

New Special Ed. Contract Language: Questions and Answers

Question	Answer
Q1: How does the new Resource Specialist language in the contract help teachers?	A: The law requires school districts to provide a full continuum of services to students with IEPs. The resource program is a part of that continuum of services, and is required by the California Education Code (Ed. Code). The Ed. Code caps the caseloads of Resource Specialists at 28 cases; however, the tentative agreement <u>lowers that caseload cap to 24.</u>
Q2: Resource Specialist credentials are no longer offered. Why do we have it in the contract?	A: The resource program is a type of setting for students with IEPs who do not require high levels of specialized support. The Resource Specialist is a Special Education teacher who provides support to students in the resource program.
Q3: What's the purpose of the Resource Specialist definition?	A: The language clarifies that a Resource Specialist should only work with students who are placed in general education, without Special Education support, for a majority of their school day. This definition aligns with what is in the Ed. Code. It is now reinforced in the contract to prevent arbitrary reclassification of special educators from Education Specialist to Resource Specialist.
Q4: What is the purpose of the Special Education study and when must it be done by?	A: The District last conducted a comprehensive top-to-bottom study of its Special Education program in 2007. The resultant <i>Hehir Report</i> has generally guided District Special Education service delivery ever since. The new study must be completed by April 30, 2016, with diverse stakeholder input. The new report will assess, among other things, the availability of a full continuum of services, the utilization of Special Education staff and the student/staff supports that are needed.
Q5: Will the contract provide support when it comes to the scheduling and length of IEP meetings?	A: The contract requires administration to "make every effort" to ensure IEP meetings do not occur beyond the 8-hour workday. Unit members should first get approval from their administrator before scheduling an IEP meeting beyond the 8-hour workday, and unit members must be compensated at their pro-rata rate for any time worked beyond the 8-hour workday. Additionally, there should be no more than three IEP meetings per month that extend beyond the contractual 6-hour and 35-minute on-site day.
Q6: What supports does this new language give to Gen. Ed. teachers who have students with IEPs in their classes?	A: The new language <i>mandates</i> principals to provide additional <i>available</i> supports to Gen. Ed. teachers with 20%+ IEP enrollment in any given class. These additional supports may include, but are not limited to, smaller class size, redistribution of site Special Education staff, additional prep time and/or the elimination of non-teaching duties.

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Read the full text of the Tentative Agreement on the SDEA website: www.sdea.net