



Inclusive Classrooms **Are Teachers Ready to Support Students with Learning Differences?**

Benetech 2019 School Preparedness Survey



We've Got This!

Inclusive education is on the rise, but are teachers ready to support all learners? A survey by the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Understood found that while students with learning differences spend over 80% of their time in general education classrooms, only 17% of general education teachers felt very well prepared to teach students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

While this low percentage may seem alarming, general education teachers have support from a team of inclusive education experts. We surveyed special education teachers, assistive technology specialists, education therapists, and other teachers that work with students with reading barriers about how they are feeling for the 2019-2020 school year. The results show a league of inclusive education superheroes, who are prepared to support their students' diverse needs.

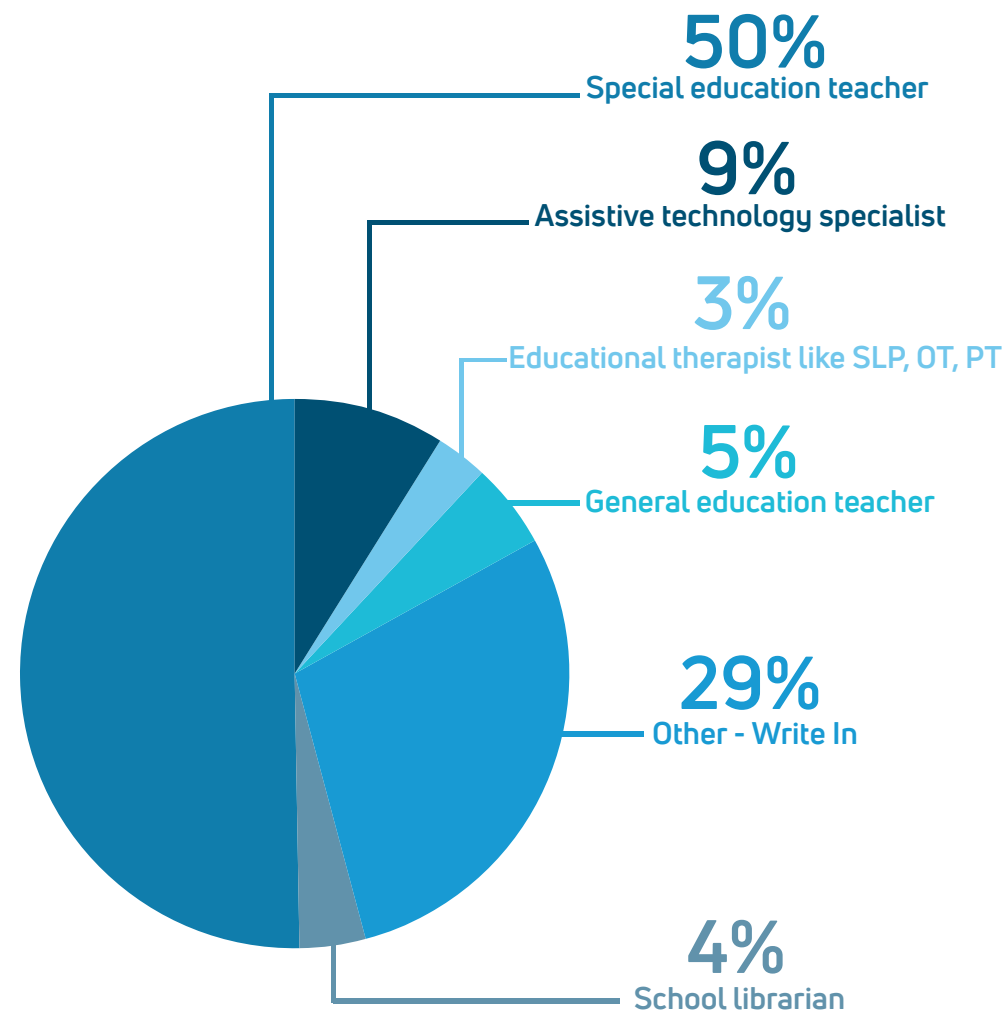
Who We Surveyed

Over 1,000 US teachers who support students with reading barriers were surveyed late August through mid-September to capture their attitudes for the 2019-2020 school year.

