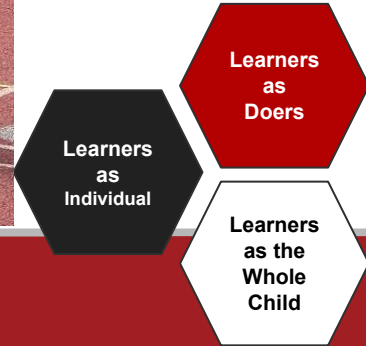




Increasing Paraeducator Retention Rates



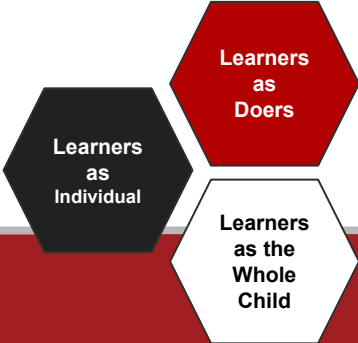
Introductions...



Jim Nichols
Chief Human Resources & Operations Officer
Indian Hill EVSD
Twitter & Instagram: @IHOoperations
LinkedIn: Connect with me

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Indian Hill Exempted Village School District



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eHCLE Standards



eHCLE Domain: Total Rewards

1. Compensation and Benefits
 - a. Analyze external markets to ensure the organization offers competitive total rewards
 - b. Design policies and practices to ensure equitable total reward decisions
2. Career Management
 - a. Establish transparent process for transfers, promotions, demotions and exits
 - b. Create equitable career advancement opportunities



Local Context



- Suburban District in Cincinnati, Ohio
- District of approximately 2000 Students
- 41 Paraeducator across district
- Supporting a variety of student needs



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Cross-Cutting Domain - Strategy

Continuously define, measure, analyze, and improve the way work is accomplished to enhance student, employee, and organizational outcomes.



What is the challenge?



