

GAO

Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee
on Higher Education, Lifelong
Learning, and Competitiveness,
Committee on Education and Labor,
House of Representatives

July 2009

TEACHER PREPARATION

Multiple Federal Education
Offices Support Teacher
Preparation for Instructing
Students with Disabilities
and English Language
Learners, but Systematic
Departmentwide
Coordination Could Enhance
This Assistance



GAO

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Highlights of [GAO-09-573](#), a report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

In 2005-2006, students with disabilities comprised 9 percent of the student population in the United States, and English language learners comprised about 10 percent. Many of these students spend a majority of their time in the general classroom setting in elementary and secondary schools. Most teachers are initially trained through teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education. GAO was asked to examine (1) the extent to which teacher preparation programs require preparation for general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups; (2) the role selected states play in preparing general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups; and (3) funding and other assistance provided by the U.S. Department of Education (Education) to help general classroom teachers instruct these student subgroups. To address these issues, GAO conducted a nationally representative survey of teacher preparation programs and interviewed officials from state and local educational agencies in four states and Education.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Education develop and implement a mechanism to ensure more systematic coordination among program offices that oversee assistance that can help general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups. Education agreed that coordination is beneficial and will explore the benefits of creating such a mechanism.

View [GAO-09-573](#) or [key components](#). For more information, contact Cornelia Ashby at (202) 512-7215 or ashbyc@gao.gov.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Multiple Federal Education Offices Support Teacher Preparation for Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, but Systematic Departmentwide Coordination Could Enhance This Assistance

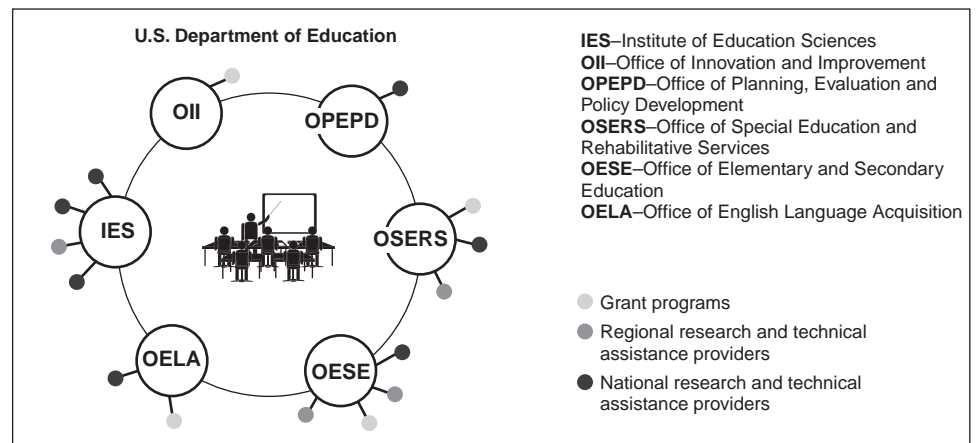
What GAO Found

According to GAO’s survey results, most traditional teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education nationwide required at least some training for prospective general classroom teachers on instructing students with disabilities and English language learners. While the majority of programs required at least one course entirely focused on students with disabilities, no more than 20 percent of programs required at least one course entirely focused on English language learners. Additionally, more than half the programs required field experiences with students with disabilities, while less than a third did so for English language learners. Despite recent steps by the majority of programs to better prepare teachers for instructing both of these student subgroups, many programs faced challenges in providing this training.

The four states GAO visited—California, Georgia, Nebraska, and Texas—set varying requirements for teacher preparation programs. However, all of the states and school districts visited provided assistance to general classroom teachers to help them instruct these student subgroups. Nevertheless, these states and school districts cited challenges providing this training, such as time constraints and identifying appropriate instructional strategies.

Six Education offices provide funding and other assistance that can help general classroom teachers instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, but no departmentwide mechanism exists to coordinate among the offices. Ten grant programs allow grantees to use funds to help general classroom teachers instruct these students; Education offices also support research and technical assistance providers that serve policymakers and educators. However, Education lacks a mechanism to facilitate information sharing among the offices on a regular basis that could assist offices that have less experience with these subgroups to better understand student needs or integrate research findings into ongoing programming.

Six Education Offices Oversee Grants and Research and Technical Assistance Providers



Sources: GAO analysis of Education documents and interviews with officials, Art Explosion (images).

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Abbreviations

ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
ESL	English as a second language
HEA	Higher Education Act
HEOA	Higher Education Opportunity Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	individualized education program
IES	Institute of Education Sciences
NCLBA	No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
NLS-NCLB	National Longitudinal Study of No Child Left Behind
OELA	Office of English Language Acquisition
OESE	Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
OII	Office of Innovation and Improvement
OPE	Office of Postsecondary Education
OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
OPEPD	Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development
SSI-NCLB	State Survey on the Implementation of No Child Left Behind

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

July 20, 2009

The Honorable Rubén Hinojosa
Chairman
Subcommittee on Higher Education,
Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness
Committee on Education and Labor
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Today's general classroom teachers face increasing student diversity in their classrooms, including growing numbers of students with disabilities and English language learners.¹ Out of the 49 million students enrolled in U.S. public schools in school year 2005-2006, students identified with disabilities and eligible for special education services under federal legislation comprised 9 percent of public school enrollment, and English language learners comprised approximately 10 percent of the student population. Enrollment for both of these student subgroups has been increasing in past years, and many of these students spend a majority of their time in the general classroom setting. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), amended and reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLBA), holds states, school districts, and individual schools accountable for the achievement of all students, including students in these two subgroups. However, schools have reported difficulty making adequate yearly progress for students with

¹Students with disabilities refers to children served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). A child with a disability means a child evaluated as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services. The term "English language learners" is commonly used to refer to students who have limited English proficiency. The No Child Left Behind Act uses the term "limited English proficient" in the text of the legislation. Throughout this report, we will use the term English language learners to refer to students who are limited English proficient.

disabilities and English language learners.² At the same time, a 2008 study funded by the U.S. Department of Education (Education) found that less than half of the general classroom teachers surveyed nationwide who received preparation to instruct students with special needs and ethnically diverse students said the training they received prepared them well for the diversity they encountered in the classroom.³

Most prospective teachers are trained through teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education, and each state prescribes standards for these programs within its own state. In addition, state and local governments have traditionally had the primary responsibility for overseeing teacher quality, but the federal government has been redefining its role in this area. At the federal level, Education provides financial assistance to states, institutions of higher education, and school districts to support teacher quality, including teacher preparation and ongoing training for practicing teachers. The ESEA, Higher Education Act (HEA),⁴ and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are the key federal laws that authorize funding to support general classroom teachers to instruct these two student subgroups through various formula and competitive grant programs overseen by Education. Education also funds a number of national and regional research and technical assistance providers that can provide support to teachers who instruct these two student subgroups.

As agreed with your office, we examined (1) the extent to which teacher preparation programs require preparation for general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners and the challenges these programs face; (2) the role selected states play in

²NCLBA (Pub. L. No. 107-110), which amended and reauthorized ESEA (20 U.S.C. 6301 et. seq.), introduced the requirement that states develop plans that include academic standards and establish performance goals for making adequate yearly progress that would lead to 100 percent of their students being proficient in reading, mathematics, and science by 2014. Each school's assessment data must be disaggregated in order to compare the achievement levels of students within certain designated groups, which include students with disabilities and English language learners, with the state's proficiency targets. Each of these groups generally must make adequate yearly progress in order for the school to make adequate yearly progress.

³See National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality and Public Agenda, *Lessons Learned: New Teachers Talk About Their Jobs, Challenges and Long-Range Plans – Issue No. 3: Teaching in Changing Times* (Naperville, IL, 2008).

⁴The Higher Education Act was reauthorized and amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Pub. L. No. 110-315, August 14, 2008.

preparing general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners and their challenges; and (3) the funding and other assistance provided by Education to states and teacher preparation programs to help prepare general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups.

We used several methodologies to answer these questions. To determine the extent to which teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education require that general classroom teachers receive preparation to work with students with disabilities and English language learners, we conducted a nationally representative survey of 374 programs randomly selected from the 50 states and the District of Columbia to create estimates about the population of all teacher preparation programs. We had a response rate of 81 percent, and all estimates from our survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points, unless otherwise noted, at the 95 percent confidence level. To understand the role of selected states in preparing both prospective and practicing teachers to work with these student subgroups, we interviewed officials at state agencies and local school districts, as well as teachers, in four states—California, Georgia, Nebraska, and Texas. We selected states that met a range of conditions, primarily focusing on states either with a high percentage of the population ages 5 to 21 who speak English “less than very well” or experiencing population growth in this student subgroup, as well as geographic diversity. We also took into consideration states with higher-than-average percentages of students with disabilities served under IDEA, Part B, who spent more than 80 percent of their day in a general education classroom.⁵ To review Education’s funding and other assistance, we compiled a list, verified by Education officials, of major relevant federal grant programs from the *2008 Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs*. For each program, we reviewed what was known about how much of the funding was used in the 2007-2008 school year to prepare general classroom teachers, statutory requirements, and performance goals. We also interviewed officials from Education-supported national research and technical assistance providers with a major focus on students with disabilities, English language learners, or teacher preparation. Finally, we selected regional providers of research and technical assistance for interviews that served our four selected

⁵IDEA, Part B requires that students with disabilities ages 3 to 21 years, to the extent possible, be provided instruction in educational settings in the least restrictive environment, such as mainstream classrooms.

states. A more detailed explanation of our methodology can be found in appendix I.

We conducted this performance audit from March 2008 to July 2009 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Educating Students with Disabilities

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of children and youth with disabilities who receive special education services under IDEA in public schools increased over 5 percent from 1976 to 2007.⁶ In fall 2007, 6 million students with disabilities received services under IDEA,⁷ and comprised about 9 percent of the student population,⁸ according to the Data Accountability Center.⁹ States have relatively similar proportions of students with disabilities served under IDEA, which can include students with learning disabilities, speech or language impairments, emotional disturbance, and autism, among other disabilities. IDEA was most recently reauthorized in 2004, and is the primary federal law that addresses the educational needs of students with disabilities.¹⁰

⁶See M. Planty, W. Hussar, T. Snyder, S. Provasnik, G. Kena, R. Dinkes, A. KewalRamani, and J. Kemp, *The Condition of Education 2008*, NCES 2008-031, a report by the National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (Washington, D.C., 2008). Special education services through IDEA are available for eligible children and youth identified by a team of qualified professionals as having a disability that adversely affects their academic performance and as in need of special education and related services.

⁷Data Accountability Center, *Table 1-3: Students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, by disability category and state: Fall 2007*, https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES31ST/AR_1-3.htm (accessed on Jun. 29, 2009).

⁸Data Accountability Center, *Table 1-15: Students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, as a percentage of population, by disability and state: Fall 2007*, https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES31ST/AR_1-15.htm (accessed on Jun. 29, 2009).

⁹The Data Accountability Center receives funding through a cooperative agreement with Education's Office of Special Education Programs.

¹⁰Pub. L. No. 108-446, December 3, 2004.

This law mandates a free appropriate public education for all eligible children with disabilities, an individualized education program (IEP) for each student, and placement of these students in the least restrictive environment, among other provisions.¹¹ Under the least restrictive environment requirement, state and local educational agencies must ensure that children with disabilities are educated with children who are nondisabled to the maximum extent appropriate.

As a result of these provisions, many students with disabilities served under IDEA spend part of their day in a general education classroom. According to Education data for fall 2007, nearly 57 percent of students with disabilities served under IDEA from the ages of 6 through 21 spent more than 80 percent of their school day in the general classroom setting.¹² Specific instructional models vary by states and school districts for students with disabilities. For example, in a full-inclusion model, or “pull-in” model, a student spends the majority of time in a general education classroom, and services are brought to the student, either by a special education co-teacher or a consultant. In a partial-inclusion model, or “pull-out” model, a student will spend part of the day in a resource classroom where the student receives more intensive or individualized instruction provided by a special education teacher. Increasingly, states and school districts are implementing a new model for the general education classroom, called Response to Intervention, aimed to help teachers determine and provide for the appropriate education interventions so that children can progress in their learning. Through this model, general classroom teachers, as part of a multidisciplinary team effort, can help to identify struggling students and monitor their progress, provide and adjust evidence-based academic interventions depending on a student’s responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities.

¹¹Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an individualized education program (IEP), which is a written statement specifying, among other components, the goals and objectives for the student, the services that a student will receive, the extent to which the student will participate in the regular education setting with nondisabled peers, and how the student will participate in statewide assessments.

¹²Data Accountability Center, *Table 2-2: Students ages 6 through 21 served under IDEA, Part B, by disability category, educational environment and state: Fall 2007*, https://www.ideadata.org/TABLES31ST/AR_2-2.xls (accessed on Apr. 7, 2009).

Educating English Language Learners

A 2008 Education report found that while the overall school population grew by less than 3 percent from 1996 to 2006, the English language learner student population increased more than 60 percent and is among the fastest growing demographic groups of students in the country.¹³ The number and percentage of English language learners vary widely among states. For example, based on state-reported data to Education, five states—California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas—were home to nearly 60 percent of students identified as English language learners in grades kindergarten to 12 in the 2005-2006 school year.¹⁴ However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 1990 to 2000, the fastest growing English language learner student populations were concentrated in other states in the Southeast, Midwest, and mountain areas of the West (see fig. 1). In addition, English language learners include foreign-born and native-born students, with several recent reports estimating that native-born students make up at least half of these students in the United States. English language learners have diverse cultural backgrounds and speak more than 400 languages, with almost 80 percent of these students speaking Spanish, according to Education. These students also include refugees with little formal schooling and students who are literate in their native languages, resulting in a range of educational needs.

¹³See Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, *Biennial Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Title III State Formula Grant Program, School Years 2004–06* (Washington, D.C., 2008).

¹⁴See Office of English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement for Limited English Proficient Students, *Biennial Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Title III State Formula Grant Program, School Years 2004–06*.

strong skills and proficiency in both the student's native language and English. Other programs aim to develop literacy in English only, such as structured English immersion programs, for which all instruction is in English and adjusted to the proficiency level of students, so that subject matter is understandable.

