

Paraprofessional Transitional Strategy for Inclusive Schools

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One strategy with potential for bridging the gap between inclusive service delivery that is overly dependent on the use of “one-to-one” paraprofessionals and a cross- categorical, site based teacher support model is to utilize a transition pool of trained paraprofessionals. This group of para-educators would be recruited, hired, assigned and trained for time-limited roles supporting students and classrooms with specific needs, which are expected to be transitional, not permanent. For example, a paraprofessional might provide support for a student moving up from elementary to middle school, specifically to deliver instruction in getting from class to class or following a rotating complex block schedule. This support would be faded through systematic, data based instruction and facilitation of natural, peer supports as needed. Similarly, the introduction of new augmentative or alternative communication technology or the implementation of a positive behavioral support plan might require consistent delivery of student support and incidental training to others in the environment, on a time-limited basis as determined by individual student progress.

The number of paraprofessionals in the pool would be determined by district size, as well as by the data on IEP requests for additional para-educator support. When not needed for specific interventions, these centrally assigned para-educators would be utilized as substitutes for absent paraprofessionals, and to provide direct training or mentoring of less experienced colleagues under the direction of special educators, and thus promote capacity-building within the district.