



Journey into
Education &
Teaching



Achieving Diversity & Equity: **Paraeducator** Pathways to College Success and the Teaching Profession

jetintoteaching.org

Agenda

- Welcome
- Outcomes
 - Learn about a unique teacher pathway program in Massachusetts
 - Explore ways to replicate JET in your state or school district
- Presentations and Presenters
 - JET Overview – Pam Herrup, JET Co-Founder and Interim Director
 - JET Mentor Program – Casel Walker, JET Mentor Consultant
 - JET Partner School District – Brockton Public Schools – Kathleen Moran, Asst. Superintendent for Human Resources
- Discussion/Comments/Questions

Teacher Diversity Matters

- Teacher diversity has significant positive impacts on students, particularly students of color
- The educator workforce in the U.S. and in MA fails to reflect the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of students and the population at large.
- School districts and policymakers in MA and across the country are increasingly recognizing systemic issues of inequity and diversity gaps in schools AND are facing teacher shortages and high teacher attrition rates.

Percentage of Students & Educators of Color



53%

Students

21%

Educators



44%

Students

12%

Educators



History

2007

JET founded by a team of educators with federal grant funding
UMass Dartmouth and Bristol Community College
School Districts: Fall River & New Bedford
Participants: over 100 Paraeducators
Program Retention Rate: 65 – 70%
Participants who earned a Degree: over 60%

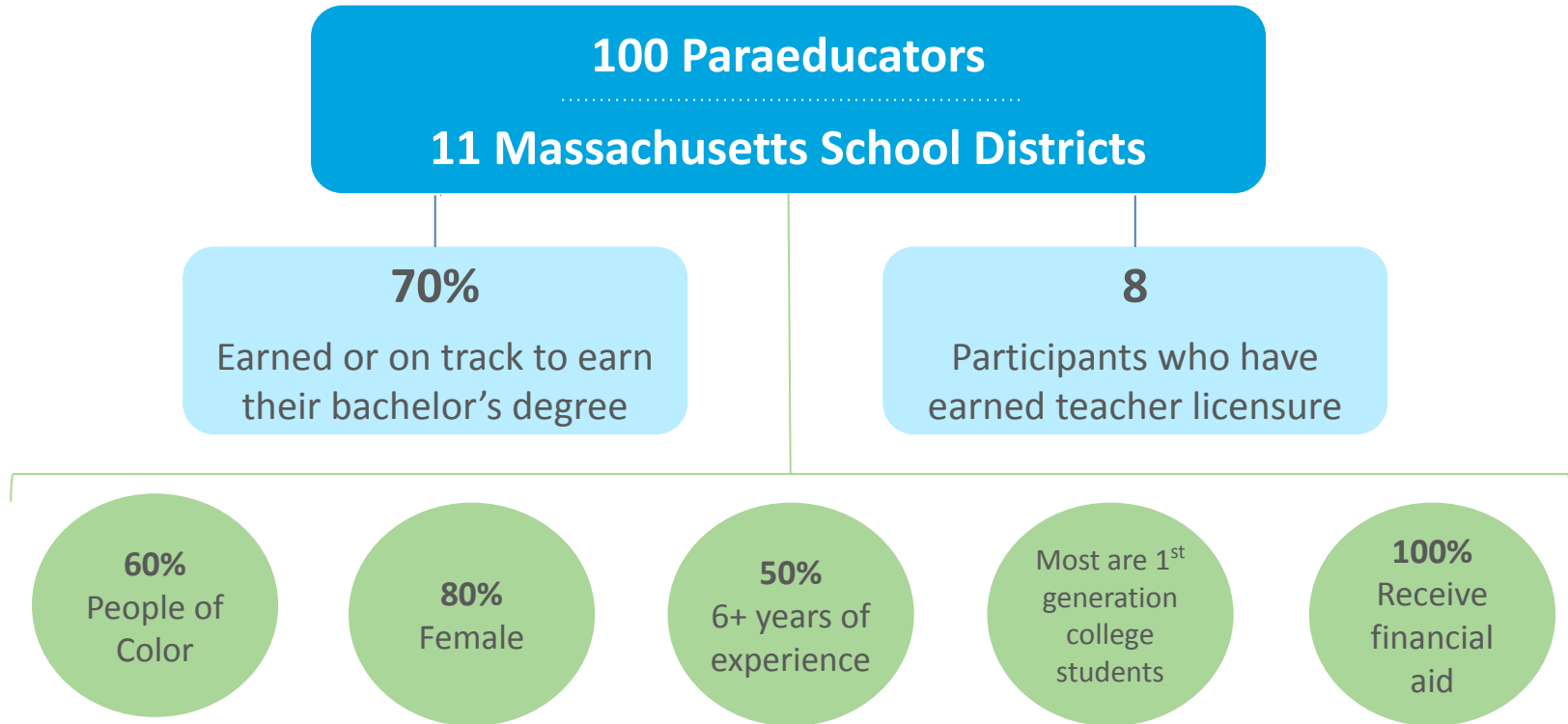
2021

JET obtained independent nonprofit incorporation status

2016

JET became a program of the MA Foundation of Teaching & Learning
Expanded to include 11 urban school districts in MA
Piloted a mentorship program
Increased focus on educator diversity and educational equity

By the Numbers (2016-2021)



Our Model

JET's approach is community-centered and designed, based on research and our years of experience, with the unique needs of adult learners and high-needs schools at the center.