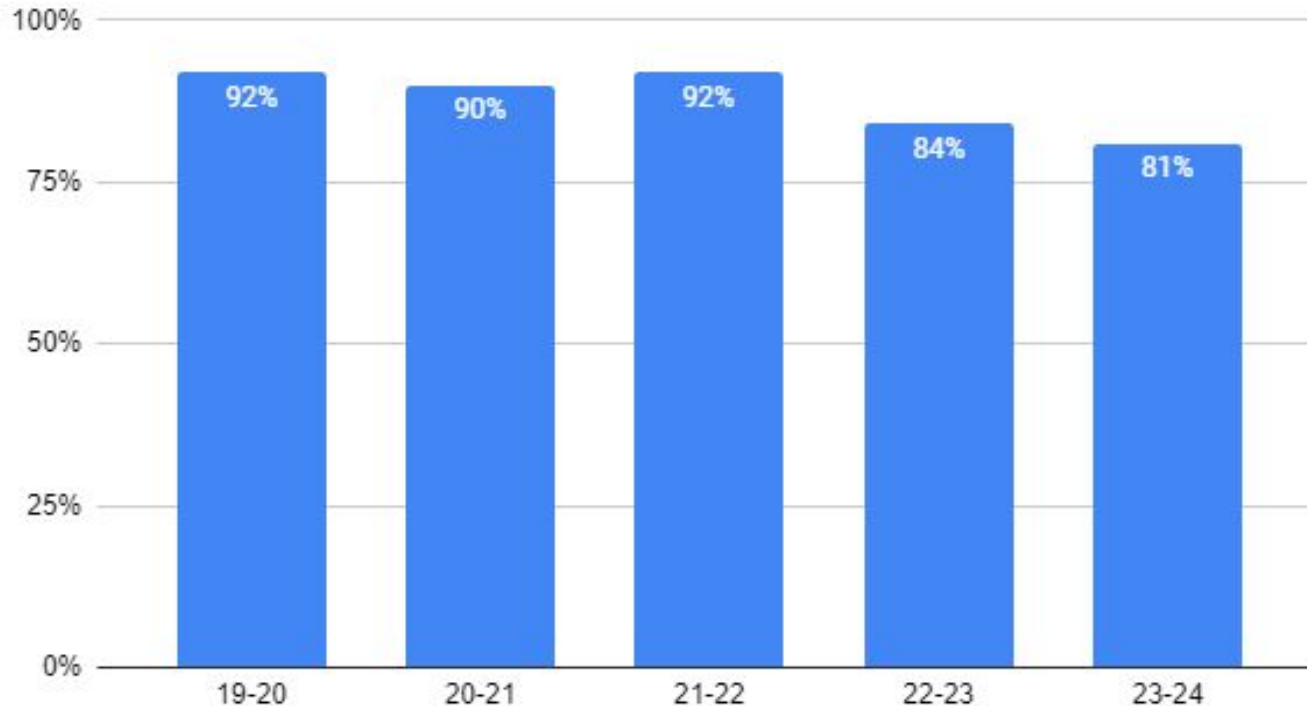
Average Retention Rates

- Certified - 97% (Red)
- Administrative - 92% (Blue)
- Classified - 88% (Yellow)

What is the challenge?



Paraeducator Retention



Average
Paraeducator
Retention Rates =

88%

Overall Decline in
Retention Rate Last
2 Years =

-11%

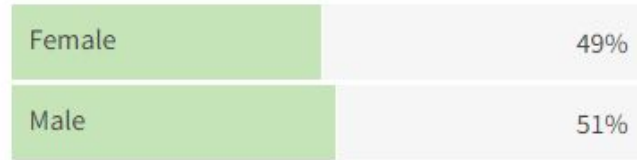
Demographics - Students @ IH



Students

2,189

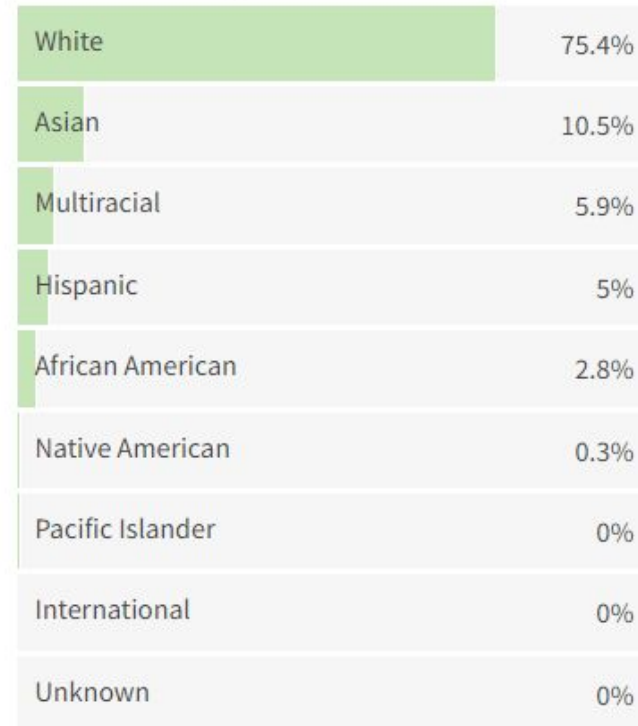
Gender



Students with
Disabilities

8.9%

Student Diversity



Why do you think this is happening?



- Turn to a partner and hypothesize about why schools may be experiencing a decline in retention rates for paraeducators.



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Why is the decline occurring?

