



# Promoting Independence and Reducing the Reliance on 1:1 Paraprofessionals

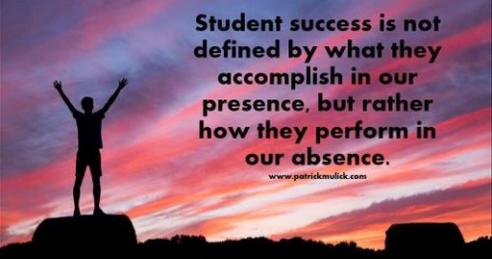
Patrick Mulick BCBA



1



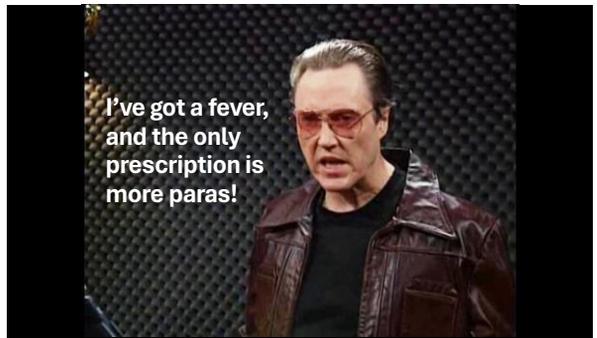
2



**Student success is not defined by what they accomplish in our presence, but rather how they perform in our absence.**

www.patrickmulick.com

3



4



## The Auburn School District

- Home to over 17,000 students
- 11.9% access special education services
- 16 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, 3 high schools, 1 alternative high school
- Fastest growing district in King County
- Very diverse community
  - 44% of students live in multilingual households
  - 11% of students are new to the country within the past two years
  - 113 languages spoken



5



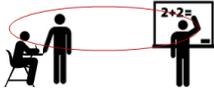
6



### Detrimental Effects of Excessive Para Proximity

Giangreco et al., 2005

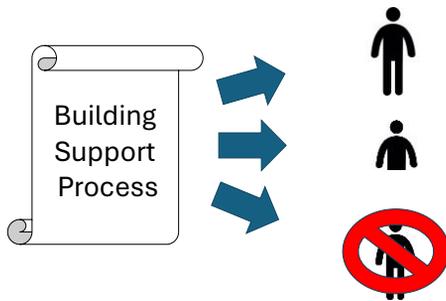
- Separation from classmates
- Unnecessary dependence-
- Interference with peer interactions-
- Insular relationships-
- Feelings of Stigmatization-
- Limited Access to Teacher instruction-
- Loss of personal control-
- Loss of gender identity-
- Provocation of problem behaviors
- Risk of being bullied-



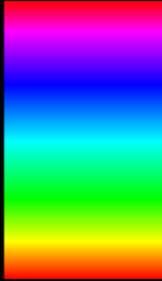
7



8



9



“Categories lead us toward certainty but away from clarity, and categorical thinking moves us away from understanding the bigger picture.”

-Bob Johansen

10



Just like with your students, you must meet adults where they are at and not where you want them to be.

11



### The Beginning

- Assembled a critical mass of special education staff
- Reviewed district data and practices related to 1:1s
- Had authentic discussion around barriers that exist in the district
- Made recommendations for next steps



12



Tier 1

- Classroom expectations that align with school-wide expectations
- Positive greetings at the door
- Differentiated instruction
- Posted schedule of activities



13



Tier 2

- Structured breaks
- Counselor referral
- Check in/check out
- Peer tutoring



14



Tier 3

- Behavior plan
- Individualized social skills development
- Behavior contract
- Wrap around services



15




16



Keep kids engaged in their learning. The busy mind forgets to misbehave.

[www.patrickmulick.com](http://www.patrickmulick.com)

17



Providing a student their needed supports does not guarantee that they will succeed, but neglecting to provide them their needed supports does guarantee that they will fail.