50% of respondents are special education teachers, and 12% are education therapists or assistive technology specialists.

About 5% of respondents are general education teachers, and 4% are school librarians.

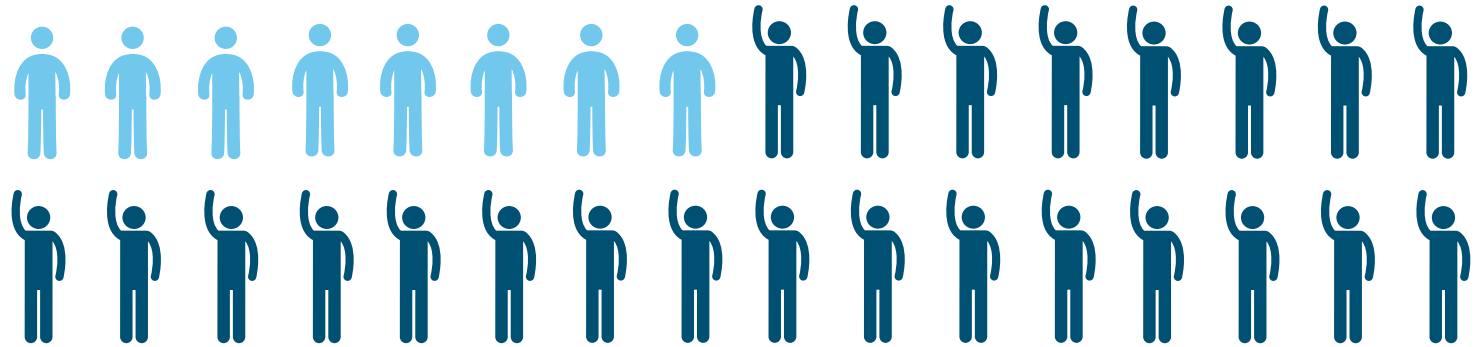
The remaining 25% identified as “other,” including Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Reading Specialist, and Alternative Media Specialist.



These Teachers Feel Prepared

73%

of respondents
reported feeling
prepared for the
school year



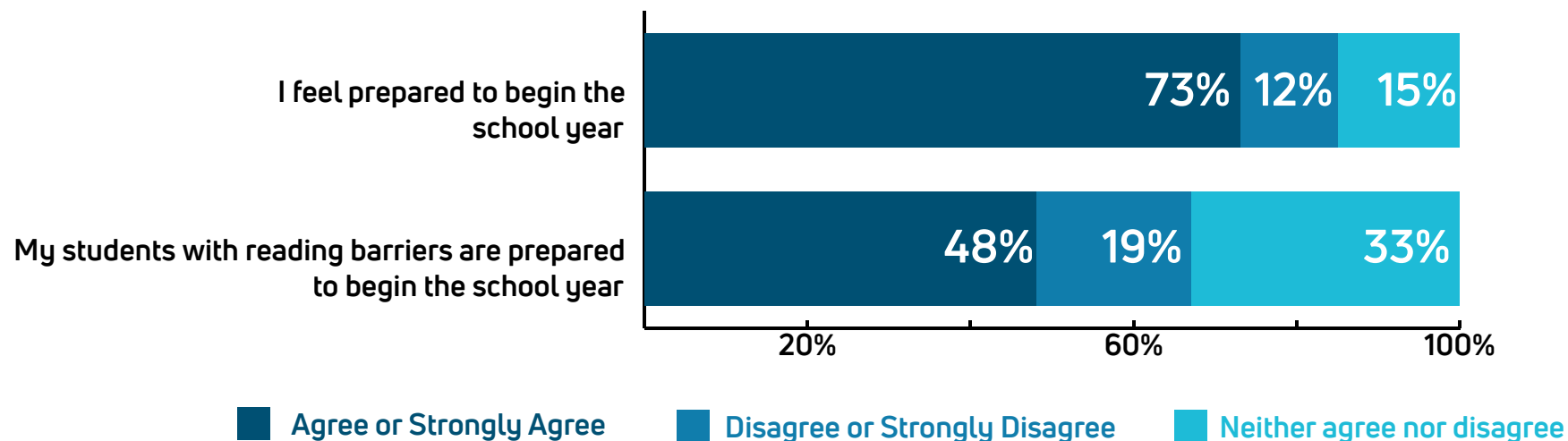
This is a slight increase from 68% of respondents last year.