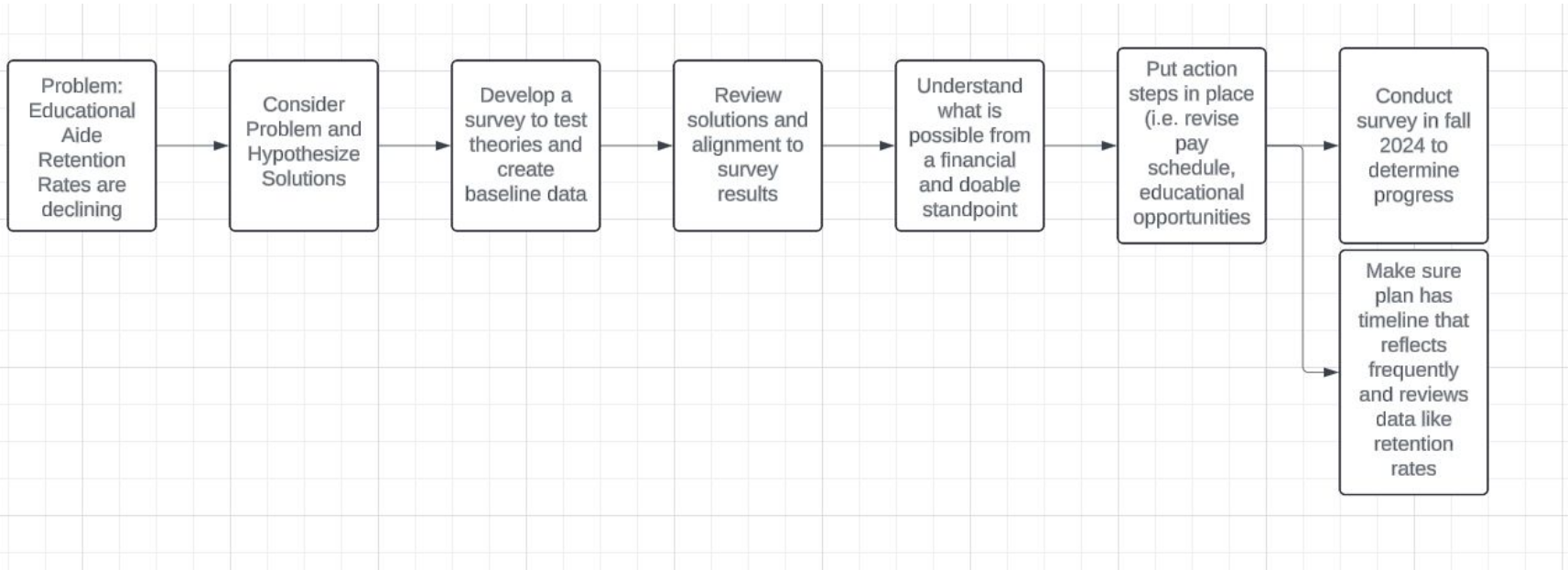


Theory of Action: If we implement targeted interventions that address the specific needs and challenges faced by paraeducators, then we can improve their job satisfaction and support, which will lead to increased retention rates.

This improvement in retention will stabilize this essential part of our workforce, contribute to a high-quality educational environment, and support our strategic goals around Student Agency and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

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Project Approach



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How it started...



- Created a new 5 tier model that embedded PD and mentor requirements that maxed out below the teacher scale
- Consulted with colleagues about my project
- Worked with our eHCLE coach to discuss
- Developed survey tool with all of their assistance

Survey data and real-time shifts in our district population dramatically shifted my direction...



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What specific data will help?



I spent time thinking about what specific action steps should I take to improve our retention rates for paraeducators. Beyond overall rates, what data would help me be more targeted regarding interventions and gauge progress?

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What changed between April and October 2024?



- We sent the first survey in April 2024
- I sent results and offered a chance for 1 to 1 meetings for every paraeducator to discuss advancement opportunities
- The district provided a stipend to all staff as part of negotiations with another classification

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Summary Survey Results

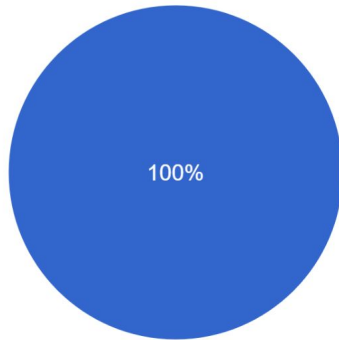


April 2024

October 2024

Would you recommend Indian Hill Schools as a place to work?

28 responses



- Yes
- No

Would you recommend Indian Hill Schools as a place to work?

29 responses

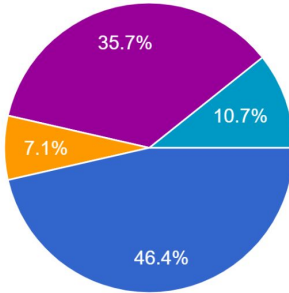


Summary Survey Results



If you were to consider leaving what would be the biggest reason?

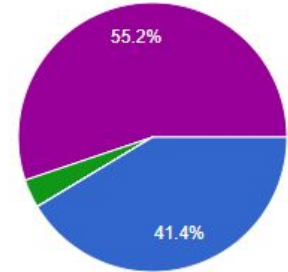
28 responses



April 2024

- Inadequate Compensation
- Inadequate Benefits
- Lack of Support and Resources
- Limited Career Advancement Opportunities
- Personal Reasons (e.g., relocation family commitments)
- Challenges in the work environment

29 responses



October 2024

Key Changes

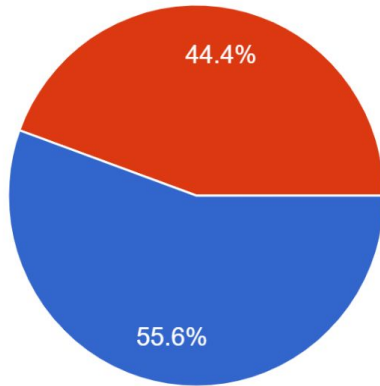
- 19.5% increase Personal Reasons
- 5% decrease in Compensation
- From 7.1% to 0% Reporting Lack of Support/Resources

Summary Survey Results



Would you have any interest in opportunities that would allow you to get your teaching license?

