

South Dakota Special Education Programs

Professional Development Survey Summary & Recommendations

Purpose of the Survey

To understand who is accessing professional development (PD), how they access it, and what supports are most needed across South Dakota's education workforce.

Who Responded

Special education professionals were the primary respondents, followed by general education professionals. Groups identified as needing expanded PD access or awareness of include paraprofessionals, administrators, and related service staff.

Key Areas Where Educators Need Support

- Behavior support
- Classroom management
- Literacy and math instruction for diverse learners
- IEP development
- Assistive technology

Preferred Professional Development Formats

In-person learning is preferred, but virtual and on-demand formats are also valued.

Where Educators Currently Find PD

- TeachSD learning platform
- SPED Conference
- USD trainings
- District communications
- Listservs
- Colleagues
- DOE website.

Barriers to Accessing PD include:

- Lack of substitute coverage
- timing issues
- overly theoretical PD
- misaligned topics
- preference for short, targeted workshops.

Advisory Panel Recommendations

- Increase PD awareness through posters and social media reminders.
- Offer targeted training in behavior strategies, classroom management, accommodations/modifications, graduation requirements, and ensure inclusion of all educator groups.
- Provide flexible PD scheduling, multiple formats, and add targeted SPED Conference sessions related to topics identified.

For more information contact: Wendy.Trujillo@state.sd.us

South Dakota Advisory Panel for Children with Disabilities (SDAPCD) Priority Setting and Planning Timeline June 2025 to April 2026

Priority Area Identified: Supporting the retention of teachers and improving student outcomes by providing accessible professional development resources.

June 2025	September 2025	January 2026	April 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SDACPD panel members identified priority area to focus on	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop needs assessment objectives• Draft message to stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create Needs Assessment Survey• Identify recipients• Distribute Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyze and review results of survey• Provide Recommendations to the Department of Education, Special Education Programs• DOE will share out recommendations to stakeholders via webpage and monthly SPED webinar