

TPI Counselor's Corner

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The negative news just keeps coming about teacher layoffs and budget cuts in public schools. As I mentioned in my last message to you, this is probably a temporary situation. Unfortunately, it may be lasting a bit longer than we had hoped, but if you have patience, the tide will turn and we will need teachers again in the future. If everyone who is meant to be a teacher gives up on that goal because of the current bad news, it is predicted that there will be a shortage of teachers in 5 to 10 years.

In the meantime, there is still a demand for highly trained special education teachers. I will briefly address one of the most pressing areas of need in special education today.

Many of you have probably heard the term "autism" in your psychology or child development or education classes. Autism affects thousands of school age and pre-school age children in California. There is a broad spectrum of manifestations of this disability in children, from severe detachment from people to a more mild case of communication difficulties and emotional challenges. Public schools are required to educate kids diagnosed with autism, even if the child is not old enough to attend an elementary school. Autism as a "discipline" is now incorporated into any new special education credential issued in California.

If you feel that you are specially gifted with a combination of compassion, caring, creativity, patience and tenacity, then perhaps this is a population you may really enjoy. They are waiting for you right now. The need is great and getting greater. Many students with special needs will be born while you are still in college. If you do choose this option, it will be the most challenging thing you may ever do, and I predict that it will also offer you some of the most rewarding experiences of your life.

Good luck in your studies.

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