

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Jacque Tovar _____	3
About Grow Your Own Educators _____	4
The Paraeducator Cohort _____	5
Continuing Education Classes _____	6
Paraeducator Trainings _____	7
Next Steps for GYOE _____	8
About the Partnership _____	9

JACQUE TOVAR

has been a paraeducator in Salt Lake City's Title 1 schools for over 20 years. As a youth, Jacque struggled in school. She and her parents – a Mexican immigrant father and a white mother – were forced to move year after year into new school boundaries. Today, Jacque works tirelessly on behalf of students, particularly those with emotional, behavioral, and learning disabilities. In 2018, this commitment earned her Utah's Marilyn Likins Paraeducator of the Year award. Jacque has long dreamt of earning her teaching license, but despite multiple attempts to return to college, obstacles have always delayed these plans.

“When I first got out of high school and enrolled at the U, my mom lost her job. I tried to go back again but she got cancer and I stopped going, to support her. Every time I thought I was ready and had enough money to get back in college something else would pull me back out, so that I couldn't afford it emotionally or monetarily.”

In 2018, Jacque joined Grow Your Own Educators. She became a member of the initiative's first cohort of paraeducators working toward teacher licensure.

“I take a lot of pride in the fact that I'm a part of this. The paraeducators accepted into this program are primarily educators of color that are already working in Title 1 schools. We have various experiences and levels of education, but our commonality is our drive to become teachers within our own communities.”

Since joining the cohort, Jacque has re-enrolled at Salt Lake Community College to finish her associates degree. She been a leader in the partnership, in the roles of assistant teacher for the paraeducator training and co-chair of the planning committee.

“I like that we're all in it together and that we support each other. A lot of us didn't know



Photo 1: Jacque and some of her students

what to do next, or if we could do it. In the cohort we feel supported, and that support system is crucial. We are working together to navigate the educational system so we can all give back to our communities by becoming licensed teachers. And we want to support parents within our communities to join this pathway by becoming paraeducators and working in their community schools.”

ABOUT GROW YOUR OWN EDUCATORS

Grow Your Own Educators (GYOE) supports pathways to teaching for local community members and paraeducators in Utah's Title 1 schools.

GYOE is a response to several challenges facing schools in Utah and around the country: 1) a severe teacher shortage, 2) high levels of teacher attrition, 3) a teacher workforce that does not reflect the full diversity of our communities, and 4) distrust between Title 1 schools and their communities. "Grow your own" programs across the country have shown that they can help address these challenges. Research has shown that such programs graduate high quality teachers who are more likely to work in, and stay in, hard-to-staff schools. Moreover, they help to build trust between communities and schools and diversify the teacher workforce in communities of color.¹

GYOE opens up pathways for parents and community members to step into paraeducator roles in schools, and for paraeducators to earn teaching licenses and become successful classroom teachers. GYOE helps to lower the financial and social barriers that members of low-wealth communities and communities of color face when entering the teaching profession. Originally named the Paraeducator Pathway, GYOE was re-launched in 2018 with the following efforts:

- **A cohort of paraeducators** from west side Salt Lake City schools who meet regularly and support one another in advancing toward licensure.
- **Continuing education courses** that offer initial steps into college for future teachers.
- **High-quality trainings** for Salt Lake City paraeducators, aligned with the Utah state paraeducator standards.

GYOE is a district-community-higher education partnership that includes the University of Utah, Salt Lake Community College, the Salt Lake City School District, Salt Lake Education Foundation, the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, and the National Resource Center for Paraeducators. The program is focused initially in Salt Lake City, with plans to grow based on the pilot efforts.

Grow Your Own Educators is helping me to reconnect with my inner voice that wants to keep growing my education. Even though I had a hard situation that still brings me down, I know that I can count on the group meetings where they understand what I go through. I don't feel alone.