Experience Brings Confidence

5% more respondents with 5+ years of experience reported feeling prepared compared to those with less teaching experience.

Perceptions of Student Preparedness are on the Rise, but Still Lag Behind Teacher Preparedness

While nearly three quarters of all teachers surveyed feel prepared for the 2019-2020 school year, less than half believe that their students with reading barriers are prepared.



But, teacher perceptions of student preparedness are on the rise, with 48% of teachers reporting that they believe their students are prepared this year, compared to 40% of teachers in 2018.

The Survey Examined Eight Factors That Might Impact Preparedness



Access to Books in
Formats Students Need



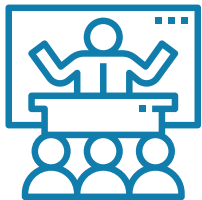
Number of Students
Supported



Free or
Reduced Lunch



Access to
Technology



Teacher Role



Support of Administration



Type of Disability



School Location

Three Factors did not Have a Significant Impact on Teacher or Student Preparedness

Whether based in urban or rural settings, supporting two students, or twenty, respondents felt similarly prepared to serve their students with reading barriers.

Whether teachers are working with students with learning differences, visual impairments, or physical disabilities, most teachers feel that they are prepared to make their students successful.



School Location



Number of Students Supported



Type of Disability

Five Factors Impacted Teacher or Student Preparedness



Free or
Reduced Lunch



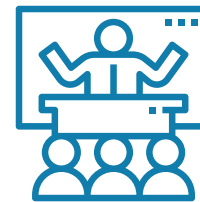
Access to Books in
Formats Students Need