[www.patrickmulick.com](http://www.patrickmulick.com)

18



## Floater Paraeducators



- High performing special education paraeducators whose job it is to support a student's program getting back on track
- Never assigned to one assignment for more than a couple of months
- Has a strong focus and goal of promoting student independence
- Through the guidance from Student Special Services, they strategically navigate both student and staff challenges

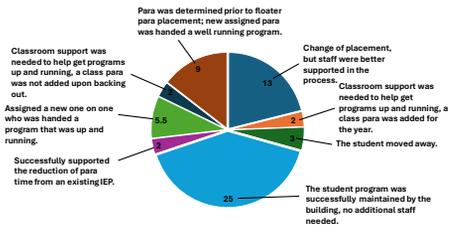
19

Table 2. Alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals

CATEGORY OF ALTERNATIVES	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES
Resource Reallocation	Trading in paraprofessional positions to hire additional special education teachers provides increased access to more highly qualified personnel.
Co-teaching	Teachers and special educators work together in the same classroom. To maintain a naturally occurring number of students special needs, it may be necessary to share a special educator across three or four classes.
Building Capacity of Teachers	Teacher capacity can be built in a variety of areas (e.g., expectations of teacher engagement with students with disabilities, differentiated instruction, universal design, response to instruction, positive behavior supports, assistive technology information about current evidence-based practices).
Paperwork Paraprofessionals	Paraprofessionals may be assigned clerical paperwork duties that free time for special educators to collaborate with teachers and work directly with students.
Improving Working Conditions for Special Educators and Classroom Teachers	Special educator conditions can be improved by reducing caseload size, the grade range covered, and the number teachers with whom special educators interact. Explore changes in class size, increase availability of special educator and related supports, schedule coordinated meeting times, and provide access to adapted materials, to improve conditions for teachers.
Peer Supports	Encourage peer support strategies that provide natural ways to support students with disabilities and may also benefit students without disabilities.
Self-Determination	Teach self-determination skills and provide opportunities for students with disabilities to have a voice in determining their own supports.
Paraprofessional Pools	Establishing a small pool of skilled paraprofessionals (or one floating position for a small school) allows for their temporary assignments to address specific, short-term needs.
Fading Plans	Developing a plan to fade paraprofessional support as much as possible can lead to greater student independence and more natural supports.
Dually Certified Teachers	Hire teachers who are certified in both general and special education to provide enhanced personnel capacity for all students.

20

## Our Data after 4 Years and 62 Cases



21



## Floater Updates



- Created an intake and exit process
- Changed the Name to **Inclusive Support Professional**
- Changed the actual category of the position due to the type of work involved
  - Supporting staff who are struggling to support a student
  - Collaborating with many adults and co-creating student systems
  - Coaching gen ed teachers on interventions
  - Being flexible with start/end times

22



## High Quality PD on Promoting Independence



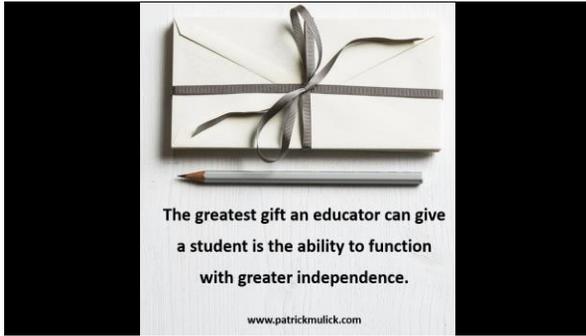
For case managers who had a student with a 1:1 paraeducator assigned, multiple opportunities for PD on PI were provided. The course highlighted:

- Strategies to promote student independence
- How to lead this work with families and school teams
- Tools and resources
- Shifting mindsets