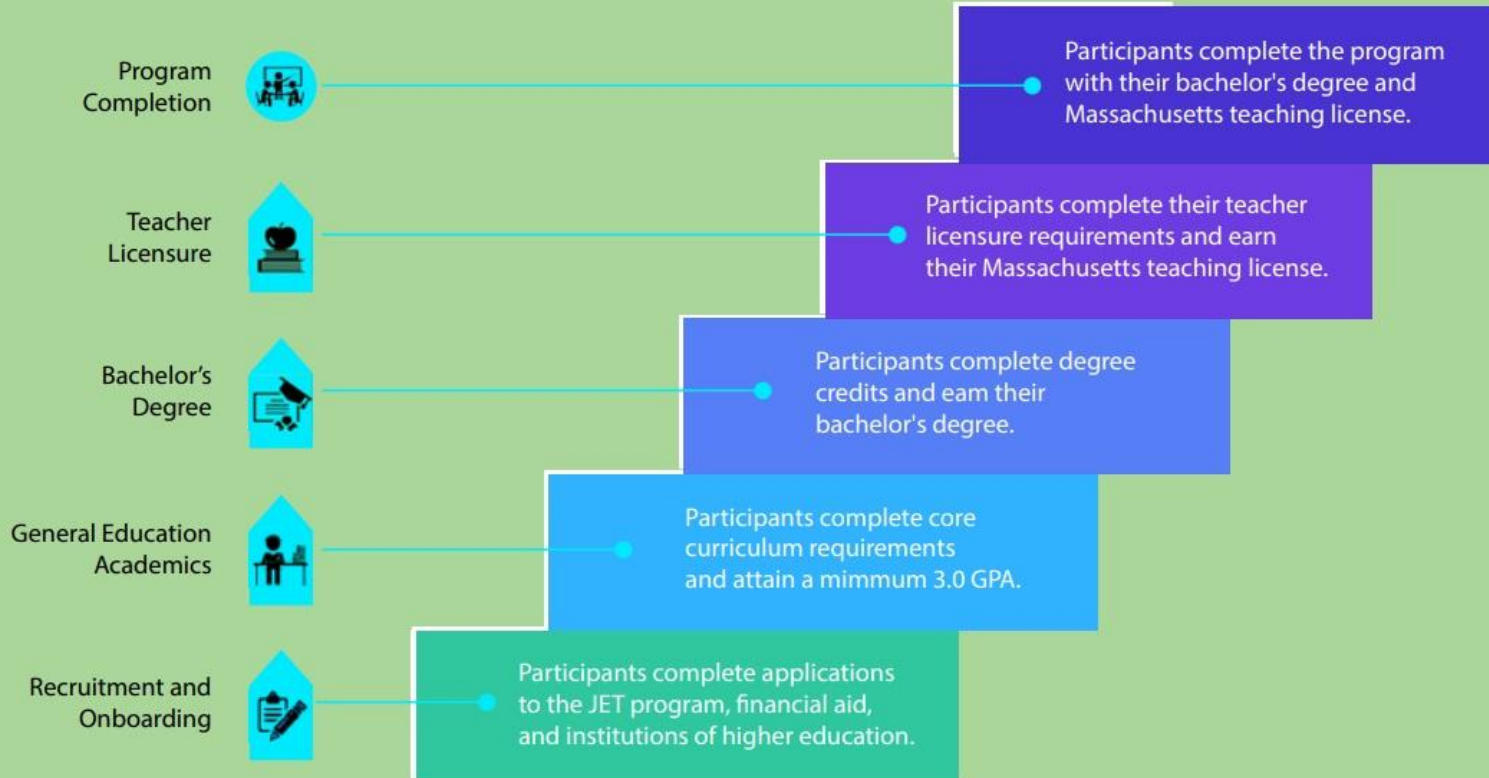
Partnerships with School Districts & Higher Education Institutions

- Provide link between school districts, paraeducators, & higher education institutions
- Work with district liaisons to recruit and support paraeducators
- Work with higher education institutions and advocate for improved and more equitable services to paraeducators

