

PR Award #	U350A110026
Name of Organization	Hillsborough County Public Schools
Name of Project	Paraprofessionals Accelerated Teaching Highway (PATH)
City, State	Tampa, Florida

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Paraprofessional Accelerated Teaching Highway (PATH), proposed by Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) is designed to provide high quality comprehensive support to paraprofessionals pursuing teacher certification in Exceptional Student Education, a high need area in HCPS. PATH has partnered with St. Petersburg College (SPC) to implement a program that recruits, supports and prepares highly qualified paraprofessionals. Three goals frame the project: 1) Recruit highly qualified HCPS paraprofessionals to become Teachers of Record (TOR) in Exceptional Student Education in high need schools, 2) Assist highly qualified paraprofessionals to achieve state certification in an expedited manner(within two years) and 3) Retain participants as Teachers of Record for at least 3 years within high need schools in HCPS. Projected outcomes include 90% of participants securing certification and 85% remaining as Teachers of Record for at least three years.

Eligible paraprofessionals are those who have AA degrees, have worked with children for two or more years, have passed Florida Department of Education’s General Knowledge Test and have submitted a portfolio. Once admitted to the PATH program, applicants enroll in St Petersburg College's College of Education for an accelerated two year program. Participants receive strong support along every step on the path to certification. Scholarships pay tuition and classes are held at a site within the school district. Academic coaches are provided to bolster academic success. The internship process occurs without sacrificing full time employment. Upon completion of the program, PATH participants receive pre-placement assistance with interviews and state certification verification. Once hired, HCPS’s New Teacher Induction Program provides peer mentoring, peer evaluation, and prescriptive professional development to maintain effectiveness.