Career Path for Teachers

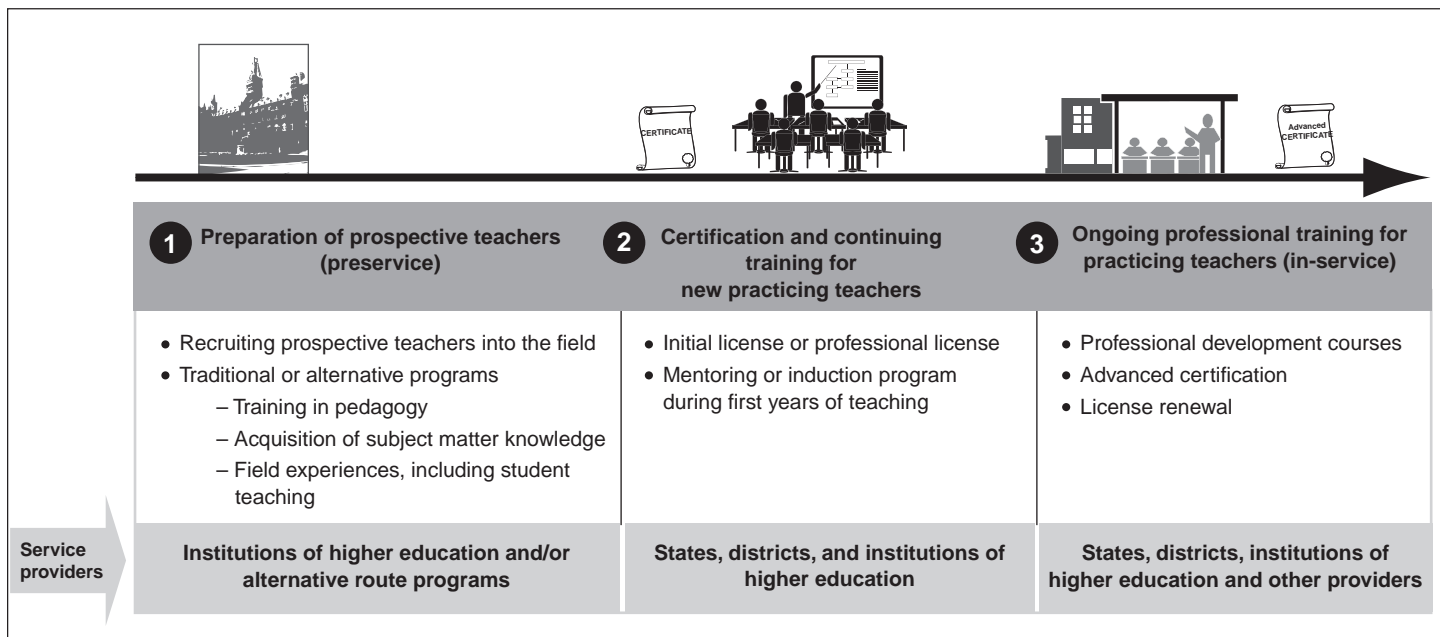
Preparation for general classroom teachers involves formal training for initial certification, often referred to as preservice training, as well as ongoing training throughout a teacher's professional career, often referred to as in-service training or professional development. Multiple pathways exist for teachers to obtain their initial certification to teach. Most teachers receive undergraduate degrees through teacher preparation programs administered by institutions of higher education. These traditional programs typically include courses in subject matter and instructional strategies, as well as field-based experiences. Under this traditional approach, prospective teachers must complete all of their certification requirements before beginning to teach. In contrast, alternative routes to certification, designed for prospective teachers who already have an undergraduate degree or perhaps an existing career in a different field, tend to focus mainly on instructional approaches, since these prospective teachers generally have subject matter expertise. Prospective teachers in alternative routes to certification typically begin teaching while continuing to take coursework needed to meet certification or licensure requirements. According to state-reported data submitted to Education, nearly 20 percent of the teachers prepared in 2003-2004 earned their teaching certificate through an alternative route to certification.¹⁵ About half of alternative programs are administered by institutions of higher education. The remainder are offered through school districts,

¹⁵Alternative routes to certification are gaining in popularity. According to the most recent available state-reported data submitted to Education, from 2000 to 2004, the number of individuals who completed alternative routes to certification programs increased by almost 40 percent. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, *The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality: A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom* (Washington, D.C., 2006).

statewide regional educational service centers,¹⁶ state departments of education, and other entities.

Training for practicing teachers already in the classroom continues beyond completion of a teacher preparation program with training offered by states; school districts; and other entities, including institutions of higher education. Some states and school districts may offer induction or mentoring programs for new teachers, which could include assistance from a more experienced teacher, additional training, or classroom observation. Teachers can also earn supplemental certificates, such as an English as a second language (ESL) endorsement, and school districts may encourage or require teachers to receive additional training to earn these certifications. See figure 2 for an illustration of the various steps in the career path for teachers.

Figure 2: Career Path for Teachers



Sources: GAO analysis, Art Explosion (images).

¹⁶Regional educational service centers are state and federally supported centers disbursed across different geographic regions designed to improve the educational effectiveness of their member school systems by sharing services, gathering and disseminating teaching tools, and providing training to teachers on issues that arise within their particular school districts.

State and Federal Support for Teacher Preparation

State educational agencies, local school districts, and the federal government support the preparation and ongoing training of general classroom teachers. Each state sets its own standards for teacher preparation programs and requirements for teacher certification. As a result of state-specific standards for teacher preparation programs and teacher certification, teachers prepared in one state may not meet the qualifications in another state. Nationwide, most teachers become certified to teach within the same state where they completed their preparation, but some states have higher percentages of teachers trained outside of the state. According to state-reported data submitted to Education, in 2003-2004, seven states reported that more than 40 percent of their newly certified teachers received their initial preparation outside the state they were working in.¹⁷ Some states prescribe ongoing professional development standards that teachers must meet in order to maintain their certification and are also responsible for monitoring and assisting their school districts.

In line with Education's strategic goal outlined in its fiscal year 2009 Performance Plan to improve student achievement with a focus on bringing all students to grade level by 2014, as required by ESEA, and to ensure that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers, Education provides financial support and other assistance to state and local educational agencies that can be used to help general classroom teachers instruct these two student subgroups. Financial support is provided through a number of formula and competitive grants.¹⁸ These grant programs provide billions of dollars to state educational agencies, school districts, and institutions of higher education, as well as other entities, and are administered by different Education offices. Other federal assistance includes research and technical assistance directly from Education offices or indirectly via about 100 regional and national technical assistance providers supported by the agency. Six offices within Education oversee

¹⁷These states were Alaska, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wyoming. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, *The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality: A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom*.

¹⁸Formula grant programs are noncompetitive awards based on a predetermined formula. The eligible recipients for Education's formula grant programs are state educational agencies that then pass much of the funding through to local educational agencies. Competitive, or discretionary, grants are awarded on the basis of a competitive process. Education reviews applications based on established criteria to determine which applications best address the program requirements.

funding, research, and technical assistance that provide support to varying degrees related to preparing general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners (see table 1).

Table 1: Education Offices That Oversee Funding or Assistance That Can Support Prospective and Practicing Teachers in Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

Education office	Purpose
Institute of Education Sciences (IES)	Provides rigorous research on which to ground education practice and policy.
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)	Promotes academic excellence, enhances educational opportunities and equity for all of America’s children and families, and improves the quality of teaching and learning by providing leadership, technical assistance, and financial support.
Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)	Provides national leadership to help ensure that English language learners and immigrant students attain English proficiency and achieve academically and assists in building the nation’s capacity in critical foreign languages.
Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD)	Oversees planning, evaluation, policy development, and budget activities within Education.
Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII)	Makes strategic investments in innovative educational practices through two dozen discretionary grant programs and coordinates the public school choice and supplemental educational services provisions of ESEA, as amended by NCLBA.
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)	Works to improve results and outcomes for people with disabilities of all ages; in supporting ESEA, as amended by NCLBA, OSERS provides a wide array of supports to parents and individuals, school districts, and states in three main areas: special education, vocational rehabilitation, and research.

Source: GAO analysis of Education documentation.

ESEA, IDEA, and HEA are the three major laws that influence the preparation of teachers to work with students with disabilities and English language learners in general education classrooms.

- ESEA, which was amended and reauthorized in 2001 by NCLBA, is designed to improve the education of all students and holds school districts accountable for student achievement. ESEA provides that students with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency are among four specific student subgroups for which achievement

must be monitored.¹⁹ States must set annual goals that lead to all students achieving proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science by 2014. To meet adequate yearly progress for a given year, each district and school must show that the requisite percentage of each designated student group, as well as the student population as a whole, met the state proficiency goals on an annual assessment.²⁰ In addition, states must annually assess the English language proficiency of all students with limited English proficiency. ESEA authorizes funding to improve outcomes through preparing teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, most notably through Titles I, II, and III. Title I, Part A of ESEA provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of economically disadvantaged children. Title II, Part A aims to improve teacher and principal quality. Title III of ESEA focuses on assisting school districts in achieving student progress in English proficiency. In addition, ESEA defines highly qualified teachers as those that have (1) a bachelor's degree, (2) full state certification or licensure, and (3) demonstrate proficiency in the subjects they teach. However, while there are specific requirements for special education teachers, ESEA does not identify specific requirements for general classroom teachers to prove their skills in teaching students with disabilities or English language learners.

- IDEA is the primary federal law that addresses the educational needs of students with disabilities.²¹ IDEA provides formula grant funding to states and school districts under Part B for students with disabilities from the ages of 3 through 21 years. IDEA also provides competitive grant funds to states, institutions of higher education, and other entities under Part D to support personnel development and technical assistance and information dissemination efforts.
- HEA authorizes competitive grants to enhance the quality of teacher training programs and the qualification of practicing teachers, as well as accountability requirements for teacher preparation programs and states.²² Although Congress has held states and teacher preparation

¹⁹The other two subgroups include students who are economically disadvantaged and students who represent major racial and ethnic groups.

²⁰Schools must show that at least 95 percent of students in each designated student group participated in these assessments.

²¹20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.

²²20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.

programs accountable for the federal funds they received under HEA, the reauthorization of that act by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) amended HEA to require annual reporting on the preparation of general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners.²³

In addition, the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 is intended to strengthen the principal education research, statistics, and evaluation activities of Education.²⁴ This act established the Institute of Education Sciences (IES).

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), signed into law on February 17, 2009, provides Education with an additional \$97 billion.²⁵ Of this amount, more than \$21 billion will provide funding for three existing grant programs authorized by ESEA, HEA, and IDEA that either require or allow funds to be used to prepare general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. The \$97 billion for Education also includes \$53.6 billion for the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. Local educational agencies that receive Fiscal Stabilization funds may use them for fiscal years 2009 to 2011 for any activity authorized by ESEA and IDEA, which would include supporting programs designed to address the educational needs of students with disabilities and English language learners as an eligible use of funds. In an April 2009 report on our initial review of state usage of funds available through this act, we noted that only three states have had their proposals describing how they would use the funds designated for educational purposes approved by Education.²⁶

²³Section 205 of HEA, as added by Section 201 of the HEOA, Pub. L. No. 110-315 requires annual submission of three types of reports on teacher preparation and qualifications: (1) a report from institutions of higher education to states, (2) a report from states to the Secretary of Education, and (3) a report from the Secretary of Education to Congress and the public.

²⁴Pub. L. No. 107-279.

²⁵Pub. L. No. 111-5.

²⁶See GAO, *Recovery Act: As Initial Implementation Unfolds in States and Localities, Continued Attention to Accountability Issues Is Essential*, [GAO-09-580](#) (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 23, 2009).

Most Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs Required at Least Some Training on Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners and Cited Challenges Preparing Teachers for Both Subgroups

According to our survey, which we administered during fall 2008, most traditional teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education nationwide required at least one course for prospective general classroom teachers that included content on instructing students with disabilities and English language learners, although the level of emphasis on these student subgroups in required coursework varied greatly.²⁷ In addition, fewer programs required field experiences with these students, especially English language learners. The majority of programs recently took steps to improve prospective teachers' training on instructing these subgroups but cited ongoing challenges to provide this training. Overall, about half of these programs felt that they could benefit from additional assistance.

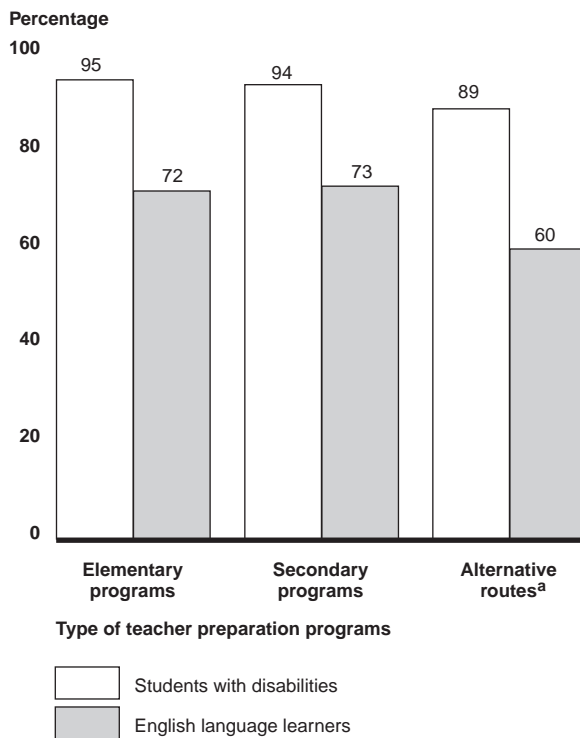
While Most Programs Required Courses That Include Content on These Subgroups, Course Emphasis Varied, As Well As Requirements for Field Experiences

On the basis of responses from the random sample of teacher preparation programs at the institutions of higher education we surveyed, we estimate that most traditional teacher preparation programs nationwide require courses, with varying levels of emphasis, on students with disabilities and English language learners. As shown in figure 3, about 95 percent of these programs required courses that include at least some content on instructing students with disabilities, and about 73 percent of programs required courses that include at least some content on English language learners. The major reason cited by programs for not requiring courses with content on English language learners or field experiences with this student subgroup was that their state standards did not require this of teacher preparation programs. For example, state standards for teacher preparation programs vary in their requirements regarding course content and field experiences and can include limitations on the maximum number of program or credit hours. In addition, states vary in whether they have the same or different standards for traditional and alternative routes to

²⁷All estimates based on our sample are subject to sampling error. We surveyed 374 institutions of higher education that offer teacher preparation programs and had an 81 percent response rate. Unless otherwise noted, the margin of error for questions answered by these institutions is no more than plus or minus 6 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence. For more detailed information on this survey, please see appendix I.

certification programs. We estimate that about half of the institutions of higher education offered alternative routes to certification. Of those institutions of higher education that offer both traditional and alternative programs, the percentage of alternative routes with required courses that include content on these student subgroups was similar to traditional teacher preparation programs.

Figure 3: Percentage of Teacher Preparation Programs That Reported Requiring Courses, with Varying Levels of Content, on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

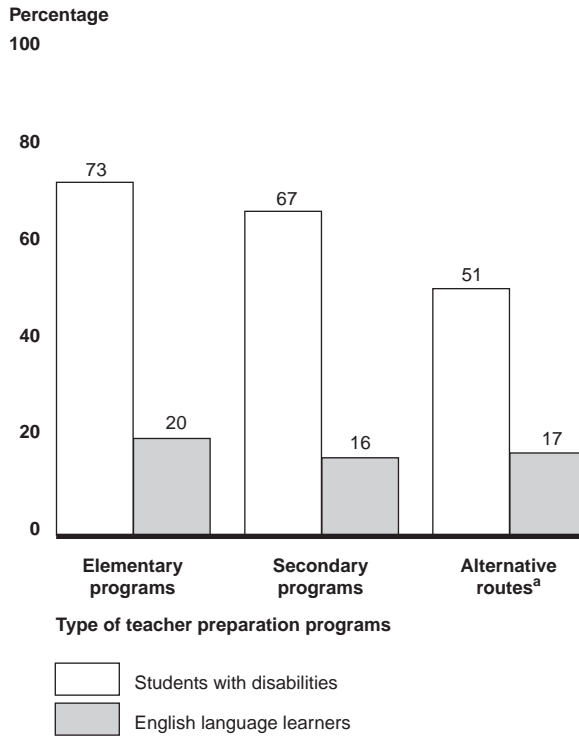
Notes: Data on elementary and secondary programs refer to traditional teacher preparation programs. Data on alternative routes to certification include programs that prepare both elementary and secondary general classroom teachers.

^aThese statistics have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

While the majority (67 to 73 percent) of traditional teacher preparation programs had at least one course entirely focused on students with disabilities, no more than 20 percent of programs required at least one course entirely focused on English language learners (see fig. 4). English language learners were more often a partial focus of required courses for

prospective elementary and secondary teachers. For example, programs were more likely to incorporate content on instructing these students as part of required courses entirely focused on diverse learners, including but not limited to English language learner students. However, fewer alternative routes to certification (51 percent) than traditional programs reported requiring courses entirely focused on students with disabilities, while the percentage of alternative routes that required courses entirely focused on English language learners was similar to traditional programs. In general, there is a lack of consensus regarding what makes a teacher effective. However, several experts we spoke with suggested an integrated or infused approach to incorporating content on these student subgroups into multiple courses for prospective teachers as a preferred method for preparing teachers. In addition, several experts emphasized the importance of collaboration among faculty members with regard to preparing prospective teachers to instruct these students.