Support & Mentoring for Paraeducators

- Provide guidance and support in obtaining financial aid, a college degree & teacher licensure
- Pair each participant with a mentor, a veteran teacher in their district, to provide ongoing professional and social-emotional support
- Provide tools, guidance and support to JET mentors

Pathway for paraeducators in the JET Program



Benefits to Participants

According to participants, JET has provided the following benefits:

- Increased their knowledge of the process to complete their bachelor's degree and earn licensure, and support along the path
- Increased their motivation and confidence in their ability to succeed
- Provided them with the support they needed to stay on track despite the challenges they face

“Before JET, I was kind of lost.... I was doing my job and I thought that was it, with nowhere else to go. I am an adult and family provider and going back to school and getting a degree was not in my vision; I didn't know the way forward, I didn't have a vision. I was at [a] plateau.... Becoming part of JET and communicating with them showed me the way to getting a degree.”



“JET saw the wealth of talent in classroom paraprofessionals and decided to invest in us. JET supported my journey in becoming a licensed teacher in the Boston Public Schools and worked with me every step of the way to ensure that I was staying on track. I grew more confident with the guidance and support of JET and my cohort members. I was very fortunate to receive a Teacher’s position in K0/K1 at my school. Thank you to the amazing JET.”

~ Kamini Pulchansingh Teacher
Martin Luther King, Jr. K-8 School
JET 2017 Boston Cohort



Journey into
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Teaching

JET Mentor Program

JET Mentor Program

“Journey into Education & Teaching Mentor Program (JETMP) is specifically designed to support paraeducators who want to become licensed teachers, need to complete their Bachelor’s degrees, obtain teacher licensure requirements and become a teacher in their district.”

JET Mentors:

- Guide with care and professional career development that helps sustain the paraeducators over this multi-year journey to teaching.
- Provide motivation to continue working towards a college degree and becoming a teacher.
- Builds confidence that they can succeed in becoming a teacher.
- Have the knowledge of the steps to take to become a teacher.
- Demonstrate genuine understanding, empathy and care.
- Are flexible and use a supportive approach, focused on the needs of the paraeducator.



JET Mentor Program: The Mentor Qualities

- Experience in the school or district of the paraeducators.
- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited U.S. college or university.
- In good standing in their current school/district of employment.
- Previous mentoring or coaching experience (preferred but not required).
- Experience teaching or working with a paraeducators (preferred but not required).
- Professional teaching license (preferred but not required).
- Caring adult!



JET Mentor Program: Expectations & Responsibilities

1. Mentor 1, 2, or 3 paraeducators
2. Meet at least monthly with paraeducator(s).
3. Attend Mentor Orientation (usually in August)
4. Attend 2-3 Mentor professional development sessions.
5. Provide data and information to JET when required.
6. Attend End of Year Paraeducators' Celebration (usually in June)
7. Set goals with the paraeducators
8. Maintain confidentiality
9. Support the paraeducators in submitting Paraprofessional Teaching Preparation Grant (PTP)
10. Support the paraeducator in completing the Free Applications for Federal Student Aid application

JET Mentor Program: Mentor Training and Support

- Supporting the Adult Learner
- Effective Mentoring
- Advisors vs Mentors
- Creating Successful Partnerships
- Asking Questions & Listening
- FAFSA and PPT Grants
- Peer Networking
- Goal Setting



Benefits of the JET Mentoring Program

“The best part is to have someone to go to and vent to and you know they are going to be there for you.”

JET Scholar

“[It was helpful] to have the mentor’s support to help with the procedure to get the license and how to go about doing that. Meeting with her, doing it together. I spoke with her several times and that was helpful.”

JET Scholar

“The best part is letting my experience be an asset to people just starting out.... I have something to make their journey a bit easier and I want to be able to do that. I’m in awe of how they handle all the new technology and when talking to them I was learning myself: the old meets the new.”

JET Mentor

“She was very well aware of the community that I currently work in as a paraprofessional and some of the staff I work with. And just being within that field, understanding some of the trials and tribulations that I would go through in going to school and working full-time. And her being a woman of color, a mom - just understanding the trials and tribulations that I go through, you know, so it was definitely someone who was able to support me through my educational journey, but also assist in being that social emotional person to lean on, so it was good.”

JET Scholar

JET Mentor Program

“The overall objective of a mentor is to serve as a one-on-one personal guide that helps JET Scholars make and sustain progress on their goal of becoming a teacher.”



Dr. Kathleen Moran

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Brockton Public Schools



Brockton Public Schools

Demographics

- 86% of the student population are people of color
- >25% of teachers are people of color
- 41% of paraeducators are people of color
- 28% of students are English learners



JET in the district

- Began in 2018
- a core component of district efforts to diversify the teacher workforce
- JET works closely with the District's HR Department to implement JET
- All mentors are district educators - paid by the district & trained by JET

JET Results so far

- 10 paraeducators in the program, 70% people of color
- 1 participant graduated from Bridgewater State University

Brockton School District

Brockton's Mission

The Brockton Public Schools ensures student success by fulfilling the educational, social and emotional needs of all students in the pursuit of instructional excellence.

