

Concise and relevant on-demand training for paraeducators

Oregon school district uses 321insight's research-based videos promoting best practices to inform important daily decisions

Facing state budget cuts, Hillsboro School District in Oregon was searching for a cost-efficient way to offer training to its paraeducator staff (paraprofessionals, educational assistants, instructional aides, etc.), who work with more than 20,000 students across 35 schools.

"We have paraeducators in all of our buildings," says Elaine Fox, who is executive director of student services. "Our traditional way of training was to send district office staff to schools and pay extended contract to paraeducators and teachers to stay for training. We just couldn't do that any longer with the state of the budget in Oregon."

Fox says the district looked at a number of options before implementing programs by 321insight, which offers flexibly designed, cost-effective online solutions for group or individual training. Fox says paraeducators in Hillsboro often support students with the most challenging behaviors and disabilities, yet they frequently lack training in best practices for behavior management, and they often receive little guidance in clarifying professional roles and boundaries. Through Parasharp™ from 321insight, paraeducators and teachers can access on-demand and job-ready information through 5- to 8-minute videos delivered by industry experts.

"321insight is such a fantastic model because it gives information in very short bites," Fox says. "Using 321insight doesn't take away time and service to students—in fact it enhances it, and we really liked that."

Training and implementation

Parasharp™ provides paraeducators with training and resources to understand and manage student behavior or specific disabilities, and to gain insight into their roles as educators. Paraeducators also gain a toolbox of skills to use in challenging situations and learn to effectively support students using inclusive practices.

Fox says paraeducators were "thrilled" with 321insight because it would not "take up massive amounts of their time" and because it pertained directly and practically to their work. In addition to Parasharp™ there are also diversity and trauma-informed learning series that offer practical advice and solutions that paraeducators and teachers can immediately put to use in the classroom.

Positive feedback and results

Fox adds that some of the most positive feedback for 321insight has come from the unions that represent



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paraeducators and teachers. Fox says the paraeducators' union was an advocate of more training for its members, which it now has through on-demand access. The teachers' union says it gave their members additional professional development in a more efficient and time-saving manner, on relevant topics such as professional roles and responsibilities, avoiding power struggles with students, and more.

In addition, Fox says, general education teachers don't engage naturally in a lot of special education training, so this had been a great way for them to learn about some of the issues that students are dealing with. Fox adds that it is important for teachers to have awareness and understanding of not only special education, but concepts associated with trauma-informed care and diversity work in the district as well.

"For the district, 321insight provides an efficient and practical training model that is not overwhelming to staff nor super expensive to implement," Fox says. "Our paraeducators receive their training in a timely manner and now come much more prepared into their daily situations with students."



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