Figure 4: Percentage of Teacher Preparation Programs That Required at Least One Course Entirely Focused on Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

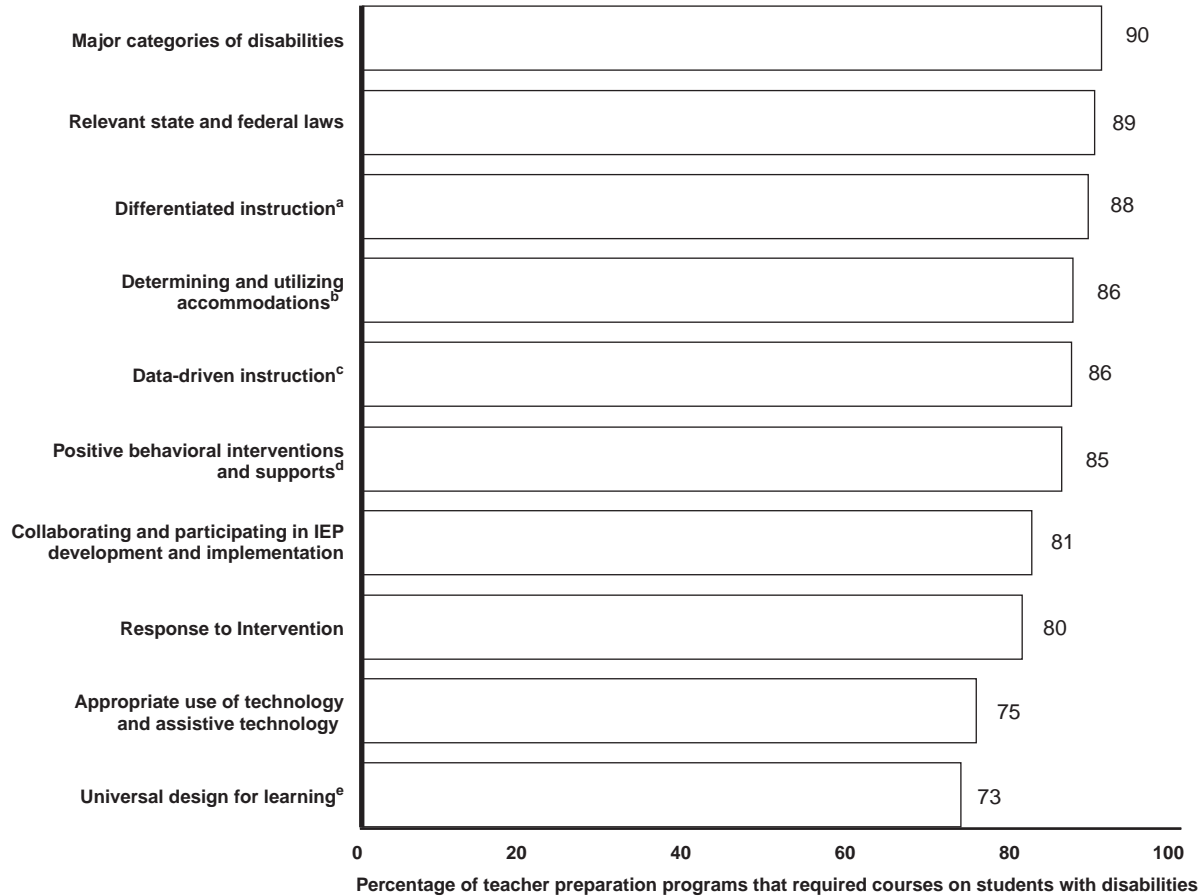
Notes: Data on elementary and secondary programs refer to traditional teacher preparation programs. Data on alternative routes to certification include programs that prepare both elementary and secondary general classroom teachers.

^aThese statistics have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

Most traditional teacher preparation programs reported that their required courses on students with disabilities included information on major categories of disabilities; relevant state and federal laws; and instructional strategies to meet the diverse needs of these students, such as differentiated instruction, determining and utilizing accommodations for instruction and assessment, and Response to Intervention (see fig. 5).

Figure 5: Topics Included in Required Courses for Prospective Elementary and Secondary Teachers in Traditional Programs on Instructing Students with Disabilities

Topics for required courses



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

^aDifferentiated instruction refers to the use of flexible teaching approaches to benefit the individual learning needs of all students.

^bAccommodations are services or support related to a student's disability that allows him or her to fully access and demonstrate knowledge in a particular subject matter.

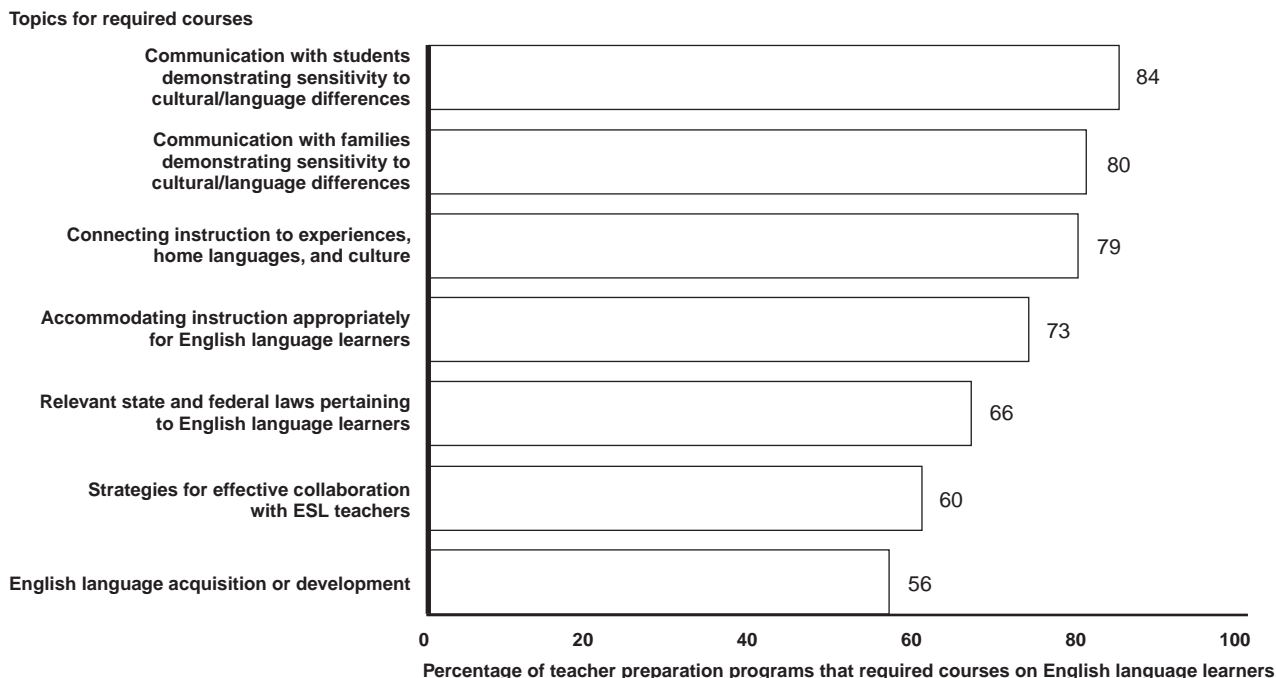
^cData-driven instruction refers to the use of student data to inform instruction that specifically targets student needs.

^dPositive behavioral interventions and supports refers to an operational framework that guides selection, integration, and implementation of the best scientifically-based academic and behavioral practices for improving academic and behavior outcomes for all students.

^eUniversal design for learning refers to a framework for designing educational environments that helps all students gain knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm for learning.

Programs that required specific courses on English language learners most often reported including topics related to communication with students and families and connecting lessons and instruction in ways that demonstrate cultural sensitivity, as shown in figure 6. Of the various topics we asked about in our survey related to instructing English language learners, the least likely topic to be included as part of the required courses for both elementary and secondary teachers was English language acquisition or development. However, experts we spoke to in the field of teacher preparation for English language learners emphasized the need for general classroom teachers to have knowledge of language acquisition.

Figure 6: Topics Included in Required Courses for Prospective Elementary and Secondary Teachers in Traditional Programs on Instructing English Language Learners



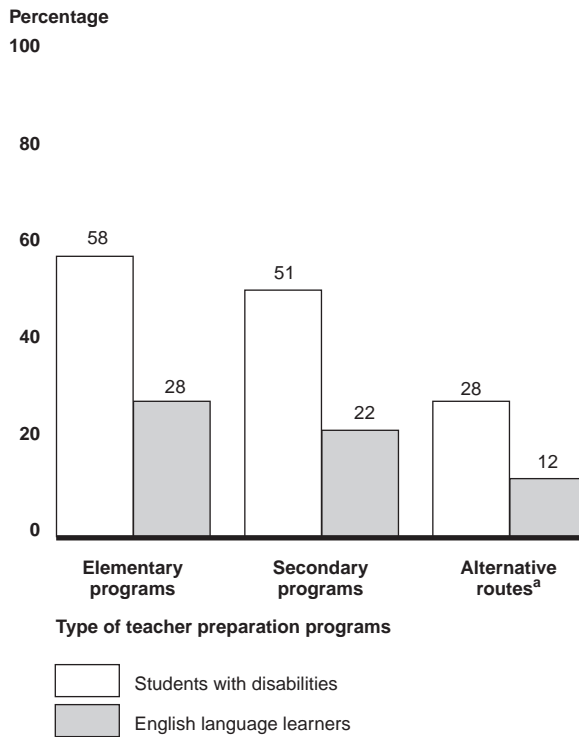
Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

Teacher preparation programs nationally varied in whether or not they required field experiences for prospective teachers with these student subgroups, but overall, a larger percentage of these programs required field experiences for prospective teachers with students with disabilities than with English language learners (see fig. 7). Examples of field experiences can include observing teachers, participating in the development of individualized education programs for students with disabilities, and tutoring English language learners. The National Council

for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, a professional accrediting entity for institutions that prepare teachers, has identified field experience as one of six key components that should be incorporated into these programs.²⁸

²⁸The majority of teacher education institutions in 31 states have received accreditation from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, and 39 states have adopted or adapted this entity's standards for approval of their teacher preparation programs. The six key components include (1) candidate knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions; (2) assessment system and unit evaluation; (3) field experiences and clinical practices; (4) diversity; (5) faculty qualifications, performance, and development; and (6) unit governance and resources. Recognizing changes in the nation's student population and the need for all teachers to have awareness of these student subgroups, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education revised its standards in 2008 to recommend field experiences that expose teacher candidates to students with disabilities and students with linguistic diversity.

Figure 7: Percentage of Teacher Preparation Programs That Required Field Experiences with Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

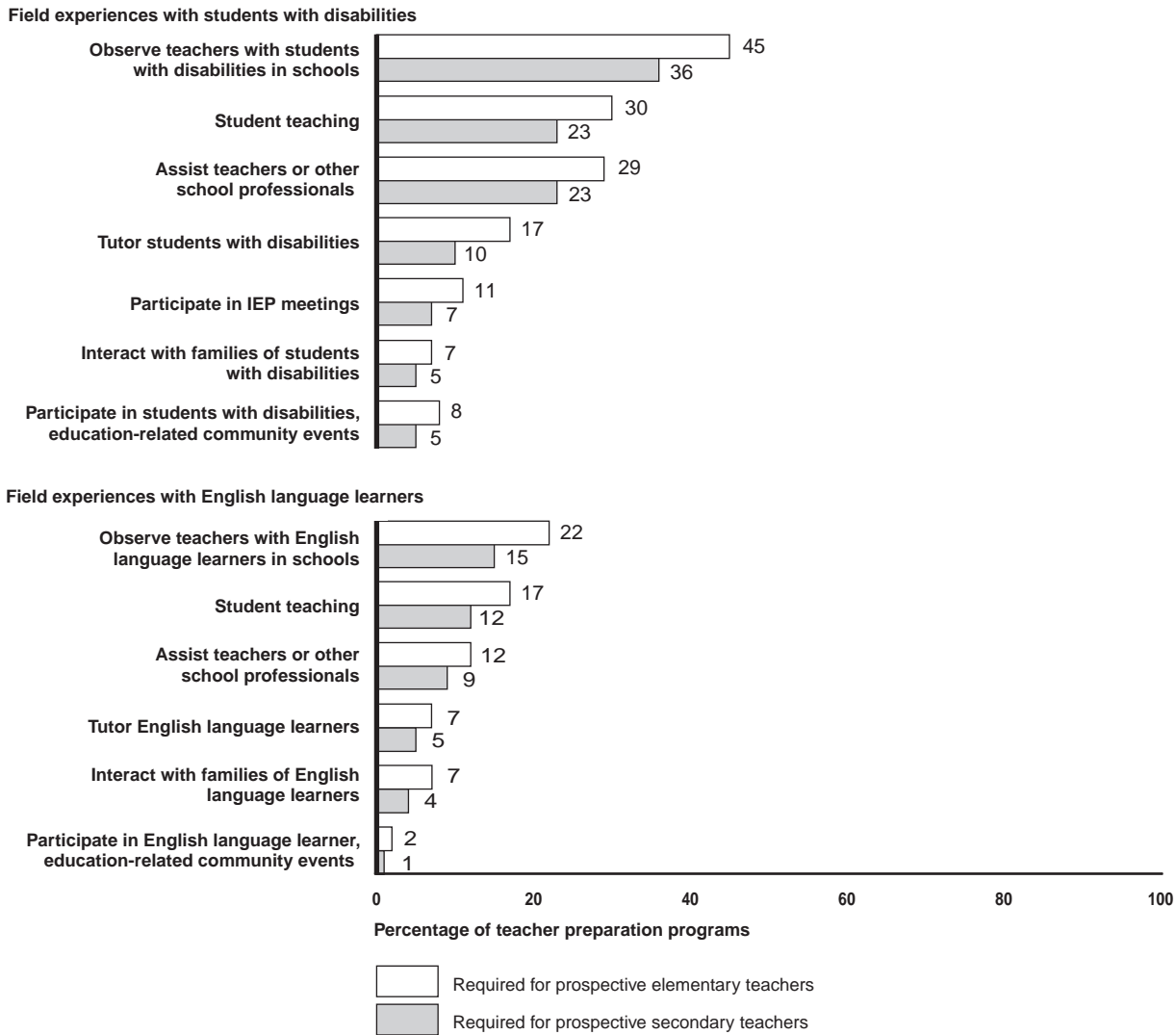
Notes: For traditional elementary and secondary programs, field experiences typically occur before a prospective teacher becomes certified to teach. To obtain similar information on field experiences for alternative routes to certification, which can generally accelerate the time it takes for a prospective teacher to become the teacher of record in a classroom, we obtained information on field experiences for these programs that occurred prior to prospective teachers assuming their position as the teacher of record.

^aThese statistics have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

Teacher preparation programs can offer a variety of field experiences for prospective teachers, although our survey results indicate that requirements for specific types of field experiences with students with disabilities and English language learners are not widespread. The type of field experiences most often required for prospective elementary and secondary teachers for both student subgroups was to observe existing teachers working with these students in their classrooms (see fig. 8). However, this was required in less than half of the programs. Assisting teachers or other school professionals and student teaching were also among the most frequently reported field experiences required with these

students. While a student teaching placement is a typical component of a teacher preparation program, based on our survey results, less than one-third of these programs required that prospective teachers work with either of these student subgroups during their student teaching experience. However, more programs reported expecting that prospective teachers would gain experience working with students with disabilities and English language learners as part of their student teaching experience, than reported having formal requirements in place.

