Paraprofessional Persona

How do we get them into the pipeline?

Paraprofessional | Rashida Hijjo

Rashida Hijjo immigrated to the United States 15 years ago when her husband's engineering firm relocated them. Rashida received an associate's degree from the university in her home country and currently serves as a paraprofessional in her local school district. She has discovered her love of teaching and wants to be a special education teacher. Her district has been approved by the state to implement a brand new Grow Your Own/Registered Apprenticeship program. Rashida has heard about the program through the grapevine, but is not sure how to participate or if she qualifies.

Goal

Identify ways to get Rashida into an educator pipeline and fully licensed with the state department for employment in a district.

Questions

Note: When responding to the questions below, please consider your current role/affiliation (i.e., state agency, EPP, PK—12 organization) and imagine that your institution is in the same state/region as your counterparts at your table.

1. What information does Rashida need to earn her degree and certification (e.g., educational requirements, certification requirements, job prospects)? What role does your organization play in supplying that information?
2. What supports does Rashida need (e.g., financial, academic)? How can your organization ensure she receives those supports?
3. What barriers prevent your selected organization(s) from doing more?
4. How could your selected organization(s) partner with other organizations to help Rashida get into the educator pipeline—from degree attainment to certification to hire?

5 Shifts to Address the Educator Shortage

Shift 1 - Reduce barriers to careers in education while preserving standards of excellence

- Information about different careers in education is available to Rashida while she is still currently working
- Requirements to get a teaching certificate/special education certification now are accessible and clearly communicated
- Requirments for full licensure are accessible and clearly communicated
- Information on getting credit for what Rashida has learned and education from her home country and done as a paraprofessional
- Information on the Grow Your Own/Registered Apprenticeship program is accessible and clearly communicated
- Supports are available to increase affordability

Shift 2 - Design comprehensive human capital management systems

- Information is available to districts, EPPs and state departments that make them aware of Rashida, including her path and where she is in her journey
- Information about Rashida's certification completion is available to districts so that they can leverage a competitive advantage to gain a student teacher and potentially, a future teacher candidate

Shift 3 - Establish transparent and equitable total rewards systems

- Information is available to Rashida about benefits or incentives provided to teachers beyond base salary (e.g., state retirement system, health insurance, growth opportunities, physical and mental support) Statewide salary information and benefits information are shared with and easily accessible to Rashida
- It can be hard to find special education teachers. To what extent does the salary structure enable schools to pay someone like Rashida a competitive salary
- Information about possible tax incentives, housing incentives and perks to becoming a teacher are shared with and easily accessible to Rashida

Shift 4 - Strengthen educators' sense of purpose, belonging and connection

- Supports are available to make Rashida feel welcomed to the profession
- Supports are available to Rashida now to build professional networks and social relationships in education/special education

Shift 5 - Deliver exceptional employment experiences

- There is a contact person(s) from every institution across the pipeline (e.g., EPPs, state agencies, PK–12 organizations) who Rashida can go to with questions while they are in the pipeline to be an educator (e.g., opportunities in a school before they complete the program, should they consider an advanced degree, what are the different types of certifications)

SAMPLE PIPELINE JOURNEY MAP

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Journey Phases	Awareness	Preparation & Support
Process	Through communication with someone at the district, Rashida learns about: ● Requirements for becoming a special education teacher ● How her transcript compares to the requirements ● How to enroll in a Grow Your Own program through the district and partner education preparation program, or EPP (e.g., requirements, deadlines) ● Program logistics (e.g., timing of classes, working full-time as a paraprofessional during the program, progressing through the program) ● Whether she would have to pay (and if so, how much) ● Supports offered by the district and the EPP ● What happens after program completion (e.g., guaranteed job, requirement to stay in the district for X years)	While completing the program Rashida receives the following supports: ● Mentorship from a supervising teacher and an instructional coach ● Gradually increasing responsibilities in the classroom with scaffolding and support ● Financial assistance (e.g., paid tuition, other fees or materials paid for, loans) paid for through Title II funds, federal grants, university grants ● Designated person at the district who oversees pathways ● Tutoring for help with coursework

Journey Phases	Awareness	Preparation & Support
Process Owners	District	- District: Connect Rashida to university and community resources, assist her through the process (e.g., licensure) - EPP: Provide relevant coursework and training, help students be academically successful - State Department of Education: Guide the work, be innovative, identify and provide financial resources, facilitate partnerships between districts and higher education
Touchpoints	- Outreach by the district to Rashida - One or more meetings scheduled by the district	- EPP courses - EPP supports (e.g., course enrollment, tutoring) - Supports from the school where Rashida works - District supports, including logistical and financial
Problems, Barriers, and Pain Points	- Reconciling international certification with local degree requirements - Lack of awareness of opportunities like GYO - Effectively advertising and recruiting - Internal assumptions or fears: Thinking there are certain barriers when there really aren't	Financial - Costs of higher education - Other costs: Mentors, etc. - Wrap-around services: Childcare, bus passes Logistical - Potential disorganization if there is not someone to take the lead on unifying the process - Lack of people at the district to oversee the program - Lack of district readiness for alternative pathways - The need to work with teacher unions

Journey Phases	Awareness	Preparation & Support
		Academic ● CAEP requirements ● Reliance on seat hours instead of competencies ● Lack of innovation/tendency to train teachers using old methods Social/Cultural ● Working conditions: isolation, more time needed to do the job of teaching ● Having opportunities to collaborate ● Lack of support for minority educators