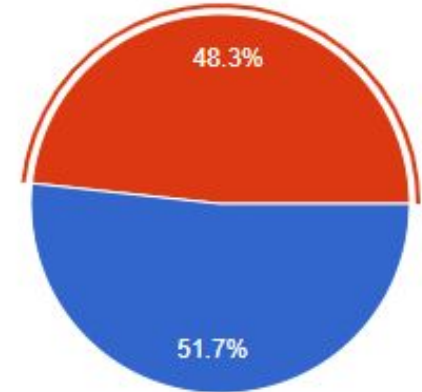
27 responses



April 2024

29 responses

- Yes
- No

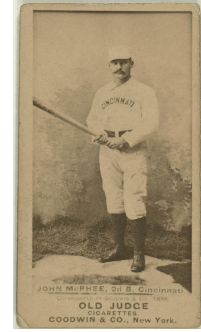


October 2024

What does the baseball card of a paraeducator in Indian Hill look like?



The paraeducators in the Indian Hill School District are predominantly female, with an average age of 51.6 years and an average of 6.1 years of experience. The demographic composition of this group reveals that 89.2% are white, while 10.8% are Black or African American. Hourly rates for our paraeducators range from \$17.50 - \$28/hour. Some paraeducators also coach or perform other supplemental duties.



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What is the persona of a paraeducator in Indian Hill?



Judy is a 44 year old white female who is married with a Master's Degree in teaching. She enjoys the flexibility that a paraeducator provides to life beyond school versus a teaching position. She has been in the district for one year and during a recent sit down shared interest in more opportunities within the role. She did express concern over pay, but also celebrated the benefits package.



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What is the persona of a paraeducator in Indian Hill?



Susan is a 46 year old, white female with an associates degree in an unrelated field who has worked for the district for 20 years. She is interested in additional responsibilities in the district and expressed interest in having those tied to enhanced compensation.



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What is the cost?



Consider the costs to replace a paraeducator?

- HR costs (Hiring, Onboarding, Mentoring)
- Training Costs for specific role?
- Replacement for student aide... Not quantifiable

A recent estimate quantified this cost as much at \$3000 per hire when you factor in the staffing required to hire, Training, Onboarding, Recruitment, Licensing and Mentorship.



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What specific data will help?



- *National Trend Data*
- *Local Annual Retention Data*
- *Local Survey Data deployed biannually*
- *One-to-One conversations with current paraeducators in form of stay interviews*

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What action steps?



- Review compensation model
- Look at internal and external compensation trends
- Review benefits package
- Consider opportunities to improve working conditions (culture, PD)



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So what is the plan...



Based on Survey Data we are taking several action steps...

- **\$1,200 Stipend:** Approved one-time bonus.
- **Escalator Bonuses:** Refer to budget impact attachment.
- **Certification Support:** Programs to assist in getting teaching certification.
- **Enhanced Outreach:** Biannual surveys, stay interviews, improved communication.
- **Acknowledgement Focus:** Encourage authentic recognition of paraeducators' contributions

Ideas



Take a moment to talk with a partner...

- What idea could work in your district; does it need to be modified?
- Understanding the backstory of my district and your district what are other solutions that have not been presented?



How will we gauge success?



- Annual *retention rates* for Indian Hill Schools
- *Comparison* of local and national retention rates
- Progress tracked through *biannual survey* results
- Stay interview data compiled, *targeting 100%* of paraeducators by 2027



Communication & Accountability



- **June 2024** - Sent results and invitation to meet to every paraeducator; 3 responded
- **October 2024** - Sent results, invitation to meet to every paraeducator and university options flyer
- **Improving routine feedback** (Ex: Cards)



Biggest Lesson Learned...



Have question now or later?



Jim Nichols - jim.nichols@ihsd.us

Resources - [Survey](#)

Escalators - [Options](#)