Figure 8: Types of Field Experiences Required by Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs for Prospective Teachers on Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

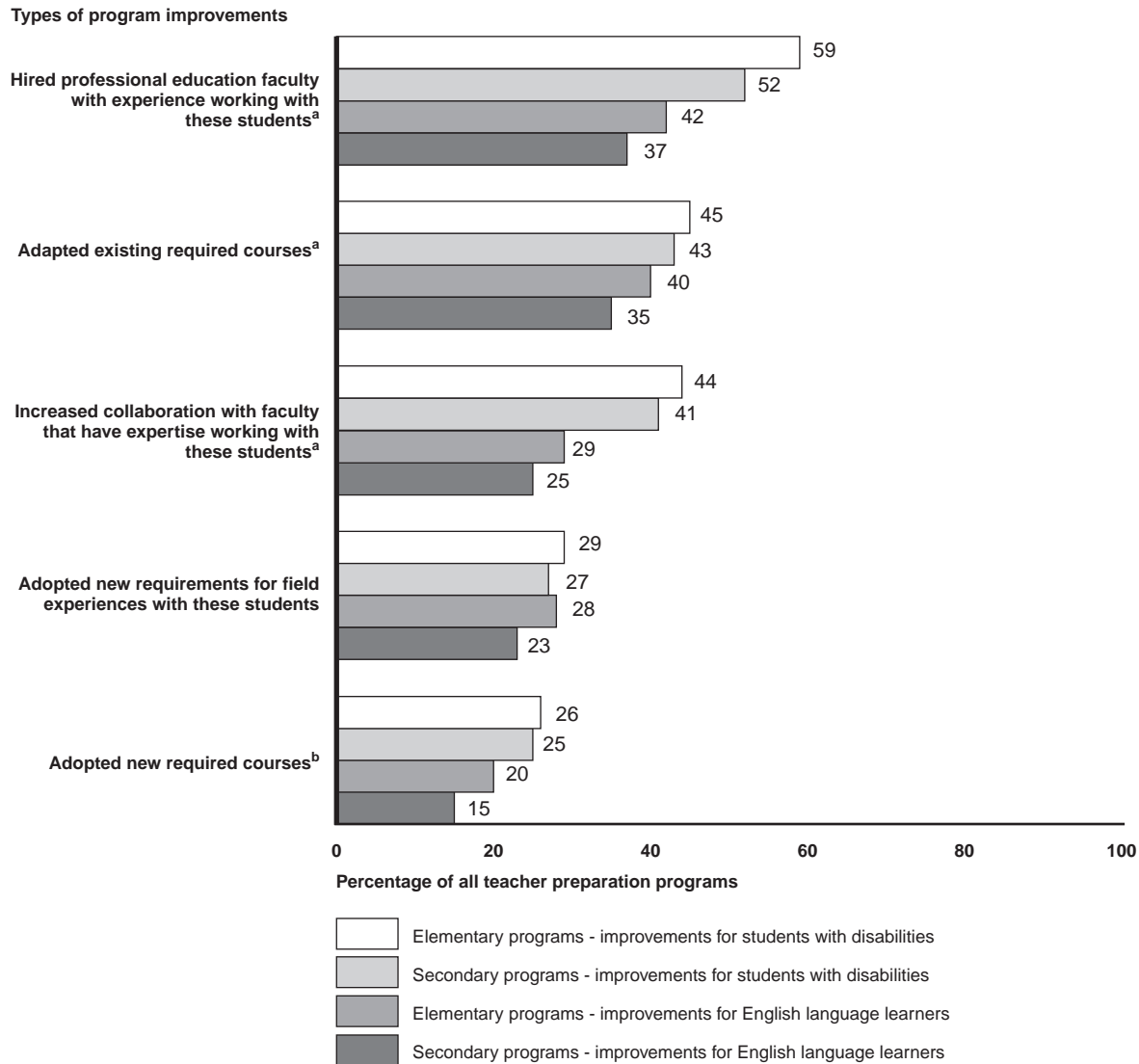


Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

Most Programs Reported Taking Steps to Better Prepare Teachers for Instructing These Subgroups, Yet Cited Challenges in Providing This Preparation

Based on our survey results, an estimated 70 percent of teacher preparation programs have taken steps in the last 3 years or were planning to take steps in the next 2 years to better prepare prospective elementary and secondary teachers to instruct students with disabilities, and 58 percent reported having taken or planning to take steps for English language learners. Hiring professional education faculty with experience working with these students and adapting existing required courses (see fig. 9) were the two most likely types of program improvements recently taken by these programs for both student subgroups.

Figure 9: Program Improvements Recently Completed by Teacher Preparation Programs to Better Prepare Prospective Teachers for Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



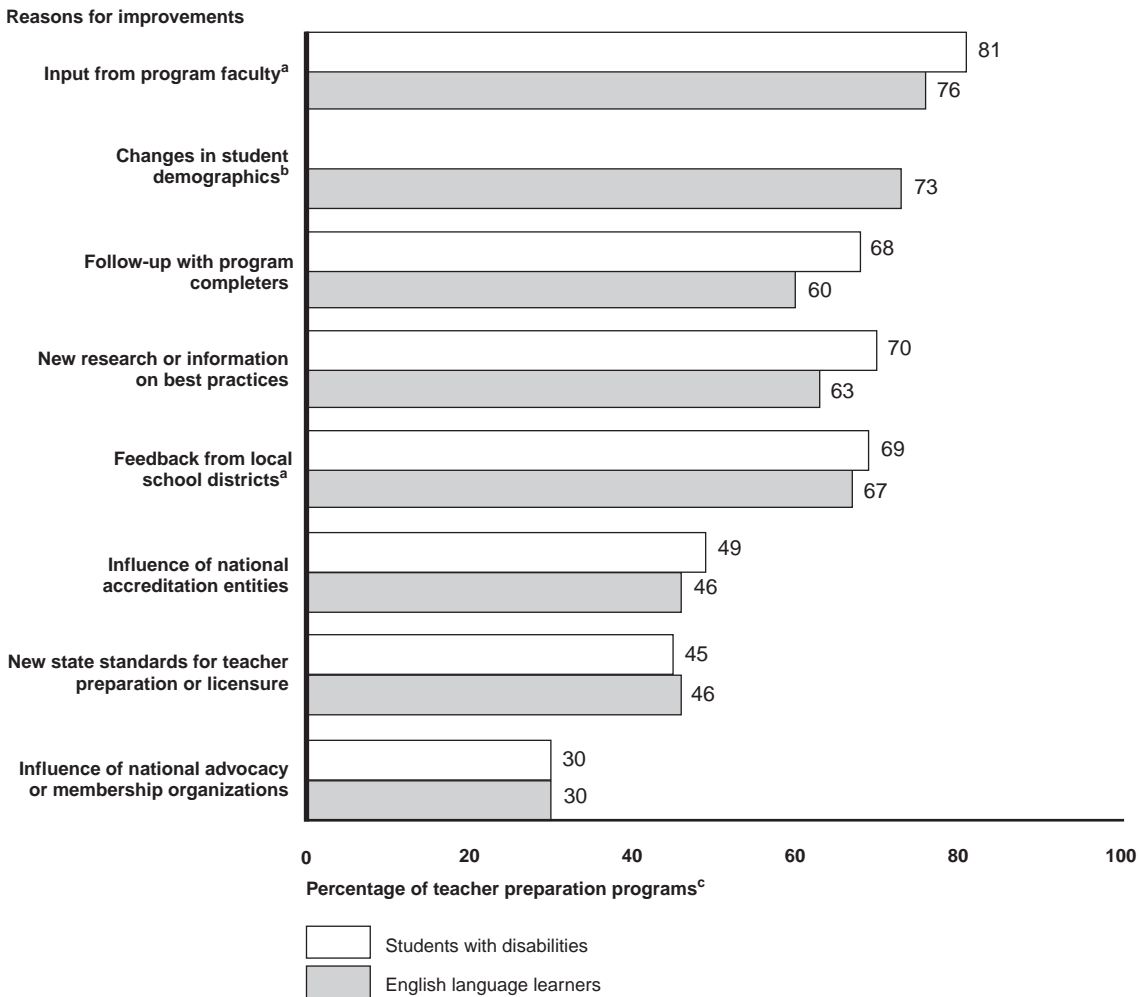
Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

^aThese statistics have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points or less at the 95 percent confidence level for the responses pertaining to improvement for English language learners for elementary and secondary programs.

^bThe statistic for secondary programs—improvements for English language—learners has a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points or less at the 95 percent confidence level.

In general, programs reported similar reasons for making improvements to better prepare teachers for instructing both student subgroups, as shown in figure 10. Teacher preparation programs most frequently cited input from faculty members as a top reason for making improvements to better equip teachers who instruct both student subgroups. Regarding English language learners, most programs cited changes in student demographics as a top reason for prompting these actions. In addition, over 50 percent of programs viewed the following as major or moderate reasons for making improvements: (1) new research or information on best practices, (2) feedback from local school districts, and (3) follow-up with program completers indicated a need in this area.

Figure 10: Reasons Reported by Teacher Preparation Programs That Prompted Program Improvements to Better Prepare Prospective Teachers for Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

^aThese statistics have a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points or less at the 95 percent confidence level for questions pertaining to the English language learner subgroup.

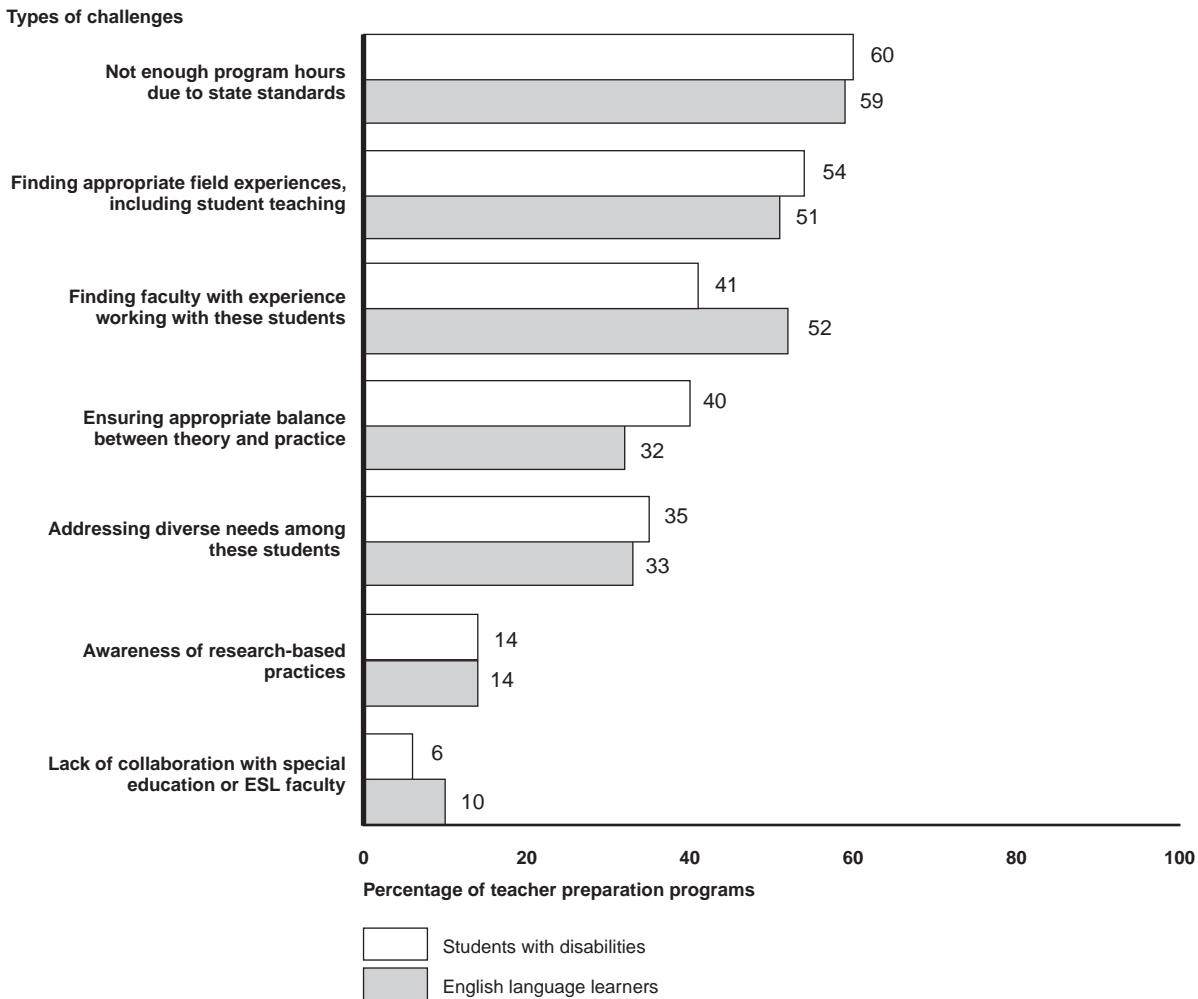
^bWe only asked about the extent to which changes in student demographics prompted program improvements with regard to the English language learner subgroup, given the recent growth of this population. In addition, this statistic has a margin of error of plus or minus 7 percentage points or less at the 95 percent confidence level.

^cPercentages are based on the number of teacher preparation programs that listed these as major or moderate reasons for making improvements.

Despite a number of recent improvements teacher preparation programs reported making, most institutions cited ongoing challenges in providing

this training to prepare prospective teachers for instructing both student subgroups. On the basis of our survey results, the challenge most frequently cited by institutions was not having enough program or credit hours due to state standards (see fig. 11). Specifically, teacher preparation programs may struggle to find time in their programs to include additional preparation related to instructing these subgroups, given state standards that can include limitations on the maximum number of program or credit hours allowed or specific topics that must be addressed in required courses. Other top challenges reported by institutions included difficulty arranging field experiences, including student teaching for prospective teachers, and limited faculty with experience working with these two subgroups. Based on these responses, it appears that the improvements most frequently being taken by these institutions are to address their top challenges. For example, programs frequently reported hiring faculty members with experience working with these student subgroups as a way to better prepare teachers, which would help to address one of the top challenges reported by these programs. In addition, institutions are adapting existing courses to incorporate content on instructing these students, possibly to help their programs better prepare teachers without exceeding the maximum number of program or credit hours required by state standards. Finally, we found that the challenges reported by teacher preparation programs were not associated with program size, indicating that even large programs with potentially greater access to resources face similar challenges preparing prospective teachers for these student subgroups.

Figure 11: Challenges Faced by Teacher Preparation Programs in Preparing Prospective Teachers to Instruct Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

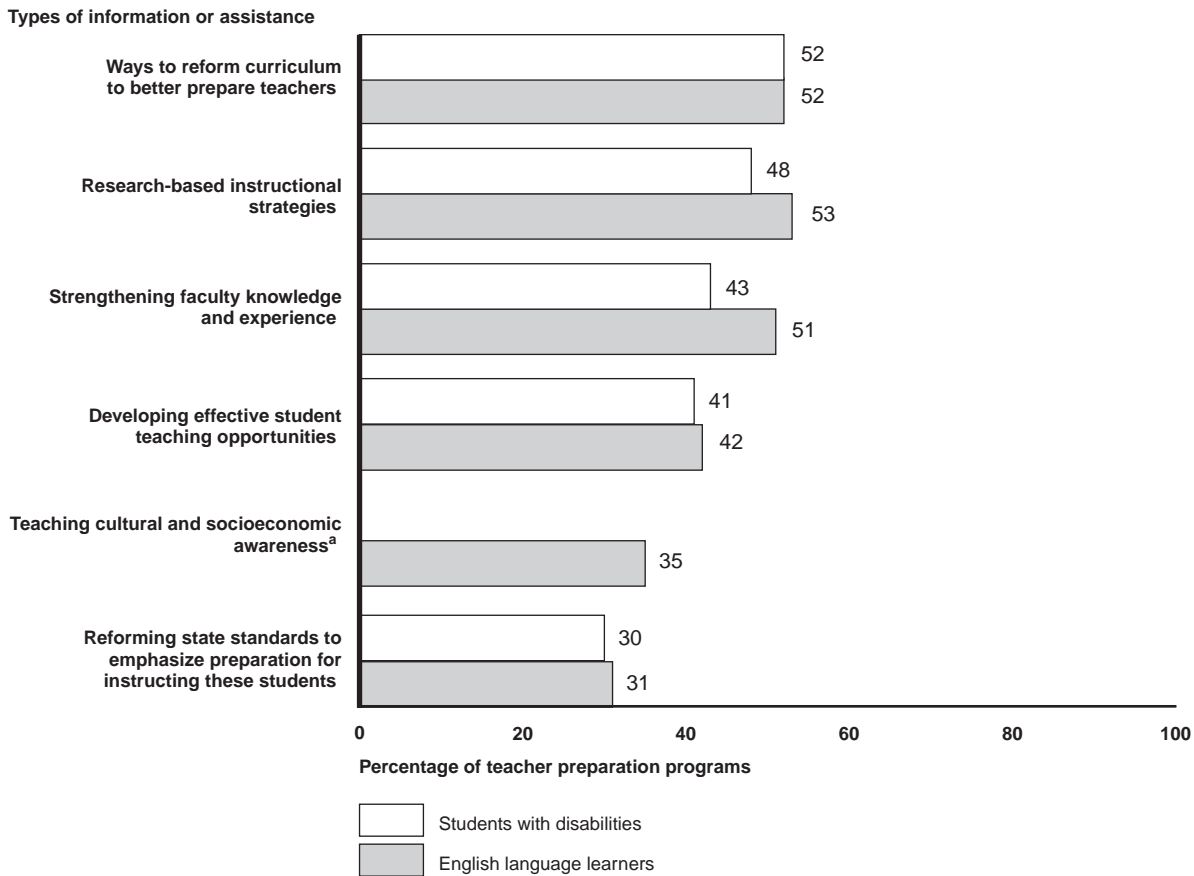


Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

While some institutions reported receiving support from state agencies and Education, approximately half of the teacher preparation programs indicated they could benefit from additional information or assistance. According to our survey results, during the 2007-2008 academic year, an estimated 64 percent of institutions received assistance from state agencies in preparing teachers to work with students with disabilities, and 53 percent received assistance in preparing teachers to work with English language learners. Examples of assistance from state agencies included providing information on research-based practices or sponsoring a

statewide conference. An estimated 40 percent of these institutions received assistance from Education in preparing teachers to work with these student subgroups. Examples cited by these institutions of assistance provided to them by Education include grant funding, Web sites, conferences, and other published materials from Education. As shown in figure 12, an estimated 50 percent of institutions would greatly benefit from information or assistance, specifically in the areas of reforming curricula and identifying research-based instructional strategies for both student subgroups, as well as strengthening faculty knowledge of and experience specifically with English language learners. Finally, when asked about how the federal government could assist them in preparing teachers to work with these student subgroups, 142 of the 303 institutions that completed our survey responded to this open-ended question, and about half of the qualitative responses were related to additional funding needs. More than one-third of institutions that responded to this question expressed a need for technical assistance in the form of research, training, and other information.