Theory of Action

If the Brockton Public Schools implements a system of instructional excellence that:

- delivers Common Core-aligned curriculum in a safe and supportive environment;
- values a strong system of growth by consistently supporting the Brockton Educator Growth and Evaluation Network (BEGEN);
- designs and adopts a system of quality professional development that supports all stakeholders in meeting their professional and district determined goals;
- and provides all students and teachers with access to quality instructional technology that improves digital literacy;
- then we will ensure our students are socially, emotionally and academically prepared to live in a global society.

District Educator Diversification Efforts

- Job Fairs with colleges, universities, and organizations
- Open House: introduce potential employees to the district and available positions
- Partnerships with JET and MPDE (Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education)
- DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) Diversification Grants
- Collaboration with Bridgewater State University
- Upcoming Paraprofessional Job Fair scheduled for November 2022

District Collaboration with JET

- Promote JET at district level to recruit and support JET scholars
 - Communications sent to all current Paraprofessionals
 - Communication with Paraprofessional union
 - Union leadership also shares information with membership
- Recruit, approve and pay district educators as JET mentors
- Provide support and district resources to JET scholars
- Attend annual JET meetings
- Participant in JET Evaluation surveys and activities

JET Mentor Role

District Job ad details

JET Mentor Teachers (up to 5) - School Year 2022-2023

- The mission of JET (Journey into Education and Teaching) is to help Paraprofessionals become licensed educators. JET serves a need to diversify the teaching force, racially, linguistically and economically.

Qualifications:

1. Must hold a valid DESE Educator License
2. A minimum of 5 years successful teaching experience preferred

Responsibilities:

1. Serve as a mentor for up to three (3) JET Paraprofessionals
2. Attend August Orientation Meeting and JET Paraprofessional meetings throughout the year
3. Regular (monthly) check-in and problem solving with JET Paraprofessionals
4. Participate in mentor training sessions with JET Paraprofessionals
5. Link JET Paraprofessionals to appropriate resources
6. Work with JET Paraprofessionals to develop a journal, a log of activities, a portfolio, etc.
7. Maintain a log of all meetings

Paraprofessional Job Ads

In an effort to increase awareness, we updated our job ads to include information about JET

TO: ALL PARAPROFESSIONALS BROCKTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FROM: Dr. Kathleen F. Moran, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
SUBJECT: PARAPROFESSIONAL VACANCIES

According to the terms of the contract, the following positions are being advertised for school year 2022- 2023.

...

This advertisement does not purport to spell out all of the job responsibilities and obligations of employees. Job descriptions are not meant to be all-inclusive. Management reserves the right to assign duties consistent with a paraprofessional's training and ability, regardless of whether the exact duty is listed in any written job description.

...

Brockton has an ongoing partnership with JET (Journey into Education & Teaching). "JET is a proven pathway to teaching for paraprofessionals without a bachelor's degree who want to become licensed classroom teachers in their urban community high needs schools." Brockton paraprofessionals who have two years of experience may be eligible to participate in this program. Please check out the JET website for more information: JET Journey into Education & Teaching (jetintoteaching.org)

District Plans to Enhance Partnership with JET

- Increase Communication with JET Scholars
 - Check-ins to determine progress toward completion of the program
- Increase Awareness
 - In-person and virtual informational sessions
 - Include testimonials from JET Scholars and Mentors
- School Committee formed a Diversity, Race, Equity, and Inclusion Subcommittee
 - Professional development for school committee members
 - Policies to be created

School Districts Evaluation of JET

Key Strengths & benefits of JET, according to participating school districts:

- Strong partnership in district efforts to diversify their teacher workforce –they value the flexible approach, in-depth expertise, & up-to-date information
- Improved paraeducator recruitment, development & retention in the teacher pipeline
- Increased teacher preparedness & skills among paraeducators in the program

“One of the main goals [in our strategic plan] includes increasing diversity in the teacher workforce...We identified some really talented paras in the school who have been here a while and are proven educators - they just needed some assistance in obtaining a degree and certification. It’s a nice partnership with JET to be able to deliver on that goal for the school while delivering for these professionals individually.”

Lessons Learned & Opportunities

Mentoring is vital

Long-term investment is essential

Cross-sector partnerships ensure effectiveness

Collective advocacy can lead to meaningful change

Continuous learning from research & communities informs quality programming

THANK YOU

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JET is a program of the Massachusetts Foundation for Teaching and Learning, a 501(c)(3) organization.

Questions? Comments