Access to
Technology



Support of
Administration



Teacher Role

Support From Administration Contributes to Teacher and Student Preparedness



85% | **48%**

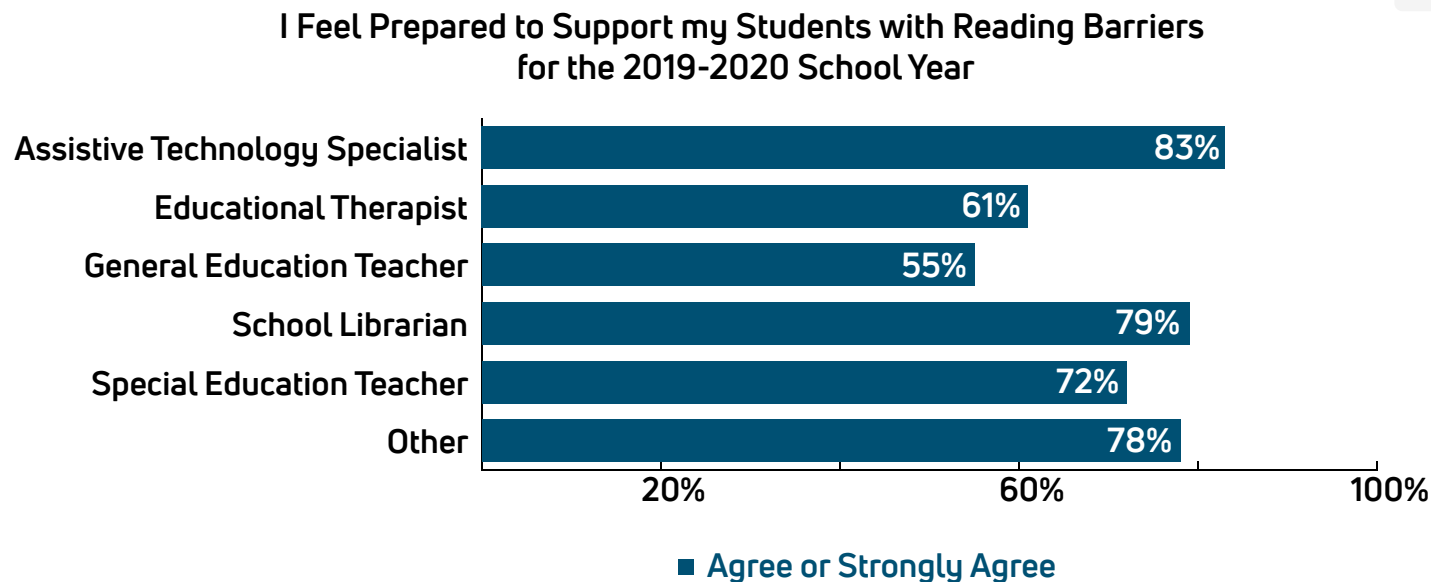
85% of teachers who had support from their administration agreed or strongly agreed that they felt prepared to support their students with reading barriers, compared to only 48% of teachers who do not have support.

60% | **24%**

60% of teachers who had support from their administration agreed that their students with reading barriers were prepared for the 2019-2020 school year, as opposed to 24% of those who did not have support.

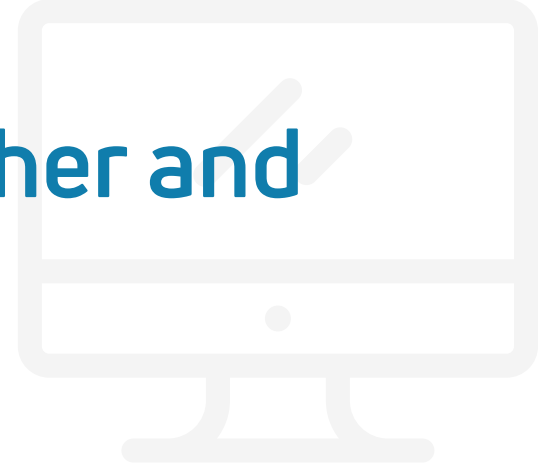
Teacher Role Affects Feelings of Preparedness

Of our respondents, 47% of special education teachers felt that their students were prepared, however only 32% of General education teachers indicated that they felt their students were prepared.



While indicating similar levels of overall preparedness to their peers, general education teachers showed the least confidence in their preparedness to support students with reading barriers (55% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they felt prepared), with 1 in 4 general education teachers reporting that they do not feel prepared to support their students with reading barriers.

Access to Tech Contributes to Teacher and Student Preparedness



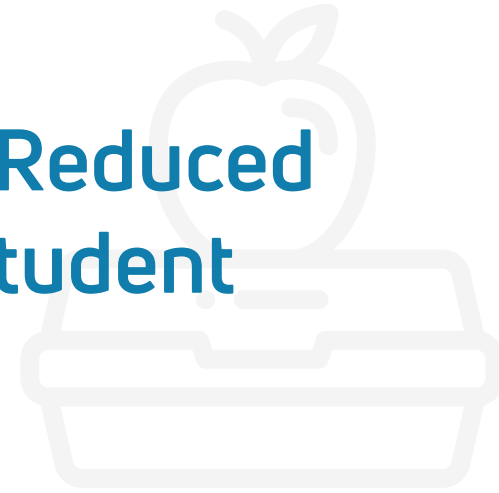
82% | **60%**

82% of teachers who felt their students had access to technology agreed or strongly agreed that they felt prepared to support their students with reading barriers, compared to 60% of teachers who felt their students did not have access.