23



24



25

Less Adult Reliance = More Opportunities

More Adult Reliance = Less Opportunities

26

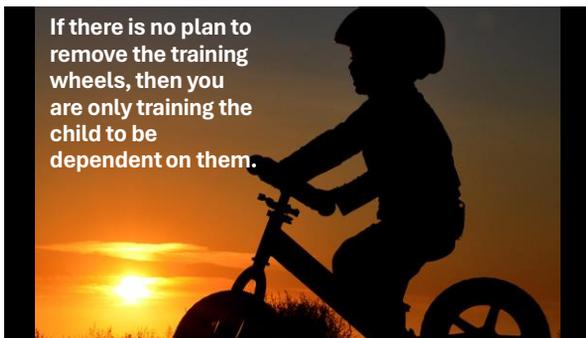
### Bad Reason's to Continue the Use of a 1:1 Paraeducator

- Everybody in the building loves the para, they are a part of the school, people would hate to see them go
- Makes it easier to find the student in a crowd, just look for the para
- The para and the student are a good match, the student enjoys the para and responds well to them
- The student feels safer when their para is around
- It helps to have someone following the student around all day just in case they escalate
- The student needs to be nudged when they stop working and the para is great at doing that

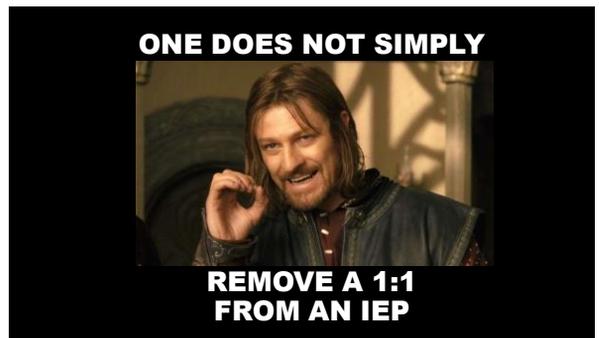
27



28



29

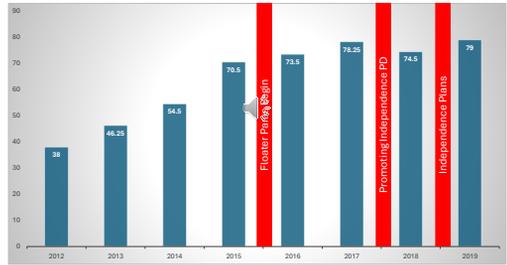


30



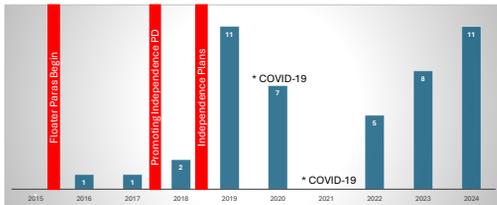
31

### Targeted Staffing Through the Years



32

### Removal of Targeted Staffing from IEPs



33



34

## Reduction of 1:1 Paraeducator Time

<p><b>Misleading Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the para</li> <li>• Yank the para</li> <li>• Dropping support</li> <li>• Getting less help</li> <li>• Decreasing student support</li> </ul>	<p><b>Student Centered Language</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing opportunities for independence</li> <li>• Progressing the student's learning through the use of naturally occurring academic, social, and behavioral cues</li> <li>• Transfer instructional control from the para to their teacher</li> <li>• Increasing student's ability to do it all on their own</li> <li>• Growing the student's ability to be a do it yourselfer</li> <li>• Maximizing direct learning from peers and the highly trained teacher</li> <li>• Advancing the student from being dependent on their own adult to be successful</li> </ul>
---	---

35

## Where Things Sit Today

- 65.5 1:1 Paras
- 19 Behavior Specialists
- 2 LPNs

36



37



### Updates

-  Meeting with building principals and principal leadership about promoting independence in buildings
-  Moved promoting independence professional development to an asynchronous option
-  Periodically having school teams return to Student Special Services to provide updates on students
-  This work is still hard!!!!

38

### Here's an IDEA!

The purposes of IDEA include ensuring that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and **prepare them for further education, employment and independent living.**



39



40



## Thank You!

[patrickmulick@gmail.com](mailto:patrickmulick@gmail.com)

[www.patrickmulick.com](http://www.patrickmulick.com)

41