— *Maria Moreno, Cohort Member*

¹ OER Associates LLC. (2012). *Grow Your Own Teachers: An Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness: Executive Summary*. Author; Skinner, E. A., Garreton, M. T., & Schultz, B. D. (2011). *Grow Your Own Teachers: Grassroots Change for Teacher Education*. Teachers College Press

THE PARAEDUCATOR COHORT

Over the past year, GYOE has been working closely with a cohort of 12 paraeducators from Salt Lake City School District. This cohort meets one to two times per month to build community, learn together, and support one another in their pathways to licensure. Due to work and family obligations, cohort members are generally part-time students.

In the past year, 12 participants completed 35 college courses for a total of 105 credits.

Cohort Activities

- Visits from college and university advisors
- Readings and discussions about issues related to teaching and educational justice
- Sharing goals and aspirations for careers
- Guest speakers
- Connecting with scholarship opportunities and other resources

Stages Along the Pathway



LICENSURE GOALS

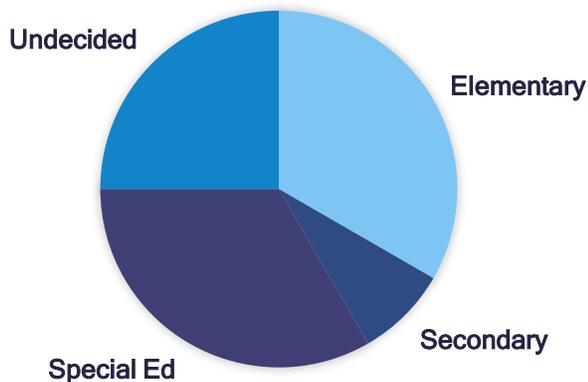


Photo 2: The cohort throws a mini baby shower for one of its members

CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES

GYOE offers credit-bearing college-level courses and test prep classes through the University of Utah. These courses, held in community and university spaces for a minimal fee, give community members and paraeducators accessible and affordable first steps into postsecondary education.

Courses Offered This Year

- **Introduction to Teaching** through Urban Institute for Teacher Education and Continuing Education at the University of Utah (3 credits)
- **Integrated Curriculum Methods** through Family and Consumer Studies and Continuing Education at the University of Utah (3 credits)
- **Prep for the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators** test through Continuing Education at the University of Utah.

Total paraeducator enrollment in the three courses was 29, with some participants taking multiple courses.



Photo 3: Participants in the community-based Intro to Teaching course, Summer 2018

PARAEDUCATOR TRAININGS

This spring, GYOE piloted a new professional development series for around 40 paraeducators in the Salt Lake District. Over the course of eight trainings, once per month, participants study topics aligned with the Utah state standards for paraeducators. The first half of the pilot finished in April, and the second half will begin in September.



Photo 4: Paraeducators gather for the first professional development session

88% of participants surveyed report already using what they learned at the trainings in the classroom.

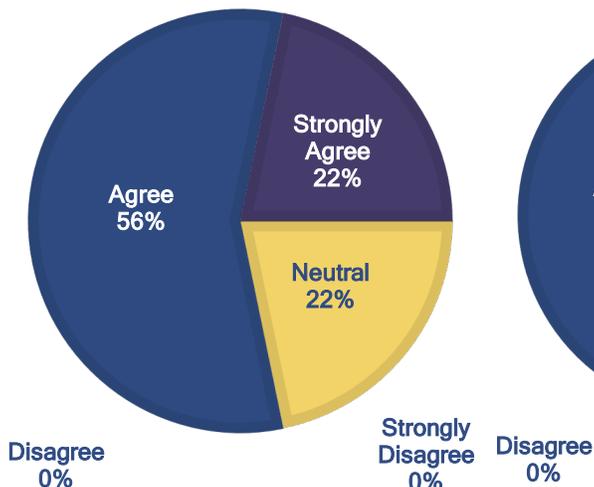
Course Topics

- Roles & Responsibilities
- Instructional Methods
- Behavior Support
- Ethics
- Communication & Problem Solving
- Assessment
- Working in a Team