Figure 12: Types of Information or Assistance Reported by Teacher Preparation Programs That Could Greatly Benefit Their Efforts to Prepare Teachers to Work with Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

^aWe asked about information and assistance on teaching cultural and socioeconomic awareness, in general, and not in relation to any particular student subgroup.

The States We Visited Set Varying Requirements for the Preparation of Teachers to Instruct Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, though All Offered Ongoing Training to Teachers and Experienced Challenges Meeting Training Needs

The four states we visited varied in their coursework and field experience requirements for teacher preparation programs for instructing students with disabilities and English language learners. In addition to setting requirements for teacher preparation programs, each of the four states and eight school districts provided training opportunities to practicing teachers for instructing these student subgroups. Nevertheless, officials said they faced challenges providing training to prospective and practicing teachers.

The States We Visited Set Varying Requirements for Preparing Teachers to Instruct Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

Coursework Requirements for Teacher Preparation Programs

The standards set by the four states we visited for teacher preparation programs required varying coursework for prospective teachers on instructing students with disabilities and English language learners. California and Nebraska prescribed specific topics related to instructing students with disabilities that must be covered by teacher preparation programs in their states. Specifically, programs in these states must cover information on types of disabilities, meeting the needs of special education students in the general classroom, and knowledge of the individualized education program process. In Georgia and Texas, state standards require that all teacher preparation programs provide coursework on students with disabilities, and Georgia specifies that at least one course must be entirely focused on students with disabilities, although the structure of

this course can vary.²⁹ California, which is home to nearly one-third of the nation's English language learners, also required specific coursework for instructing English language learners, such as tools for English language development, teaching strategies, and legal requirements, as well as requirements for coursework on student diversity. The other three states we visited also required coursework on student diversity, although only Georgia defined language as a type of diversity. Nebraska's and Texas's requirements do not specifically mention language or English language learners in the diversity requirements.³⁰ However, these three states offer teachers the opportunity to obtain additional targeted training to work with these students, often referred to as an English as a second language (ESL) endorsement.³¹

Field Experience Requirements for Teacher Preparation Programs

Among the four states we visited, only California required field experiences with both students with disabilities and English language learners. State educational officials from two of the other states explained that programs already provide or try to provide these placements, and so requiring it was unnecessary. For example, a senior official from Nebraska's teacher certification office said that the state has not considered requiring field experience with students with disabilities since programs clearly make an effort to offer these experiences for prospective teachers, as these opportunities are more universally available. However, she said that they have not made field experiences with English language learners a requirement, because so few districts have large populations of these students.

State Outreach to Teacher Preparation Programs

During our site visits, we learned of a few examples that involved each of the four states conducting outreach to teacher preparation programs on

²⁹Currently, Texas does not specify what topics on students with disabilities must be covered by teacher preparation programs. However, one senior official said that a new bill in the Texas House of Representatives (H.B. 3421) would set specific requirements for students with disabilities.

³⁰As of April 24, 2009, the Texas legislature was considering a bill that related to requiring teacher preparation programs to provide coursework on English language learners.

³¹According to state officials, 16 percent of general classroom teachers in Texas had their endorsement (as of January 2009), 7 percent of general classroom teachers in Nebraska had their endorsement (as of August 2008), and 5 percent of general classroom teachers in Georgia had their endorsement (as of October 2008). Senior officials told us that California did offer an endorsement prior to requiring teacher preparation programs to provide coursework and fieldwork on instructing English language learners. As a result of these requirements, only veteran teachers and teachers trained outside the state who have not received instruction on English language learners must get their endorsement.

preparing prospective teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. For example, Georgia's state educational agency convened both special and general education faculty members to discuss issues related to preparing prospective teachers to instruct students with disabilities. In Texas, as part of an annual meeting for institutions of higher education that received federal grant funding to improve teacher quality, the state agency for higher education recently presented effective instructional strategies to higher education faculty for math and science teachers to use with English language learners.

Each State and School District We Visited Provided Assistance to Practicing Teachers for Instructing Both Student Subgroups

State and District Assistance for Practicing Teachers with Students with Disabilities

In addition to support for prospective teachers, each of the four state educational agencies and the eight school districts we visited provided training to practicing general classroom teachers on instructing students with disabilities. At the state level, assistance provided to general classroom teachers focused on special education initiatives designed for use in the general classroom. For example, all four states told us about initiatives that focused on meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms through Response to Intervention and co-teaching.³² Response to Intervention helps general classroom teachers, as part of a multidisciplinary team effort, to identify struggling learners and adapt to their learning styles, while co-teaching involves pairing a general classroom teacher with a special education teacher. California and Georgia both reported developing written guidance and training on co-teaching for use at the local level by teachers and administrators. Three of the state educational agencies we spoke with also offered online resources such as links to various Education-funded technical assistance centers and grant-related information, including

³²States reported that some of these initiatives were funded through IDEA and ESEA Title II state set-aside funds. State set-aside funds are a small percentage of these large formula grant programs that are meant to be used for statewide initiatives, whereas most of the funds from these programs pass through states to local educational agencies.

State and District Assistance
for Practicing Teachers with
English Language Learners

federal formula funding under ESEA and IDEA that can be used to help general classroom teachers in instructing students with disabilities.

Conversely, many of the district officials and school administrators we spoke with said they primarily focused on meeting the needs of their special education teachers, but support was typically available to general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities through instructional coaches hired by the districts or special education personnel at the individual schools. Overall, general classroom teachers we spoke with said they relied on assistance from special education teachers within their schools, and several schools mentioned having co-teaching arrangements in place. Finally, three of the districts reported requiring training for general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities. For example, one district in Nebraska required all elementary teachers to take training on Response to Intervention. Nationwide, an Education-funded survey found that almost all school districts provided professional development for teachers with at least some emphasis on instructional strategies for students with individualized education programs under IDEA.³³

Consistent with the assistance provided to help teachers instruct students with disabilities, all four of our selected states held statewide conferences or trainings offered by the state or through regional educational service centers to help general classroom teachers instruct English language learners. State officials reported that these trainings focused on implementing statewide English language development standards and assessments, as well as specific content areas and grade levels. For example, Texas has for nearly 20 years offered an annual statewide symposium on the instruction of English language learners at the secondary level. Another example is the California Subject Matter Project, a network of 15 regional professional development providers that offers training and technical assistance to school districts, individual schools, and teachers on instructional techniques for English language learners in specific content areas, such as math and science.³⁴ National data obtained

³³The survey data do not specify to what extent the professional development was provided to general classroom teachers. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Volume III—Accountability Under NCLB: Interim Report* (Washington, D.C., 2007).

³⁴State officials reported that this effort was funded through ESEA Title II state set-aside funding.

by Education found that for the 2005-2006 school year, 42 out of 49 states that responded, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, reported offering professional development to mainstream teachers who instruct English language learners.³⁵ In addition, three of the four states we visited reported providing online resources that can be accessed by general classroom teachers, such as written guidance and online training on best practices for instructing this student subgroup.

The eight districts we visited, most of which had higher concentrations of English language learners than the average district in their state, offered training opportunities and hired instructional coaches to provide individualized support to general classroom teachers with these students. School districts reported either providing training directly to teachers or helping them access training from other entities. For example, teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District participated in an Education-funded program through a local institution of higher education, which provided training on instructional strategies and required teachers to visit the homes of their students with limited English proficiency to gain a better understanding of the students' cultural backgrounds. Nationwide, an Education-funded survey found that approximately 50 percent of districts provided professional development for teachers with at least some emphasis on instructional strategies for students with limited English proficiency.³⁶

A number of the school districts we visited also encouraged teachers to earn an ESL endorsement by paying for the course or offering financial incentives after teachers received their endorsement. Four districts required general classroom teachers to receive training to better prepare them to instruct English language learners. For example, a Texas district requires teachers trained through alternative routes to receive a supplemental ESL certification. Several of the districts we visited used ESEA Title I, Title II, and Title III funding to hire English language learner instructional coaches and related personnel who could assist all teachers

³⁵See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Volume III—Accountability Under NCLB: Interim Report*.

³⁶The survey data do not specify to what extent the professional development was provided to general classroom teachers. See U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, *State and Local Implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act, Volume III—Accountability Under NCLB: Interim Report*.

with instructional strategies, cultural issues, and other areas. Many of the teachers we spoke with reported relying on these personnel to assist them. At the individual school level, we also learned of schoolwide approaches to ensure that content is accessible to all students. For example, teachers in an elementary school we visited in Nebraska used visual tools to help students struggling with English by depicting illustrations of concepts that may be difficult to comprehend in writing.

We noted some differences in the type of assistance provided for either subgroup depending on the size of the district.³⁷ In general, the smaller districts we visited made training available to their teachers through regional educational service centers and state educational agencies, in addition to institutions of higher education. Larger school districts we visited typically offered their own districtwide training for teachers, while still using resources offered by their state educational agency or institutions of higher education.

State Educational Agencies and School Districts Reported Challenges Ensuring That Practicing Teachers Are Prepared to Instruct Both Subgroups

State officials and, at the local level, district officials and school administrators we spoke with said that general classroom teachers were generally unprepared to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners due to three key challenges: (1) limited exposure to these subgroups in teacher preparation programs, (2) funding and time to train practicing teachers, and (3) identifying instructional strategies for both student subgroups. A number of state and school district officials expressed a desire for a stronger focus in teacher preparation programs on preparing teachers to instruct both subgroups. For example, some state and school district officials both reported wanting more preparation for prospective teachers on differentiating instruction for diverse educational needs, co-teaching with special education personnel when working with students with disabilities, implementing Response to Intervention for monitoring students at risk for poor learning outcomes, and understanding and instructing different cultures. Several of the school district officials noted that new teachers often require additional training or assistance to work with these subgroups.

³⁷In each state, we visited two school districts. The districts, within each state, had large differences in the size of their student body, with one being classified by us as small and one being classified as large.

Specifically, at the school district level, another challenge frequently cited by school district officials, administrators, and teachers in each state was identifying available funding and finding time for teachers to attend useful training sessions. District officials said that teachers can receive training during or after the regular workday, or during the summer, but all of these times have disadvantages. For example, releasing teachers for training during regular work hours incurs costs for substitute teachers, which states and districts said is challenging because of limited funding and competing priorities. Also, training in the summer and after hours is not always feasible due to contracts and personal schedules. One principal said that scheduling training during the summer is difficult because teachers are not required to attend. Teachers at one school said they struggle to participate in training outside the workday because it is difficult to fit into their schedules. Some school districts we spoke with were addressing these challenges by asking teachers who receive training to hold information-sharing sessions with other teachers in their school, and by arranging training opportunities at individual schools where teachers might be more likely to participate because of reduced time and travel burdens.

Additional challenges, particularly in instructing English language learners were identified by a number of school district officials, administrators, and teachers, including the need for more information on instructional strategies, assessing student progress, and understanding cultural issues. At the individual schools we visited, general classroom teachers and administrators we spoke with identified the need for instructional strategies specifically to address challenges in instructing English language learners, such as adjusting instruction to meet the varying needs of students, assessing each student's ability to understand content, and teaching students when their schooling is interrupted due to family mobility. A number of administrators and teachers discussed the challenges they face in understanding the numerous cultures represented by their students as well as communicating with families who have limited English proficiency. We also learned of some unique challenges for teachers at the secondary level who instruct English language learners. For example, officials in one of the states explained that instructing English language learners at the secondary level is challenging because the students must make tremendous gains in both complex content and language in a relatively short time to meet graduation requirements. Some of these students have arrived to the country recently or have limited formal education. Officials in one district noted that these students may become frustrated with learning a new language, and teachers struggle to understand their cultural differences. In addition, because students spend

time with different teachers for different content areas at the secondary level, teachers have difficulty coordinating their instruction for English language learner students.

