

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Nathan Deutsch Development Fund

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Proposal Title: Ebbing the flow: Reducing Special Education Attrition

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Brief Abstract for Publication on RTT Website:

Public school districts across the United States are facing a dilemma of epic proportions. Qualified licensed teachers are exiting the teaching profession in record numbers causing districts to face critical shortages in areas such as math, science, and special education. The critical shortages of highly qualified special education teachers as well as the increased identification of pupils with disabilities have created an overwhelming crisis in special education classrooms for schools. While much has been written about why teachers leave the profession, little research has been conducted regarding why teachers remain in the special education classroom. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that contributed to the retention of special education teachers and to create a retention model that could be emulated by building principals. Four main factors influenced teachers to leave the profession: lack of administrative support, high caseloads, low salaries, and lack of college preparation. Two of these can be controlled at the building level while the other two must be addressed at the district and university levels. Recommendations for administrative support and case load assignments are made.