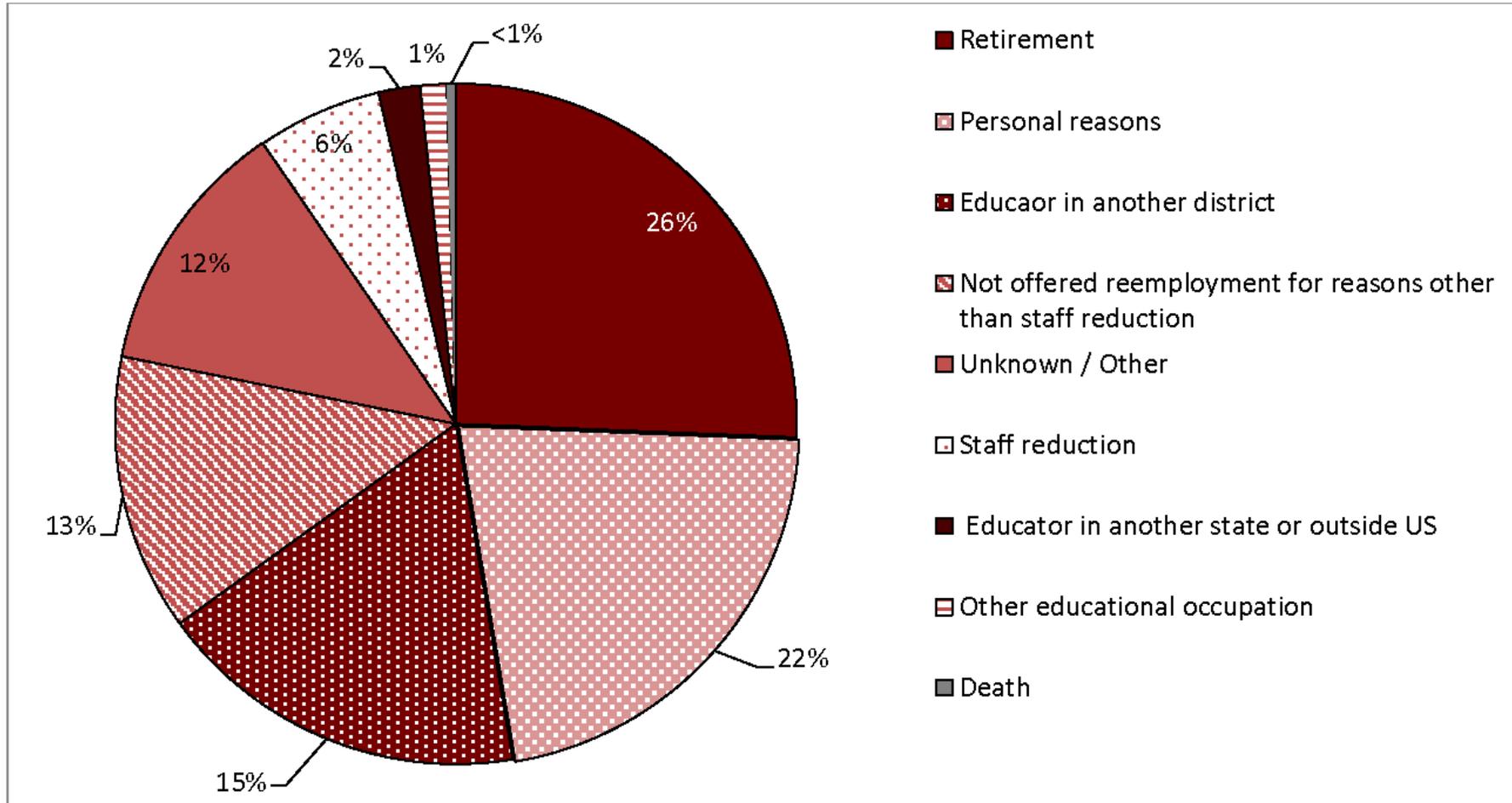
*Note.* The numbers in table represent the percentages of all responses, even those districts that had no positions or vacancies. The survey requested respondents to use could not fill all vacancies if they needed to request special permissions to fill the positions. Prepared from the MDE supply-and-demand survey, fall 2014.