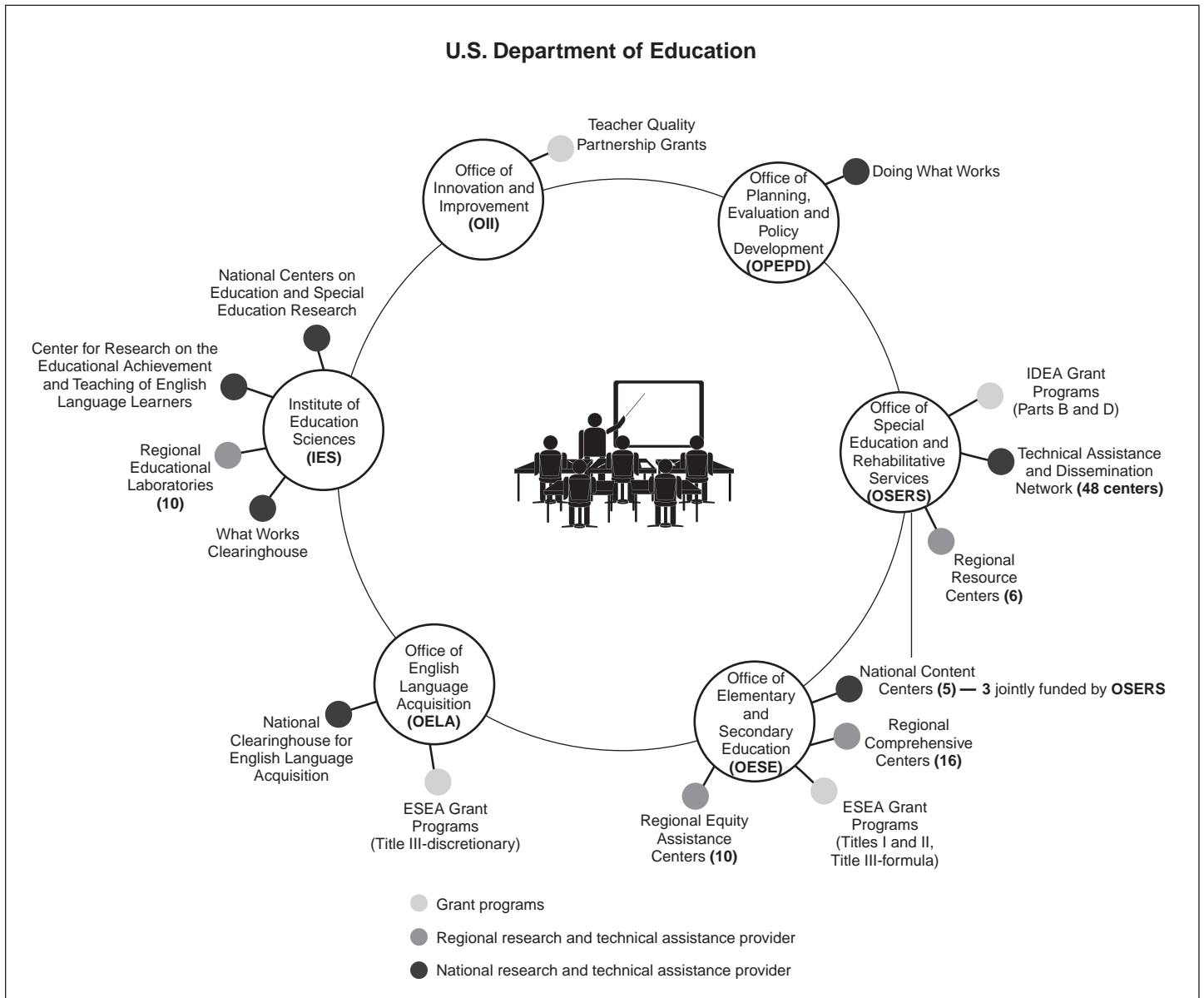
Multiple Education Offices Provide Assistance to Help Teachers Instruct Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, but No Systematic Coordination Exists among These Offices

Six Education offices provide financial support and oversee about 100 regional and national research and technical assistance providers that can work at the state and local levels to help general classroom teachers instruct students with disabilities and English language learners.³⁸ However, no departmentwide mechanism exists within Education to ensure that all relevant offices work together to maximize the department's contributions toward preparing teachers to effectively instruct these student subgroups. The grant programs and research and technical assistance providers overseen by these offices are shown in figure 13 and are discussed in more detail in the following sections.³⁹

³⁸Three of the six offices oversee grant programs, as well as regional or national research and technical assistance providers. Two offices oversee regional or national research and technical assistance providers, but no grant programs. One office oversees a grant program, but no regional or national research and technical assistance providers.

³⁹In this report, we focus on grant programs that either require or allow grantees to use some of the funds to help general classroom teachers instruct students with disabilities and English language learners.

Figure 13: Six Education Offices Oversee Grants and Regional and National Research and Technical Assistance Providers That Can Support Teacher Preparation to Instruct Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners



Sources: GAO analysis of Education documents and interviews with officials, Art Explosion (images).

Ten Grant Programs Overseen by Four Education Offices Can Help Teachers Instruct These Student Subgroups

Ten grant programs administered by four Education offices either require or allow grantees to use some of the funds to help general classroom teachers instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. Most of the funding focuses on training practicing teachers already in the classroom rather than prospective teachers, although none of the programs specifically tracks the use of funds to prepare general classroom teachers to instruct either of these subgroups. Four different Education offices—the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), and Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), and the Office of Innovation and Improvement (OII)—oversee these grants, each with a respective specific focus on elementary and secondary education generally, special education, English language acquisition, or innovative educational practices. See table 2 for a description of the 10 programs we identified within these four offices.

Table 2: Ten Federal Programs Provide Funding That Can Be Used to Prepare General Classroom Teachers to Work with Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

Program name and legislative authority	Education office	Subgroup targeted	Purpose	Fiscal year 2009 appropriations (in millions) and type of funding
Require at least some funds to be used to prepare or train teachers to instruct one of these subgroups				
English Language Acquisition State Grants, Title III, Part A, ESEA	OESE	English language learners	To improve the education of English language learners by helping them learn English and meet state academic content and student academic achievement standards. Some of the funds must be used to support high-quality professional development for classroom teachers. ^a	\$677.6 Formula ^b
Teacher Quality Partnership Grants, Title II, HEA	OII	All students	To improve student achievement and the quality of prospective and new teachers by improving the preparation of prospective teachers and enhancing professional development activities for new teachers. The program also holds teacher preparation programs at institutions of higher education accountable for preparing highly qualified teachers and supports recruiting highly qualified individuals, including minorities and individuals from other occupations, into the teaching force.	50.0 ^c Competitive ^d

Program name and legislative authority	Education office	Subgroup targeted	Purpose	Fiscal year 2009 appropriations (in millions) and type of funding
Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination, Part D, IDEA	OSERS	Students with disabilities	To promote academic achievement and improve results for children with disabilities by providing technical assistance, model demonstration projects, and dissemination of information, and implementation of activities that are supported by scientifically based research.	48.5 Competitive
English Language Acquisition National Professional Development Project, Title III, Part A, ESEA	OELA	English language learners	To support preparation for prospective teachers and professional development activities for education personnel working with English language learners.	41.8 Competitive
Allow funds to be used to prepare or train teachers to instruct one of these subgroups				
Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies, Title I, Part A, ESEA	OESE	All students	To provide assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards.	14,492.4 ^g Formula
Special Education-Grants to States, Part B, IDEA	OSERS	Students with disabilities	To assist states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, freely associated states, and outlying areas in meeting the costs of providing special education and related services to children with disabilities.	11,505.2 ^f Formula
Improving Teacher Quality State Grants, Title II, Part A, ESEA	OESE	All students	To increase academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality.	2,947.7 Formula ^g
Special Education-Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities, Part D, IDEA	OSERS	Students with disabilities	To help address state-identified needs for highly qualified personnel in special education, related services, early intervention, and regular education to work with children with disabilities, and to ensure that those personnel have the skills and knowledge needed to serve these children.	90.7 Competitive
Special Education-State Personnel Development Grants Program, Part D, IDEA	OSERS	Students with disabilities	To assist state educational agencies in reforming and improving their systems for personnel preparation and professional development in early intervention, educational, and transitional services in order to improve results for children with disabilities.	48.0 Competitive

Program name and legislative authority	Education office	Subgroup targeted	Purpose	Fiscal year 2009 appropriations (in millions) and type of funding
Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program, Title III, Part A, ESEA	OELA	English language learners	To develop high levels of academic attainment in English, and to promote parental and community participation in language instruction educational programs. Some of the funds must be used to support high-quality professional development for classroom teachers.	5.0 Competitive

Sources: GAO analysis of Education documentation. Budget information from fiscal year 2009 budget appropriations and Education's *Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Summary and Background Information*.

^aThis program includes teachers in classroom settings that are not the settings of language instructional education programs in its definition of classroom teachers.

^bThe eligible recipients for the formula grant programs in this table are state educational agencies, which then pass much of the funding through to local educational agencies.

^cThe Teacher Quality Partnership Grant program received an additional \$100 million for fiscal year 2009 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act, Pub. L. No. 111-5), signed into law on February 17, 2009. Funds from the Recovery Act are not reflected in this table.

^dEligible recipients for many of the competitive grant programs in the table include institutions of higher education, state educational agencies, local educational agencies, or nonprofit organizations, sometimes in consortia or partnerships with each other.

^eThe Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies program received an additional \$10 billion through the Recovery Act for fiscal year 2009.

^fThe Special Education—Grants to States program received an additional \$11.3 billion through the Recovery Act for fiscal year 2009.

^gOf the overall funding for Title II, Part A, 2.5 percent—roughly \$74 million—went to the state agency for higher education in each state to run a competitive statewide partnership grants program.

While together these programs provided nearly \$30 billion, excluding funds from the Recovery Act, none of the programs specifically tracked the extent to which grantees use these funds to prepare general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, and several of the programs' proposed designs suggested the funding used for this purpose was a relatively small portion of the overall funding available. For example, the two largest programs under the ESEA—the Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (Title I, Part A) and Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program (Title II, Part A)—are large, multibillion dollar formula grant programs designed to provide flexibility to states and school districts to address their needs in a variety of areas and benefit a wide range of students. While these two programs had fiscal year 2004 appropriations of \$12.3 billion for Title I, Part A and \$2.9 billion for Title II, Part A, Education reported that the districts spent 8 percent and 18 percent of these funds, respectively, for professional development in 2004-2005. Officials emphasized that professional development funds are used to train practicing teachers in a wide range of topic areas, which may include

helping general classroom teachers instruct these student subgroups. Based on our interviews with state and school district officials in the four states we visited, we learned that funds from these programs allowed school districts to assist teachers working with students with disabilities and English language learners. Examples included hiring educational coaches to work with general classroom teachers, paying for substitute teachers to allow teachers to attend training sessions, and providing support for statewide conferences.

Of the 10 grant programs we identified, 3 specifically targeted English language learners; 4 targeted students with disabilities; and the remaining 3 benefited all students, including those in these two student subgroups. The programs targeting English language learners aimed to prepare any teacher working with this subgroup. State educational and school district officials we met with who received funding from the largest of the three programs that targeted English language learners—the English Language Acquisition State Grants program—provided examples of how they used these funds to support general classroom teachers. This support included stipends for teachers to attend relevant workshops, hiring bilingual and cultural liaisons to work individually with teachers, and districtwide training sessions. In support of instruction for students with disabilities, OSERS’s Special Education Technical Assistance and Dissemination program specifies funds to be used to provide training for both general education and special education teachers, among other required uses. The grantees disseminate research and provide technical assistance on a wide range of special education topics. Several of the grantees we spoke with reported providing information both online and through in-person workshops that can benefit general classroom teachers. Similarly, the Special Education-State Personnel Development Grant Program requires 90 percent of funds to be spent on personnel preparation and professional development related to instructing students with disabilities; while general classroom teachers can benefit from the activities, Education officials emphasized the main purpose of the program is to prepare prospective and practicing special education teachers. California reported using this funding to support a program that helps teachers address behavioral issues for the general education curricula, and Georgia provided support to middle and secondary level math teachers to improve instruction to students with disabilities.

While most of the overall funding supports practicing teachers already in the classroom, rather than preparing prospective teachers at the teacher preparation level, three of the grant programs—which accounted for approximately \$183 million—either require or allow funding to prepare

prospective teachers to instruct these subgroups. (See table 3 for information on which programs required or allowed funding to prepare prospective teachers to instruct these subgroups.) For example, the HEA Teacher Quality Partnership Grant program, as amended by HEOA, requires grantees to prepare prospective teachers to meet the specific learning needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. Similarly, in its fiscal year 2007 request for proposals, the English Language Acquisition National Professional Development Project invited proposals from teacher education programs on ways to improve their programs to better prepare prospective teachers to provide instruction to English language learners, among other goals. According to a senior program official, about half of the applicants responded to this priority.

Table 3: Funding Required or Allowed to Prepare or Train Prospective or Practicing Teachers

Program name	Students with disabilities		English language learners	
	Funding for prospective teachers	Funding for practicing teachers	Funding for prospective teachers	Funding for practicing teachers
ESEA				
Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies	—	Allowed	—	Allowed
Improving Teacher Quality State Grants	—	Allowed	—	Allowed
English Language Acquisition State Grants	—	—	—	Required
English Language Acquisition National Professional Development Project	—	—	Allowed	Required
Native American and Alaska Native Children in School Program	—	—	—	Allowed
HEA				
Teacher Quality Partnership Grants	Required	—	Required	—
IDEA				
Special Education-Grants to States	—	Allowed	—	—
Special Education-Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities	Allowed	Allowed	—	—
Special Education-National Activities-Technical Assistance and Dissemination	—	Required	—	—
Special Education-State Personnel Development Grant Program	—	Allowed	—	—

Source: GAO analysis of Education documentation.

Education Oversees Numerous Regional and National Providers That Offer Assistance to Prospective and Practicing Teachers for Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners

In addition to grants for teacher preparation and training, a number of Education offices support regional and national research institutions and technical assistance providers offering help to policymakers and educators at the state and local levels. Specifically, three different program offices support four types of regional technical assistance providers that can help general classroom teachers instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, among other activities (see app. II for more information on the regional research and technical assistance centers we interviewed).

Regional Research and Technical Assistance Providers

- **Regional comprehensive centers:** Supported by OESE to work with state educational agencies to help increase state capacity to assist regional education agencies, school districts, and individual schools in meeting their student achievement goals. While the regional comprehensive centers are designed to work with state educational agencies, they can assist general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities or English language learners if requested by states. For example, one regional comprehensive center we spoke with has developed a training course for general classroom teachers on instructing English language learners, which trains small teams involving teachers and their principal, and the information is expected to be shared with colleagues in the home schools. We also spoke with some of the teachers who attended the training, who reported that it was the first time the school obtained a practical and useful manual on how to instruct English language learners. An administrator who was involved in the program also commented that his involvement helped teachers effectively share the strategies they learned with their colleagues.
- **Regional equity assistance centers:** Supported by OESE to work with school districts and other responsible government entities to ensure that their policies and procedures provide equitable opportunities for all students, regardless of race or national origin. Most of the centers we interviewed provided training on instructional strategies for English language learners. For example, one equity assistance center conducted a session for one state's local regional educational service centers on classroom strategies for English language learners that the service center could then pass on to school districts in its region.
- **Regional resource centers:** Supported by OSERS to assist state and local educational agencies in the development and implementation of performance plans and measurement systems based on indicators established by the office. While this may include helping states prepare

general classroom teachers for instructing students with disabilities, it is not a stated priority for these centers. In general, the regional resource centers we interviewed reported that their main focus is on assisting state educational agencies to develop and implement performance plans for serving students with disabilities, and that any direct work with general classroom teachers is tangential. However, one regional resource center we spoke with reported that the increased focus on Response to Intervention has focused its work more on general classroom teachers.

- Regional educational laboratories: Supported by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to provide policymakers, administrators, and teachers with expert advice, training, and technical assistance on how to interpret the latest findings from scientifically valid research pertaining to the requirements of ESEA. In instances in which scientific evidence is not available, the regional educational laboratories conduct applied research and development projects. For example, one regional educational laboratory is performing a study on whether using materials specifically written for English language learners increases student achievement. The laboratories' work is based on requests from states and school districts. None of the laboratories we spoke with focused on providing training or technical assistance directly to general classroom teachers. The research conducted by these centers is made publicly available through Education and individual laboratory Web sites.

In addition, several Education offices oversee numerous national research and technical assistance providers that can assist teacher preparation programs, state educational agencies, and those working at the school district level with research, policy, and effective instructional practices for teaching students with disabilities and English language learners. These centers focus on a wide range of education issues and serve different target audiences (see app. III for more information on the national research and technical assistance centers we interviewed).

National Research and Technical Assistance Providers

- OESE supports five national content centers with expertise on specific issues facing educators. These centers primarily support the regional comprehensive centers in their efforts to work with states. Three of the centers—the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, the Center on Instruction, and the National High School Center—are jointly funded with OSERS and thus focus some of their activities on students with disabilities.

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- OSERS supports a network of more than 40 national technical assistance centers, each with a focus on some aspect of special education. For example, two of the centers—the National Center on Response to Intervention and the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports—focus, respectively, on strategies to identify struggling learners and implement appropriate interventions in the general classroom setting and strategies to develop schoolwide disciplinary practices. In addition, the IRIS Center for Training Enhancements provides case studies and interactive online training modules that include video scenarios to allow users to see teachers engaging in various strategies to meet the needs of students with disabilities. These materials are publicly available online and are accessed by entities such as institutions of higher education, state educational agencies, and school districts.
 - OELA oversees the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, which is tasked with assisting states to implement Title III of ESEA and increasing their capacity to improve English language learner achievement. Through its Web site, the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition provides resources for teachers on many aspects of the English language learner population and links to lesson plans and classroom techniques suitable for both specialists and general classroom teachers. The clearinghouse also helps state educational agencies with collecting and reporting data in compliance with ESEA Title III, and works with states to implement standards and assessments for these students. In addition, OELA supports the Limited English Proficiency Partnership, which provides a wide array of services and products to assist teachers in instructing English language learners.
 - IES administers a national resource for administrators and educators, the What Works Clearinghouse, which assesses research on the effectiveness of programs, products, practices, and policies so that educators are able to make informed decisions. The What Works Clearinghouse also produces practice guides for educators that address instructional challenges with research-based recommendations for schools and classrooms, which has included a practice guide focused on strategies for instructing English language learners and two recently issued guides on Response to Intervention. IES also administers the Education Resources Information Center, an online database of millions of published materials that Education has provided for the last 35 years, which officials said can be a valuable resource, especially for teacher preparation programs. In addition, IES oversees the National Research and Development Centers program, which includes the Center for Research on the Educational

Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners, a national center primarily focused on research. Finally, IES funds and disseminates research through its National Center for Education Research and the National Center for Special Education Research, which can include research on preparing prospective and practicing teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners.