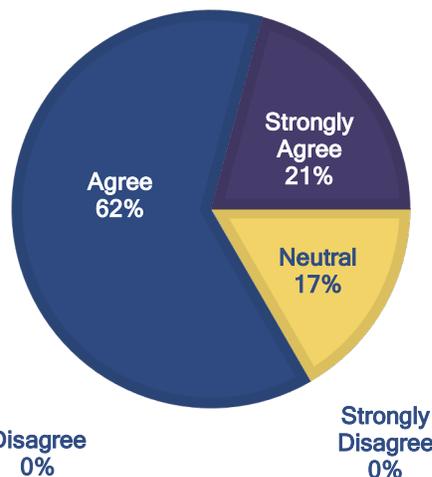
To support local residents in becoming paraeducators, the Salt Lake Education Foundation and Salt Lake City School District opened an accessible testing center where individuals can take the ParaPro Assessment Test.

Participant Survey Results

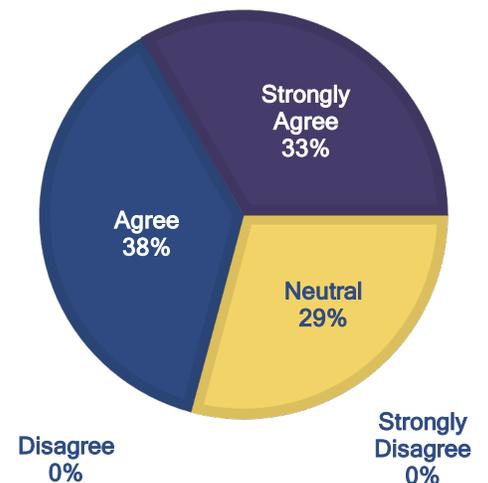
My understanding of paraeducator roles and responsibilities has increased through this course



My ability to understand and address student behavior has increased through this course



Taking this course has helped me become a better educator



NEXT STEPS FOR GYOE

GYOE continues to build toward its vision of a sustainable, accessible pathway for local community members and paraeducators to become successful classroom teachers. This will entail additional resources and supports, including:

1. Scholarship Funds

Tuition and fees will continue to be a major priority for GYOE. In addition to supporting cohort members in applying to all available scholarships and awards, GYOE is looking to develop its own scholarships for committed participants.

2. Foundational Supports

GYOE recognizes that the barriers to higher education are not only financial. They also include the need for supports like child care, transportation, tutoring, and technology that allow individuals to support themselves and their families while furthering their educations. GYOE is looking for financial and in-kind donations in this area.

3. Supporting New Paras

GYOE will continue to build pathways for community members to become paras, with the supports they need to enter the profession, pass the ParaPro Assessment, and be successful in their classrooms.

For more information, or to get involved, email Paul Kuttner at paul.kuttner@partners.utah.edu

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

This project is a collaborative effort that could not survive without the commitment of many different people and institutions. Thank you to all our partners, and to the individuals who were part of our partnership team this past year.

Jacque Tovar	Paraeducator, Northwest Middle School (Co-Chair)
Breda O’Keeffe	Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, University of Utah (Co-Chair)
Debra Andrews	Principal, Newman Elementary
Angelica Bolanos	Administrative Assistant, Salt Lake City School District
Angela Doan	Senior Advisor for Education, Salt Lake City Mayor’s Office
Logan Hall	Supervisor, HR, Salt Lake City School District
Paul Kuttner	Associate Director, University Neighborhood Partners, University of Utah
Marilyn Likins	Director, National Resource Center for Paraeducators
Kellie May	Teacher Specialist, Early Educator Support, Salt Lake City School District
Jennifer Mayer-Glenn	Director, Office of Family-School Collaboration, Salt Lake City School
Peggy McCandless	Elementary Program Coordinator, Urban Institute for Teacher Education, University of Utah
Jennifer Seltzer-Stitt	Director, Community Relations, Salt Lake Community College
Dale Smith	Associate Dean, Salt Lake Community College
Cynthia Talbot-Holz	Development Officer, Salt Lake Education Foundation
James Yapias	Director, Salt Lake Education Foundation