**Figure 7. The Percent Distribution of Responses About the Ease of Filling Vacancies in the Next Five Years Sorted From Most Difficult to Least Difficult: Fall 2014<sup>a</sup>**



*Note.* <sup>a</sup>District responders were asked to mark this option if they had to obtain special permissions to fill a vacancy. District hiring officers were then presented with another item: staff with multiple licenses. This item received the second highest difficulty rating, but it is omitted here because it represents a larger perspective than just licensure areas. Fifty-six percent of the districts indicated that they would be unable to recruit such job candidates or would find it very difficult to do so. Prepared from the MDE supply-and-demand survey, fall 2014.

**Figure 8. The Percent Distribution of the Reasons Why Teachers Left Their Teaching Positions in Minnesota: 2012–13**



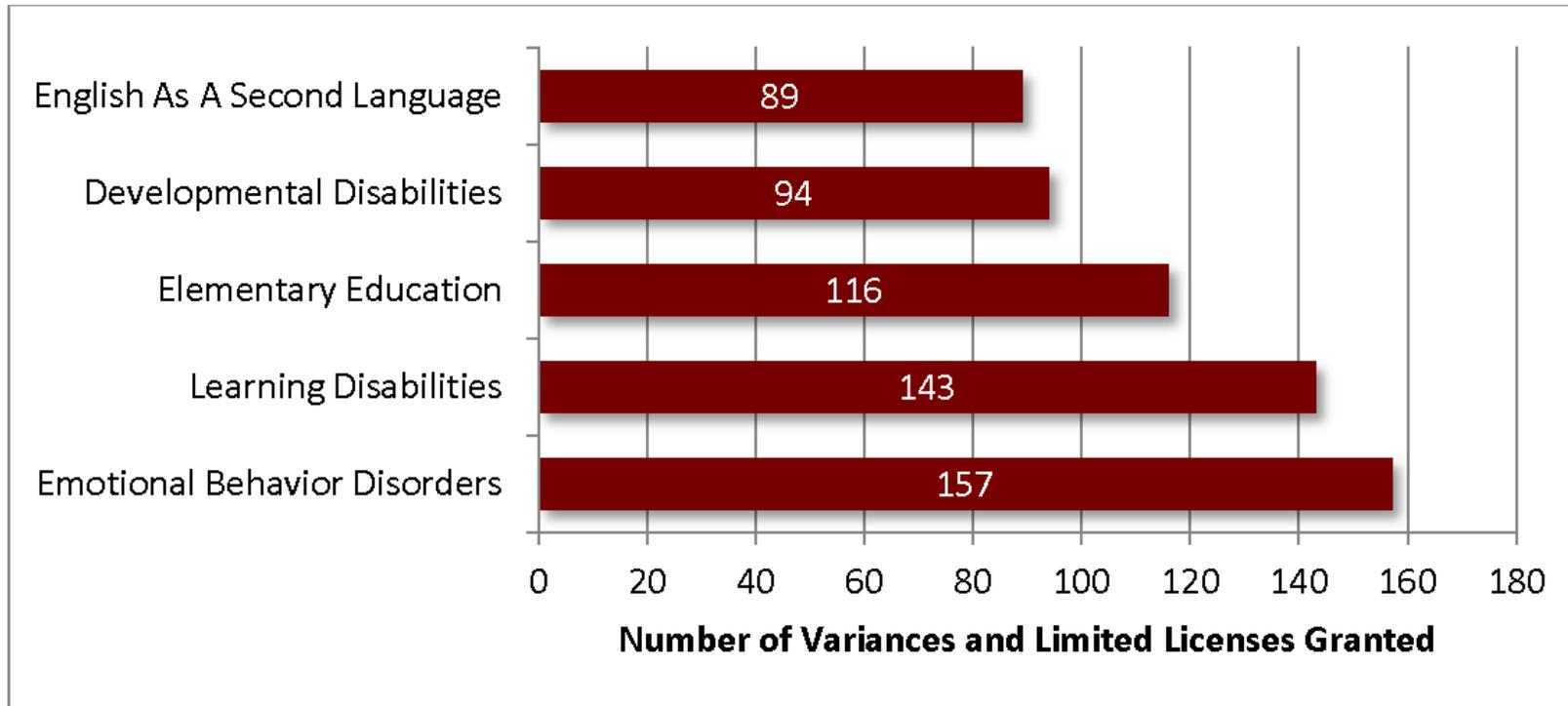
*Note.* Attrition data for 2013-14 are not complete. Prepared from the STAR system.