- The Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD) manages Doing What Works, a Web site that translates What Works Clearinghouse practice guides into practical plans for teachers and local school districts. The Web site includes a tutorial to help teachers instruct English language learners and is currently in the process of developing modules on Response to Intervention for both math and reading.

Most of the regional and national providers of research and technical assistance we interviewed focus on support to benefit practicing teachers already in the classroom, rather than prospective teachers enrolled in teacher preparation programs. Only one of the national providers we spoke with specifically focuses on teacher preparation programs, and it had recently expanded its focus to practicing teachers under its latest contract. However, a few providers reported that teacher preparation programs likely use their materials, even if the provider's interaction with these programs was not the main focus of their work. For example, while not the main focus of the center, one research center that focuses on the instruction of English language learners reported that its research has tangentially influenced teacher preparation programs through its partnerships with faculty at institutions of higher education.

Despite these research and technical assistance providers' outreach activities, most teachers and administrators in the eight school districts we visited said they were unaware of many of the resources available. Some providers reported conducting outreach primarily to states, relying on state educational agencies to disseminate resources or information about their services to the local level. Several providers also reported some efforts to disseminate information through conference presentations, e-mail lists, and regular newsletters directly to all interested parties. However, we heard from a number of teachers and administrators that they had limited awareness of these Education-funded resources. Some said they did not have the time to review all of the available resources to find relevant materials. Education officials acknowledged the challenges faced in disseminating information broadly and reported recent improvements. For example, Doing What Works, which is focused on

providing practical information to teachers, reported plans to increase its outreach efforts to classroom teachers as its available resources increase, and OSERS has funded a center to assist its entire provider network with disseminating information.

A Departmentwide Mechanism for Coordinating the Relevant Activities of These Multiple Offices within Education Could Ensure the Most Efficient Use of Resources

Six offices within Education, each with its own subject matter focus and priorities, oversee the multiple grant programs and regional and national technical assistance providers that can support general classroom teachers' efforts to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners.

Officials from each of the six Education offices that administer grant programs and other assistance related to preparing teachers for instructing students with disabilities and English language learners reported that some offices coordinate on individual efforts. For example, OSERS and OESE jointly fund and oversee the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality, the National Center on Response to Intervention, and the Center on Instruction. OPEPD has also made efforts to coordinate with other Education offices, particularly with IES. Specifically, OPEPD has modified the contract for its Doing What Works initiative—from an initiative that performs its own research to produce teacher training modules to one that develops and disseminates modules demonstrating teaching strategies based on empirical research performed by IES. This effort has helped to make IES's research available on a practical level to practicing general classroom teachers who instruct students with disabilities and English language learners; however, Education officials noted that the publicly available information may also be used by prospective teachers and their instructors within teacher preparation programs.

Coordination among and within select Education offices also extends to the regional and national technical assistance providers they oversee. For example, OSERS and OESE collaborate on an annual conference that convenes the regional and national technical assistance providers they fund to discuss best practices and opportunities for increased coordination with respect to specific issues related to students with disabilities. As a result of the conference, the regional equity assistance centers, regional comprehensive centers, and regional resource centers from the Northeast and relevant national technical assistance providers have planned and implemented collaborative initiatives, such as a joint survey of regional needs in implementing Response to Intervention. Education officials told us that a similar initiative has also been launched in the North Central region. Officials from these technical assistance

providers reported that this collaboration has led to a more efficient use of resources, a better understanding of all technical assistance programs existing in the region, and an opportunity to present a unified message to the state educational agencies with whom they work. In addition, OSERS established the Technical Assistance Coordination Center in fiscal year 2008 to promote better coordination among its 48 regional and national technical assistance providers and better information dissemination. Finally, the National Dissemination Center, also funded by OSERS, is developing a Web site that will allow the public to search the Web sites of all technical assistance providers within OSERS's Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network, as well as OESE's comprehensive centers and regional equity assistance centers.

Education has also begun new coordination efforts related to the Recovery Act that involve multiple offices, although these efforts do not currently focus on assistance to prepare general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. Given that the Recovery Act provides funds to improve teacher effectiveness, Education officials said that this presents an opportunity to coordinate the department's resources to improve teacher quality. Specifically, Education officials said that they recently initiated coordination efforts to address the Recovery Act requirements related to teachers by forming a team made up of representatives from several program offices and led by the Secretary's advisors.

Despite some coordination efforts among select offices and prior efforts to coordinate, Education currently lacks a departmentwide mechanism to ensure that activities administered through these various offices coordinate their contributions generally, and their activities to prepare general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, specifically. Many officials within the program offices we spoke with highlighted a prior effort to coordinate among offices involved in teacher quality that convened regular meetings of all relevant program offices. Officials reported that these meetings apprised them of what other Education offices were doing with regard to professional development for teachers. One research office reported they shared the information they gathered from the field immediately, rather than waiting for a report to be issued, which helped offices tailor their programs to be current, rather than lagging behind their needs. Officials we spoke with said this working group was disbanded due to changing priorities within Education.

Most of the officials we spoke with in the offices that play a role in supporting general classroom teachers to instruct students with

disabilities and English language learners noted the potential value of a departmentwide mechanism for regular coordination among offices to increase their effectiveness. Officials said systematic coordination among Education offices related to teacher preparation for these student subgroups could help at every phase of the grant cycle, allowing offices to get relevant offices' input into requests for proposals or guidance it planned to issue. Another official stated that a departmentwide mechanism would help Education offices share information, so that offices that may have less experience working with these student subgroups can better understand and address their needs. For example, with the 2008 reauthorization of HEA, OII's Teacher Quality Partnership Grant program now requires a focus on preparing general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners, for which OSERS's and OELA's expertise would be valuable. Officials noted that coordinating with other offices could enable program offices to benefit from the information obtained by Education's relevant research institutions, such as those overseen by IES. One official stated that a lack of coordination among relevant offices can lead to a loss in capacity because information is not as readily shared, particularly for cross-cutting issues such as preparing general classroom teachers for students with disabilities and English language learners. Several officials also emphasized the need for support from top management officials for departmentwide coordination among offices because, without this support, coordination is likely to become less of a priority for the offices.

Our findings are similar to those of a related July 2009 report on Education's teacher quality initiatives.⁴⁰ For example, we said in that report that teacher quality activities within Education are overseen by nine different program offices with little sustained coordination and no strategy for working systematically across program lines. The report recommended that the Secretary of Education establish and implement a strategy for sustained coordination among existing departmental offices and programs to aid information and resource sharing, and strengthen linkages among its efforts to help improve teacher quality. In its response to a draft of that report, Education said that it would consider forming a cross-program group focused on teacher quality, but also pointed out that such efforts do not always prove useful, indicating that it favors short-term, issue-specific

⁴⁰See GAO, *Sustained Coordination among Key Federal Education Programs Could Enhance State Efforts to Improve Teacher Quality*, [GAO-09-593](#) (Washington, D.C.: July 6, 2009).

coordination. In our response to Education in that report, while acknowledging that the department faces some challenges to coordination, we emphasized that we continue to believe that Education needs to develop a strategy for sustained coordination to ensure that different offices routinely become involved in sharing information and resources, as well as facilitating linkages among teacher quality improvement efforts.

Our past work and other federal guidance has highlighted the importance of coordination to deliver results more efficiently in light of limited resources and multiple demands. As we have previously reported, uncoordinated program efforts can waste scarce funds, confuse and frustrate program customers, and limit the overall effectiveness of the program.⁴¹ We have also reported that leadership and organizational culture are necessary elements for a collaborative working relationship, emphasizing that committed leadership from all levels of the organization is needed to overcome barriers to coordination. In addition, the Government Performance and Results Act offers a structured means, through the development of strategic plans and performance reports, for identifying multiple programs—within and outside the agency—that contribute to the same or similar goals and for describing coordination efforts to ensure that goals are consistent and program efforts are mutually reinforcing.⁴²

Conclusions

Education's performance plan outlines its goals for providing all children in this country, including students with disabilities and English language learners, with qualified teachers and the education they need to meet challenging academic standards. At the same time that increased attention is being paid to the academic achievement of students in these subgroups, many of them spend a large proportion of their day in general classrooms, rather than in special, separate classes. This places increased emphasis on effectively preparing general classroom teachers who may instruct these students to help them meet achievement goals. While federal grants, research, and technical assistance that can be used to support teachers in achieving these goals are available, the management and oversight of this assistance is spread among numerous Education offices. While some of these offices have

⁴¹See GAO, *Managing for Results: Building on Agencies' Strategic Plans to Improve Federal Management*, [GAO/T-GGD/AIMD-98-29](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 30, 1997).

⁴²See GAO, *Results Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, [GAO-06-15](#) (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

recently increased coordination in some areas, coordination among all relevant offices to share information and expertise related to students with disabilities and English language learners in the general classroom does not occur on a regular basis. As a result, Education offices may not fully benefit from the expertise and experiences available departmentwide to assist teachers in instructing these students, which could potentially limit program effectiveness and prevent the most efficient use of resources.

Greater coordination among Education offices is especially relevant in light of Congress's new focus, through HEOA, on preparing prospective teachers for instructing these subgroups, and the Recovery Act, which substantially increased funding for teacher preparation programs and for states and school districts to assist prospective and already practicing teachers. Attention to coordination among relevant offices specifically focused on assisting general classroom teachers in instructing students with disabilities and English language learners is warranted and needs to come from Education's leadership to ensure support for such an effort and help it endure. More systematic coordination focused on the ultimate goal of making progress in academic achievement for students with disabilities and English language learners in the general classroom would complement increased emphasis on coordination among Education offices involved in teacher quality efforts, as we recommended in our related July 2009 report.

Recommendation for Executive Action

We recommend that the Secretary of Education develop and implement a departmentwide mechanism to ensure more systematic coordination among Education's offices that oversee grant programs, research, and technical assistance that can help prospective and practicing teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners in the general classroom.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

We provided a draft of this report to Education for review and comment. Education's comments are reproduced in appendix IV. In its comments, Education agreed that coordination is beneficial and noted that it will explore the benefits of creating a mechanism to ensure more systematic coordination. More specifically, Education will review the advisability of forming a cross-program committee, but it would first want to ensure that such a group would lead to improvements in the way Education and its grantees implement programs that promote teacher quality. It added that, in the department's experience, creating an intradepartmental committee

for the sole purpose of coordinating agency activities or sharing information across offices is not always useful, indicating a preference for bringing different offices together to work on discrete issues when such action is needed. Education commented that it had recently increased coordination efforts among multiple program offices to address new Recovery Act requirements and, as the work of that team evolves, it will likely make more sense to have it look at issues related to the teaching of students with disabilities and English language learners than to establish a separate coordination body focused narrowly on that area. We revised our report to reflect Education's new Recovery Act coordination efforts. Education also provided technical comments that we incorporated into the report as appropriate.

As we indicated in our conclusions, we believe that more systematic departmentwide coordination is warranted at this time for several reasons, including the new focus through HEOA on preparing prospective teachers for these students and new Recovery Act funding available to states and school districts. However, we do not specify the particular method by which Education should address this issue. Education should use its knowledge of past efforts and existing barriers to explore various mechanisms for sharing expertise and information among relevant offices. For example, these could include building upon existing efforts, as Education noted regarding its Recovery Act coordination efforts, or exploring new ways to bring people together through electronic means or in communities of practice that facilitate sharing of expertise and information. In addition, Education could consider identifying any specific legislative requirements and other potential impediments to coordination and develop a strategy for addressing them. A key component of any coordination mechanism, as we also noted in our conclusions, is that the coordination effort should come from Education's leadership to ensure support and help it endure.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days after its issue date. At that time we will send copies of this report to the Secretary of Education, relevant congressional committees, and other interested parties. In addition, this report will also be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at <http://www.gao.gov>. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.

Sincerely yours,



Cornelia M. Ashby
Director, Education, Workforce,
and Income Security Issues

Appendix I: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our review focused on (1) the extent to which teacher preparation programs require preparation for general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners and the challenges these programs face; (2) the role selected states play in preparing general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners and their challenges; and (3) funding and other assistance the U.S. Department of Education (Education) provides to states and teacher preparation programs to help prepare general classroom teachers to instruct these student subgroups. For the purposes of this engagement, we defined general classroom teacher as a nonspecialist teacher of the general education curriculum in a mainstream classroom; we did not include special education teachers or English as a second language teachers within the scope of our research.

Survey of Teacher Preparation Programs at Institutions of Higher Education

We designed and implemented a Web-based survey to gather information on the extent to which teacher preparation programs administered by institutions of higher education require preparation for general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. The population from which we drew our sample consisted of the institutions of higher education in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. We identified these institutions from a list of teacher preparation programs that report annually to their state educational agencies, as required by the Higher Education Act (HEA). We obtained the list from Education's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) and supplemented the information with data obtained from state officials. We assessed the reliability of these data and found them to be sufficiently reliable for our purposes. Our survey was directed to deans or chairs of colleges or departments of education.

Process for Developing the Survey Instrument

To develop survey questions, we reviewed existing studies and other resources on preservice preparation for general classroom teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners. We also conducted interviews with faculty members from institutions of higher education with expertise on these issues and officials from national membership and accreditation entities for teacher preparation programs to develop an understanding of the curriculum structure for prospective elementary and secondary teachers enrolled in traditional programs and

alternative routes to certification offered by these institutions.¹ Finally, we pretested various drafts of our questionnaire with deans and chairs of colleges and departments of education at eight institutions of higher education to help ensure that the questions were clear, the terms used were precise, the questions were unbiased, and that the questionnaire could be completed in a reasonable amount of time. We modified the questionnaire to incorporate findings from each pretest.

Our survey questionnaire obtained information on required courses and field experiences, challenges facing programs in preparing general classroom teachers for these student subgroups, program improvements, and additional assistance received and needed in these areas. For the sections of our questionnaire pertaining to curricula requirements, we primarily focused on traditional programs offered by institutions of higher education that prepare elementary and secondary general classroom teachers. To a lesser extent, we also included questions on alternative routes to certification, which may also be offered by these institutions. All the institutions of higher education within our sample offered a traditional teacher preparation program for either prospective elementary or secondary teachers or both. In addition to traditional teacher preparation programs, these institutions may also administer alternative routes to certification, and table 4 provides estimates of the number of programs by type from institutions responding to our nationwide survey. Finally, given the variation in the types and structure of various teacher preparation programs, we only collected data on an institution's largest teacher preparation program for prospective elementary and secondary teachers, as well as their largest alternative route to certification program. We asked institutions to identify their largest programs as those with the highest number of program completers in the 2007-2008 academic year.²

¹Our survey only included alternative routes to certification administered by institutions of higher education. We did not include alternative routes to certification offered by other entities, such as state educational agencies, school districts, regional educational service centers, and other organizations.

²A program completer is an individual who has completed all the requirements of a state-approved teacher preparation program and is documented as having fulfilled these requirements.

Table 4: Characteristics of Teacher Preparation Programs at Institutions of Higher Education That Responded to GAO’s Survey

	Traditional programs		Alternative routes
	Elementary	Secondary	
Number of institutions	296	284	145
Percentage of total survey respondents (n = 303)	98.0%	95.9%	50.5%

Source: GAO survey of teacher preparation programs.