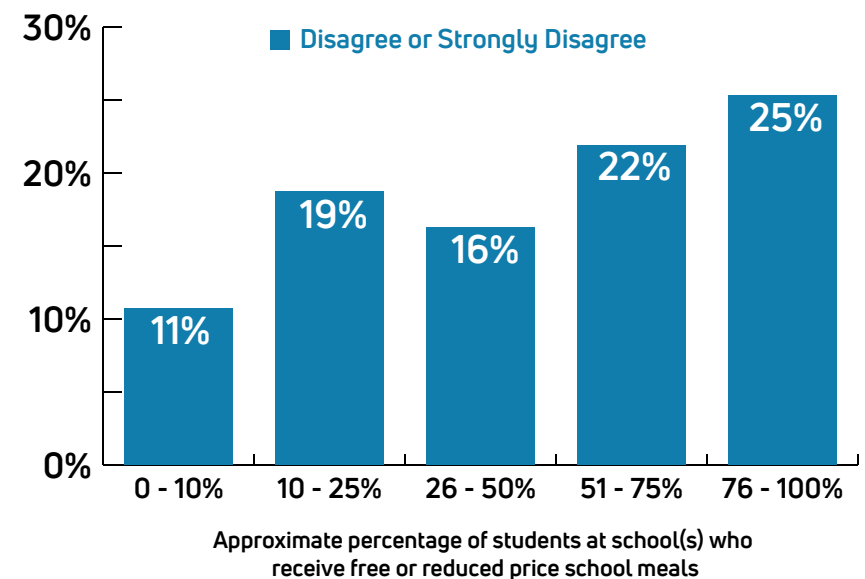
57% | **28%**

57% of teachers who felt their students had access to technology agreed or strongly agreed that their students with reading barriers were prepared for the 2019-2020 school year, as opposed to only 28% of those who did not feel their students had access to tech.

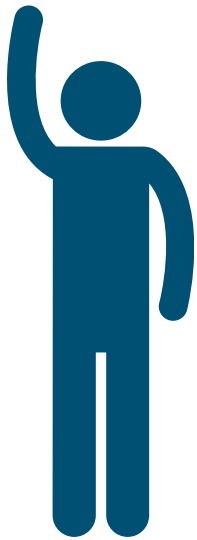
Percentage of Students Receiving Free/Reduced Lunch Impacts Teacher Perceptions of Student Preparedness



When asked if their students with reading barriers were prepared for the school year, 25% of teachers at schools with 75-100% students receiving free or reduced price lunch disagreed or strongly disagreed, compared to only 11% of teachers at schools with 0-10% of students receiving free or reduced priced lunch.



Access to Books in Formats Students Need Contributes to Student Preparedness



66% of teachers who believe their students with reading barriers have access to books in formats they can read, agreed or strongly agreed that their students were prepared for the school year.



In contrast, only **28%** of teachers who didn't believe that their students had books in formats that they can read, said that they felt their students with reading barriers were prepared.



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About This Survey

The survey data represents input from 1173 teachers across the United States who serve students with reading barriers including dyslexia, low vision, blindness, or a physical disability that affects with reading. Teachers were surveyed between August 28th, and September 16th. The survey was promoted to teachers who support students with reading barriers through Bookshare newsletters and social media.

Based on a confidence interval of 95%, the margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points. Data subsets have a larger margin of error.

About Benetech

Benetech is a nonprofit that empowers communities with software for social good. Benetech's work transforms how people with disabilities read and learn, enables human rights defenders and civilians to pursue truth and justice, and connects people to the services they need to live and prosper. Benetech is constantly pursuing the next big social impact. Visit www.benetech.org.

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