**Table 22. The Number of New Licenses Granted per License Area: 2009–10 to 2013–14**

License Area	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12	2012–13	2013–14	Percentage Change from 2009-10 to 2013-14 <sup>a</sup>
Agricultural education	46	45	47	81	48	4.3%
Business	110	47	48	45	20	-81.8%
Career and technical education	43	40	52	55	35	-18.6%
Computer/Information technology	24	43	73	24	7	-70.8%
English/Communication arts/Literature	1,022	826	990	715	423	-58.6%
Family/Consumer sciences	27	15	24	15	8	-70.4%
Health/Safety/Physical education	326	266	345	342	182	-44.2%
Industrial/Tech	25	14	23	25	3	-88.0%
Mathematics	487	372	364	400	251	-48.5%
Natural sciences	602	464	489	438	262	-56.5%
Other	23	26	25	21	23	0.0%
Prekindergarten/Elementary	2,683	2,152	2,524	2,485	1,617	-39.7%
Social sciences	589	430	478	446	286	-51.4%
Special education	1,218	1,298	1,577	2,094	733	-39.8%
Visual and performing arts	280	255	280	310	212	-24.3%
World language/Culture	357	297	363	469	240	-32.8%

*Note.* Natural sciences include life sciences, physics, general science, chemistry, physical sciences, science 5–9, science 5–8, earth and space science, and general science. Prepared from MDE Licensure data.

**Figure 16. The Numbers of Variances and Limited Licenses Granted Among Regular School Districts by Licensure Area: 2013–14**



*Note.* The figure represents the top five licensure areas with the most variances and licenses. Prepared from BOT, special permissions files, 2013–14 school year.

**Table 25. The Percentage of Districts That Indicated That It Was Very Difficult or Impossible to Fill Vacant Positions With Qualified Candidates by District Type and by Locale: Fall 2014**

License Area	District Type				Locale			
	Overall	Public	Charter	Other	City	Suburb	Town	Rural
Emotional Behavioral Disorders	43	46	35	71	39	57	55	39
Autism spectrum disorders	32	33	31	57	30	51	44	26
Developmental disabilities	31	34	27	43	25	46	37	30
Specific learning disabilities	30	32	29	29	36	32	27	30
Speech language pathologist	30	33	17	29	16	30	41	28
Special Education Early Childhood	23	27	30	40	42	28	29	24
High School Chemistry	23	29	5	57	13	22	36	23
School psychologist	22	22	42	33	45	22	31	19
High School Mathematics	22	27	21	67	23	35	32	23
High School Physics	20	24	27	20	37	32	25	20
Industrial arts	19	35	27	6	37	13	33	25
Early childhood education	18	36	34	7	35	29	30	34
English as second language (K-6)	18	39	21	8	21	16	29	15
Spanish	17	20	14	14	13	19	18	20

Note. Prepared from MDE supply-and-demand survey, fall 2014.

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect. The text is centered on a white background.

# JOINT INITIATIVE SMSU AND SWWC

# What if....

- ▶ Conducted survey
  - ▶ 49 respondents interested in “Para to Teacher” Degree Program
  - ▶ Candidates were to have completed an AA degree or previous bachelors degree
  - ▶ Have at least one year’s experience as a para in special education

Survey data was used to propose the hiring of an additional faculty member in Special Education at SMSU - but the request was denied due to an ongoing budget shortfall.

Tuition generated by students takes about two years time to be returned to a MnSCU school in the budget allocation. No money was available as ‘seed money’ to start a new program until the tuition generated would make the program sustainable.

# Now what?

- ▶ MDE Commissioner of Education, Brenda Cassellius, attended a board meeting for MREA in April 2015.
  - ▶ Discussion ensued regarding the need for innovative teacher education programs to deal with shortage areas
  - ▶ SMSU's proposal was raised as an example; Cassellius was in strong support, and encouraged SMSU to bring it's proposal to the legislature for support. The omnibus bill was already heading to the conference committee at this point.
  - ▶ HAIL MARY pass - Cassellius called Sen. Terri Bonhoff, asking her to support adding funding for the program to the Senate bill. MREA lobbyists took Dr. Bonnstetter to the Capitol to meet with Sen. Bonhoff and share details.
  - ▶ The proposal was added, but didn't make it through committee negotiations to be included in the 2015 appropriations bill.