Data Source for Survey of Institutions of Higher Education

To survey institutions of higher education that administer teacher preparation programs, we selected a probability sample of these institutions. The universe of institutions from which we drew our sample was a 2007 list of 1,344 traditional teacher preparation programs obtained from Education’s OPE, which included all institutions of higher education that administer traditional teacher preparation programs reporting annually to their respective state, as required by Title II of HEA. Because OPE’s list did not include programs from Iowa, Montana, and Nebraska, we interviewed state officials from these states and identified an additional 57 traditional programs for our sampling frame.³ To finalize our sampling frame from this list of data from OPE and state officials, we omitted programs that were outside the scope of our research.⁴ As a result, we had a sampling frame comprised of 1,272 institutions of higher education that offer traditional teacher preparation programs. From this list, which we sorted alphabetically by state, we drew a systematic random sample of 376 institutions to participate in our survey, and we eliminated two institutions from the sample because they did not meet the definition of a traditional teacher preparation program offered by an institution of higher education.

³OPE’s list does not include state-approved programs from Iowa, Montana, and Nebraska because these states did not report the number of program completers annually to OPE in 2007. In addition, these states did not require teacher candidates to take assessments to earn certification and thus did not calculate pass rates.

⁴We omitted programs with less than 10 program completers because OPE does not consistently report pass rates for these programs. In addition, we did not include programs located in Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico.

Administration Method for Survey of Institutions of Higher Education

We conducted the survey using a Web-based, self-administered questionnaire. In the questionnaire, we asked the deans or chairs of colleges or departments of education to be the lead survey respondent and, if necessary, to confer with other faculty members within their institution to answer questions requiring more detailed knowledge. We collected contact information for these institutions by cross-referencing the list of institutions with a list obtained from a national accreditation entity for teacher preparation programs and through searches of these institutions' Web sites. Through e-mails and phone contacts, we verified the contact information provided from these resources. We sent e-mail notifications to these officials beginning on September 30, 2008. To encourage them to respond, we sent four follow-up e-mails over a period of about 8 weeks. During this time, staff and contractors made phone calls to encourage those who did not respond to complete our questionnaire. In all, 303 institutions of higher education completed the survey for a response rate of 81 percent. We performed a nonresponse analysis and found no evidence of a significant potential for nonresponse bias in our survey results. Thus, our response rate for this survey allowed us to generalize our survey results to the population of teacher preparation programs administrated by institutions of higher education.

Possible Errors Inherent in Probability Samples

Survey results based on probability samples are subject to sampling error. The sample we drew for our survey is only one of a large number of samples we might have drawn. Because different samples could have provided different estimates, we express our confidence in the precision of our particular sample results as a 95 percent confidence interval. This is the interval that would contain the actual population values for 95 percent of the samples we could have drawn. As a result, we are 95 percent confident that each of the confidence intervals in this report will include the true values in the study population. Unless otherwise noted, the margin of error associated with the confidence intervals of our survey estimates is no more than plus or minus 6 percentage points at the 95 percent level of confidence.

Efforts to Minimize Nonsampling Errors

The practical difficulties of conducting any survey may also introduce other types of errors, commonly referred to as nonsampling errors. For example, difficulties in the way a particular question is interpreted, in the sources of information that are available to respondents, or in the way the data are entered into the database or were analyzed can introduce unwanted variability into the survey results. We took steps in the development of this questionnaire, in the data collection, and in the data

analysis to minimize such errors. Specifically, a survey specialist designed the questionnaire in collaboration with staff who have subject matter expertise. Then, as previously mentioned, the draft questionnaire was pretested with eight institutions of higher education to ensure that questions were relevant, clearly stated, and easy to comprehend. The questionnaire was also reviewed by an additional survey specialist and five external experts in the fields of teacher preparation, English language acquisition, and special education. Data analysis was conducted by a data analyst working directly with staff who have subject matter expertise. When the data were analyzed, a second independent data analyst checked all computer programs for accuracy. Since this was a Web-based survey, respondents entered their answers directly into the electronic questionnaires. This eliminated the need to have the data keyed into databases, thus removing an additional source of error.

Site Visits to Selected States and School Districts

To understand the role of selected states in preparing both prospective and practicing teachers to work with students with disabilities and English language learners, we interviewed state and local officials in four states—California, Georgia, Nebraska, and Texas. We selected states that met a range of conditions, primarily focusing on states either with a high concentration of the population ages 5 to 21 years who speak English “less than very well” or that experienced growth in this population ages 5 to 17 years from 1990 and 2000, as well as geographic diversity. In addition, we took into consideration states with higher-than-average percentages of students with disabilities served under IDEA, Part B who spent more than 80 percent of their day in a general education classroom. During our site visits, we interviewed officials at state educational agencies, state agencies for higher education, and school districts, as well as principals and teachers, in these four states to understand the extent to which federal funding was used to support teacher preparation for instructing these student subgroups, the challenges they faced in ensuring that teachers are prepared to work with these students, and assistance Education provided to support teachers in instructing these students in mainstream classrooms.

Within our four selected states, we identified two school districts, or local educational agencies, for site visits (see table 5). To identify school districts for site visits, we focused on sites that had (1) partnerships with institutions of higher education as part of discretionary grants under Titles II and III of ESEA and Title II of HEA and (2) percentages of at least one of the student subgroups that were higher than the average for the state. In addition, we worked to get a range of urban and rural locations and also

took into consideration the size of the district, amount of federal formula grant funding, and recommendations from state officials of districts with high or growing concentrations of English language learners. We visited one or two individual schools in each district at the elementary and secondary levels that either partnered with an institution of higher education as part of an Education grant-funded project or was recommended by school district officials. Using a standard set of questions, we asked district officials and school administrators about their use of federal funds, challenges in ensuring that teachers are equipped to instruct these students, and assistance needed and received from state agencies and Education. In addition, we gained insight from teachers working with these students by learning about their preservice and in-service training in relation to their on-the-job experiences.

Table 5: School Districts GAO Visited in Four Selected States

School district	Location
Los Angeles Unified School District	Los Angeles, Calif.
New Hope Elementary School District	Thornton, Calif.
Gwinnett County Public Schools	Suwanee, Ga.
Houston County Schools	Perry, Ga.
Lexington Public Schools	Lexington, Nebr.
Lincoln Public Schools	Lincoln, Nebr.
Austin Independent School District	Austin, Tex.
Canutillo Independent School District	El Paso, Tex.

Source: GAO

Analysis of Education’s Survey Data

To provide additional information from state and local educational officials on a national scale, including teachers, we analyzed nationally representative survey data collected by Education through its National Longitudinal Study of No Child Left Behind (NLS-NCLB) and State Survey on the Implementation of No Child Left Behind (SSI-NCLB). The NLS-NCLB data are from a nationally representative survey of teachers, as well as of schools and school districts. The SSI-NCLB data are from surveys of state Title I and III Directors. We assessed the reliability of the NLS-NCLB and SSI-NCLB methodologies by (1) reviewing existing information and documentation about the survey data and (2) interviewing an agency official knowledgeable about the data. We found both of these surveys and methodologies to conform to generally accepted social science research standards.

Review of Education- Funded Grant Programs, Research, and Technical Assistance

To review relevant funding and other assistance provided by Education, we first compiled a list of major federal grant programs from the *2008 Guide to U.S. Department of Education Programs* that can be used to prepare general classroom teachers to work with these student subgroups. For each program, we reviewed what is known about how much of the funding was used to prepare general classroom teachers, statutory requirements, and performance goals. Based on this review, we talked with Education officials from various divisions, including the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), OPE, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), to confirm that we had identified the key programs that can be used to support teacher preparation for these student subgroups. In addition, we reviewed laws, regulations, and documents relevant to the 10 Education grant programs we identified. Due to our focus on Education's key grants and providers of research and technical assistance, there may be other programs and Education-supported entities that we did not identify that could be used to support the preparation and ongoing training of general classroom teachers for these student subgroups.

To understand how the department provides other assistance to help prepare teachers for instructing both student subgroups, we interviewed officials from selected regional and national Education-funded research and technical assistance providers (see app. II and III). To identify relevant research and technical assistance provided by Education, we identified a list of the key regional and national providers that receive funding and are overseen by various program offices departmentwide. We augmented our understanding of these providers by reviewing information from previous GAO reports; interviews with experts, state education officials, and school district officials; and the Web sites of the providers that were most relevant to our review.

Of the universe of approximately 100 national and regional providers we initially identified, we selected 15 regional and 11 national providers to interview, each of which had a major focus on either students with disabilities or English language learners or both or a major focus on teacher preparation. In selecting providers for these interviews, we worked to achieve a balance of providers that focus on each subgroup and, to the extent possible, providers that either had a focus on assisting

prospective or practicing teachers or both.⁵ We also interviewed officials from four types of regional research and technical assistance providers that receive Education funding: (1) Regional Comprehensive Centers, (2) Regional Equity Assistance Centers, (3) Regional Educational Laboratories, and (4) Regional Resource Centers. From among the regional providers, we interviewed officials from these entities that served our four selected states for a total of 15 interviews.⁶ We used a standard set of questions to ask about the extent to which national and regional providers provide assistance for prospective and practicing general classroom teachers on instructing students with disabilities and English language learners, the types of entities that access this information, and coordination with other Education-supported providers of research and technical assistance. We also collected and analyzed relevant documentation, such as requests for applications and statements of work.

⁵For those centers with a focus on students with disabilities, we used a secondary criterion to select those that did not specialize in a particular disability area (e.g., autism) and instead selected centers that focused more generally on all students with disabilities.

⁶The number of interviews conducted does not total 16 because the Southeast Regional Resource Center serves as the regional provider for two of our four selected states: Georgia and Texas.

Appendix II: Education-Funded Regional Research and Technical Assistance Providers GAO Interviewed

As shown in table 6, we identified four types of regional research and technical assistance providers—supported by three Education offices—that can assist states and school districts in preparing general classroom teachers to instruct either students with disabilities or English language learners or both student subgroups through a variety of means. We conducted interviews with officials from each of the 15 Education-funded regional research and technical assistance centers that serve the four states we visited, comprising four of each type of center, with one exception. We interviewed only three regional resource centers, as one regional resource center served two of our selected states.

Table 6: Selected Regional-Level Research and Technical Assistance Providers

Center	Group served	Education office	Target audience	Resources/assistance offered
Regional Resource Centers (6 centers)	Students with disabilities	OSERS	States	Assistance to states in developing and implementing state improvement plans for students with disabilities
Regional Comprehensive Centers (16 centers)	Both	OESE	States	Assistance to state educational agencies; leadership programs; and dissemination of research and best practices
Regional Equity Assistance Centers (10 centers)	English language learners	OESE	States, school districts	Professional development; assistance developing and implementing equity programs; information on legal issues regarding equity
Regional Educational Laboratories (10 centers)	Both	Institute of Education Sciences (IES)	States, school districts	Research on increasing achievement for students with disabilities and English language learners; expert-led seminars for educators

Sources: GAO analysis of Education documentation and interviews with agency officials.

Appendix III: Education-Funded National Research and Technical Assistance Providers

GAO Interviewed

National-level research and technical assistance providers, supported by five Education offices, help states, school districts, teachers, and parents with a variety of topics related to either students with disabilities or English language learners or both student subgroups. We conducted interviews with officials from the following Education-funded national research and technical assistance centers, as shown in table 7.

Table 7: Selected National-Level Research and Technical Assistance Providers

Center	Group served	Education office	Target audience	Resources/assistance offered
National Center on Response to Intervention	Both	OSERS	States	Assistance on development and implementation of Response to Intervention policies for states; public access to information about Response to Intervention
IDEA Partnership	Students with disabilities	OSERS	School districts, teachers, administrators, teacher preparation programs	Teaching and reference materials; facilitated dialogue among stakeholders
National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities	Students with disabilities	OSERS	National-level assistance centers, schools, teachers, families	Teaching and reference materials; dissemination of existing materials
National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition	English language learners	OELA	States	Research on increasing achievement for English language learners; resource guides for teachers
Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners	English language learners	IES	Researchers, administrators, teachers	Professional development for practicing teachers; Internet seminars for educators
National High School Center	Both	OESE/OSERS	Regional comprehensive centers	Information on high school issues; Internet seminars
What Works Clearinghouse	Both	IES	States, administrators, teachers, parents	Practice guides for teachers; assessment of education research
Doing What Works	Both	OPEPD	Teachers	Teaching strategies
IRIS Center for Training Enhancements	Both	OSERS	Teacher preparation programs, states, school districts, teachers	Online video examples of strategies for teachers; case studies
Center on Instruction	Both	OESE/OSERS	Regional comprehensive centers	Professional development materials; research-based information
National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality	Both	OESE/OSERS	Regional comprehensive centers	Teaching strategies; research and policy information

Sources: GAO analysis of Education documentation and interviews with agency officials.

Appendix IV: Comments from the U.S. Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20202

June 19, 2009

Ms. Cornelia M. Ashby
Director
Education, Workforce, and
Income Security Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Ashby:

I am writing in response to the recommendation made in the Government Accountability Office (GAO) draft report, "Teacher Preparation: Multiple Federal Education Offices Support Teacher Preparation for Instructing Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners, but Systematic Department-wide Coordination Could Enhance this Assistance" (GAO-09-573).

This report had one recommendation for the Secretary of Education. Following is the Department's response.

Recommendation: We recommend that the Secretary of Education develop and implement a department-wide mechanism to ensure more systematic coordination among Education's offices that oversee grant programs, research, and technical assistance that can help prospective and practicing teachers to instruct students with disabilities and English language learners in the general classroom.

Response: The Department agrees that coordination is beneficial and will explore the benefits of creating such a mechanism. However, to the extent that the report suggests the creation of a permanent Department-wide committee, the Department's experience indicates that creating intradepartmental committees for the sole purpose of coordinating agency activities or sharing information across offices is not always useful. While the Department will review the advisability of forming a cross-program committee, it would first want to ensure that such a group would truly lead to improvements in the way the Department and its grantees implement programs that promote teacher quality.

The Department has effectively brought together individuals from different offices to work together on discrete issues or problems related to teacher quality when such action is needed. Good examples are the coordination that occurred on the implementation of the highly qualified teacher requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education

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**Appendix IV: Comments from the U.S.
Department of Education**

Act, as amended, and on the development of common performance measures for teacher professional development programs.

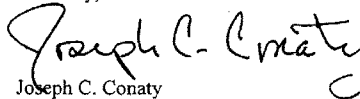
In recent months, the Department has taken additional actions to coordinate activities in response to new demands and needs. The Department has initiated a number of coordination efforts to address the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) requirements. One team led by the Secretary's advisors on teacher issues and made up of representatives from several program offices, focuses on teachers and school leadership. As the work of that team evolves, it will likely make more sense to have it look at issues related to the teaching of students with disabilities and English language learners than to establish a separate coordination body focused narrowly on that area.

Efforts to coordinate programs, research, and technical assistance efforts cannot fully eliminate barriers to alignment. Individual programs and technical assistance efforts have legislative requirements, and some of these will, inevitably, run counter to one another. While increased internal coordination may alleviate some problems, it is unlikely to completely resolve them.

The enclosed document includes the Department's suggested technical changes to the report.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments on the draft report.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Conaty
Delegated Authority to Perform the Functions and
Duties of the Assistant Secretary for Elementary
and Secondary Education

Enclosure

Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Cornelia M. Ashby, (202) 512-7215 or ashbyc@gao.gov.

Staff Acknowledgments

Gale Harris (Assistant Director) and Kate Blumenreich (Analyst-in-Charge) managed all aspects of the assignment. Miriam Hill, Heddi Nieuwsma, and Melissa Swearingen made significant contributions to this report in all aspects of the work. Marisa London also made contributions to the report. Kate van Gelder contributed to writing this report; Carolyn Boyce, Justin Fisher, Stuart Kaufman, and Shana Wallace provided key technical support; and Jessica Botsford provided legal support. Mimi Nguyen and Jeremy Sebest developed the graphics for the report.

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