# If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!

- ▶ MREA worked with SMSU to develop a legislative proposal for funding during the 2016 session for a 'Para to SPED' program
  - ▶ Legislation was authored by Sen. Bonhoff and Sen. Gary Dahms in the Senate, and by Rep. Chris Swedzinski in the House.



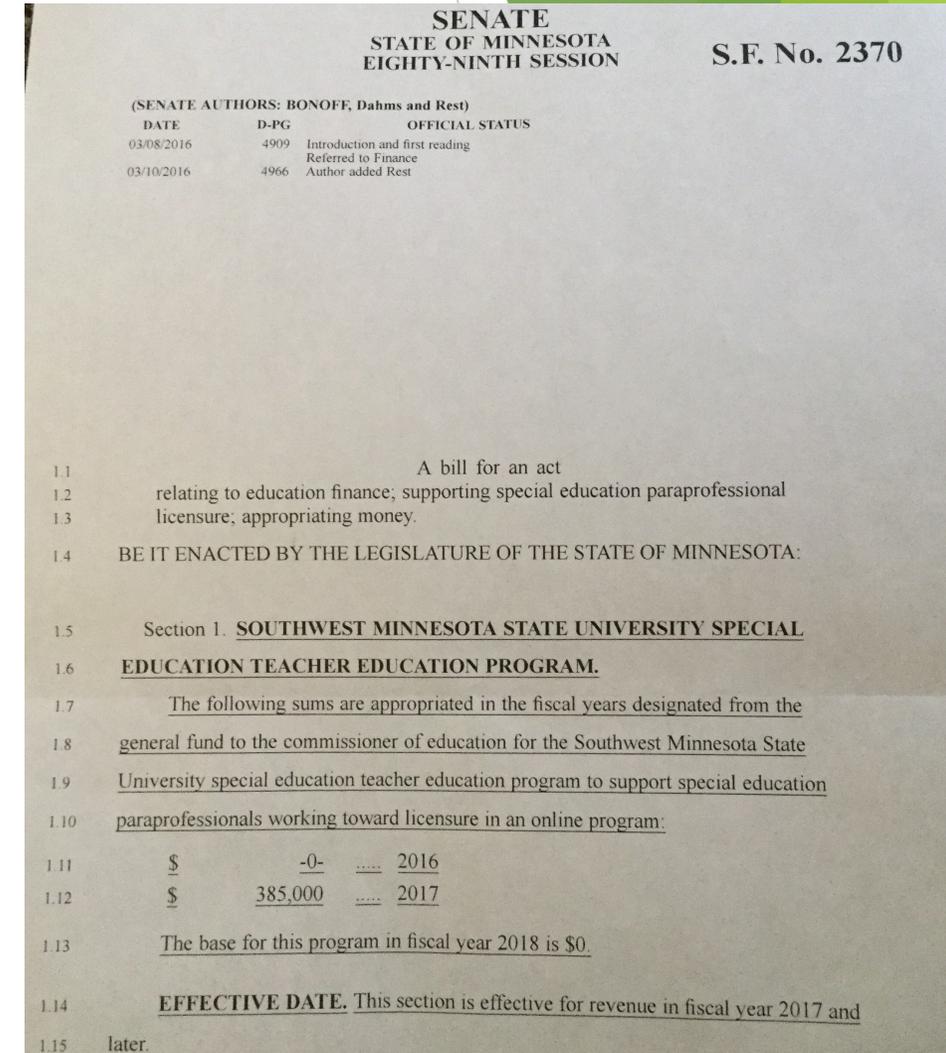
Sen. Gary Dahms



Rep. Chris Swedzinski

Swedzinski

MREA lobbyists Sam Walseth and Joe Gould arranged dates for testimony regarding the proposal in both the House and Senate. They met with Dr. Bonnstetter and helped in finding the committee hearings, preparing for testimony, and with follow-up afterwards.



# Fingers crossed...

- ▶ The funding for the Para to SPED proposal includes the faculty and adjunct/overload costs to deliver the program for the first cohort of candidates over a three year period. It did not include funding for the candidates.
- ▶ Testified for HF 3427 in the House Education Finance Committee on March 30, 2016
- ▶ Testified on SF 2370 in the Senate E-12 Committee on April 7, 2016
- ▶ Results: the appropriate is included in the House budget proposal, but not in the Senate. Sam Walseth, MREA lobbyist, provides direction on next steps
- ▶ Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup> - SMSU receives official word that the funding is part of the omnibus bill signed by Gov. Dayton

# Time for Action!

- ▶ Need to contact all potential candidates from the 2015 survey
  - ▶ Many email addresses were no longer valid
  - ▶ Most schools were already out, so paras were not checking school addresses
  - ▶ After initial emails were sent, Dr. Bonnstetter followed up with phone calls to all those on the initial interest list
  - ▶ An information packet is mailed/emailed to all those interested

Information packet was also developed and emailed to school administrators who were members in SW/WC Service Cooperative

A team of all those who would be involved with the para-to-sped candidates is developed at SMSU, from Admissions and Extended Learning to Business Services, Registration, Financial Aid, Scheduling, and more. This team met several times over the summer to track progress on candidate applications.

A grant application was completed to meet the requirements of the MN Dept. of Education to receive the funding. One wrinkle - these grants could only extend for 2 years at most. Legislative efforts will be made to allow this grant to extend to the 3 years originally intended.

# Finding a new faculty member in SPED

- ▶ A Search Committee was formed of faculty and staff from SMSU's School of Education and SW/WC
- ▶ A national search was conducted to find a candidate with the background required by Minnesota's Board of Teaching for Special Education who could also develop and deliver a fully online program
- ▶ Dr. Chris J. Anderson begins his first year as professor in the Para-to-SPED program at SMSU on August 15
  - ▶ Background includes Special Education and Reading
  - ▶ The International Association for Invitational Education (IAIE) recently granted Anderson the 2016 Outstanding Dissertation Award for Invitational Education. Dr. Anderson completed his award-winning dissertation, "A Correlational Study Examining Demonstrated Emotional Intelligence and Perceptions of School Climate," at Grand Canyon University in February.



# SW/WC's role in Para-to-Sped

- ▶ Board of Teaching requirements include field experience and student teaching placements in three grade bands: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12
- ▶ The Para-to-Sped program allows candidates to complete some of the field experiences in their place of employment - ED 101 Introduction to Education (15 hours) and SPED 290 Introduction to Special Education (15 hours) in Year 1
- ▶ During Year 2, candidates will complete 'methods' coursework also requiring lab placements in elementary reading and math
- ▶ During Year 3, candidates will finish special education methods courses in procedural safeguards and assessment and also do a year-long student teaching utilizing the co-teaching model
- ▶ Field experiences will be coordinated with SW/SC to trade staff places within a building, within a district, or within neighboring district. This allows the district to have positions covered without hiring substitutes, and also provides for more consistency for the students with special needs that are served by the candidates

# Growing pains and lessons learned...

- ▶ Candidates in the first cohort of the Para-to-Sped program have been enrolled in SMSU's currently approved SPED-Academic Behavioral Strategist (ABS) program.
- ▶ SMSU's School of Education has a Request for Initial Program Approval (RIPA) for a Non-Conventional SPED-ABS program that would allow candidates in the Para-to-Sped program to take fewer classes towards the degree to allow some credit for prior work experience. This RIPA is moving through the review process, hoping for a spring approval. If approved, all candidates would be moved to this new program.
- ▶ Found that many candidates had A.S. or A.A.S. degrees, rather than the A.A. degree desired. This requires that candidates need to complete their liberal education course requirements along with the Para-to-Sped program, which could delay their student teaching by one - two semesters.
- ▶ Some of those initially enrolled found that a fully online program, while meeting convenience needs, was not compatible with their learning styles
- ▶ Some found that due to a variety of circumstances, they were not eligible for financial aid. All should be eligible for loan forgiveness programs upon graduation and being hired in a district meeting program requirements.

# Where do we go from here?

## ▶ Taking names and numbers -

- ▶ We have had a number of inquiries from potential future candidates, school districts, and other LEAs regarding the program
- ▶ Looking at options for starting future cohort, perhaps in Fall 2017 or Fall 2018

## In the meantime -

- Asking potential candidates to check to see whether all MN Transfer Curriculum goal areas were met with their previous degree
- Looking at options for partnering with other LEAs in the state to provide the field experience/student teaching placement support that SW/WC is currently providing for the first cohort
- Considering a future expansion to include the Early Childhood Special Education licensure?

# Questions? Contact Information:

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