

Pathways to Careers in Teaching

Building New Jersey's
Paraprofessional-to-
Teacher Pipeline



NJ PATHWAYS
TO CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
Aligning Education to Build an Innovative Workforce



Presenters

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Partner Network

Community Colleges

- Bergen Community College
- Brookdale Community College
- Essex County College
- County College of Morris
- Raritan Valley Community College

Community College Partnerships Addressing Educator Workforce Shortages





Why This Work Matters

- Teacher shortages continue across New Jersey
- Universal Pre-K expansion is increasing workforce demand
- Paraprofessionals are already embedded in school communities
- Adult learners need flexible and affordable pathways
- Community colleges are uniquely positioned to support educator workforce development



The Full Pathways Project

**Development of statewide
paraprofessional certificate
pathway**



**Brookdale's NJDOE-approved P-3
Alternate Route Program**



Building the Curriculum: Starting with Stakeholder Needs

What do para-professionals and school districts actually need?

1

Statewide surveys informed curriculum development

2

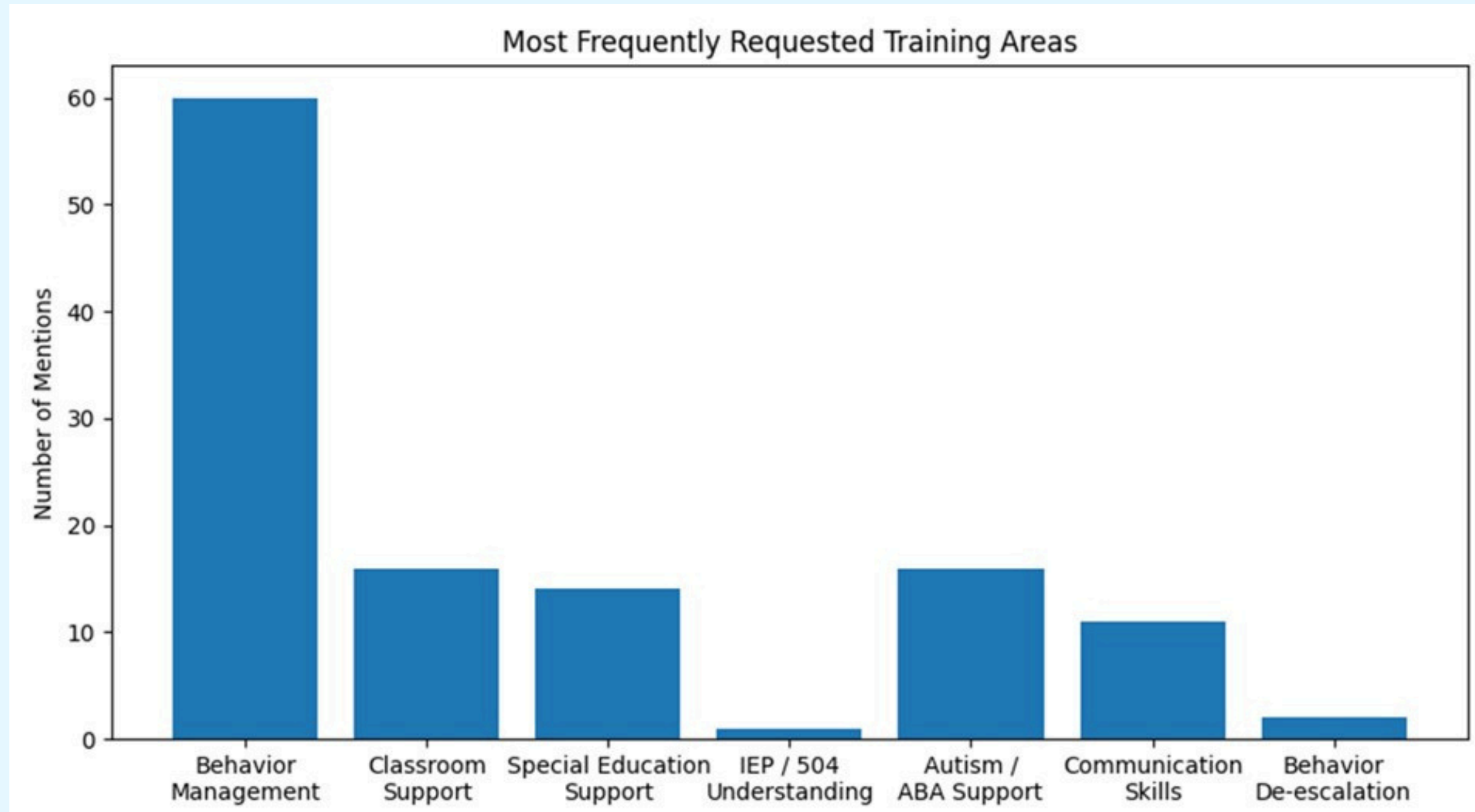
Feedback gathered from para-professionals, administrators, and practitioners

3

Curriculum intentionally aligned to workforce needs



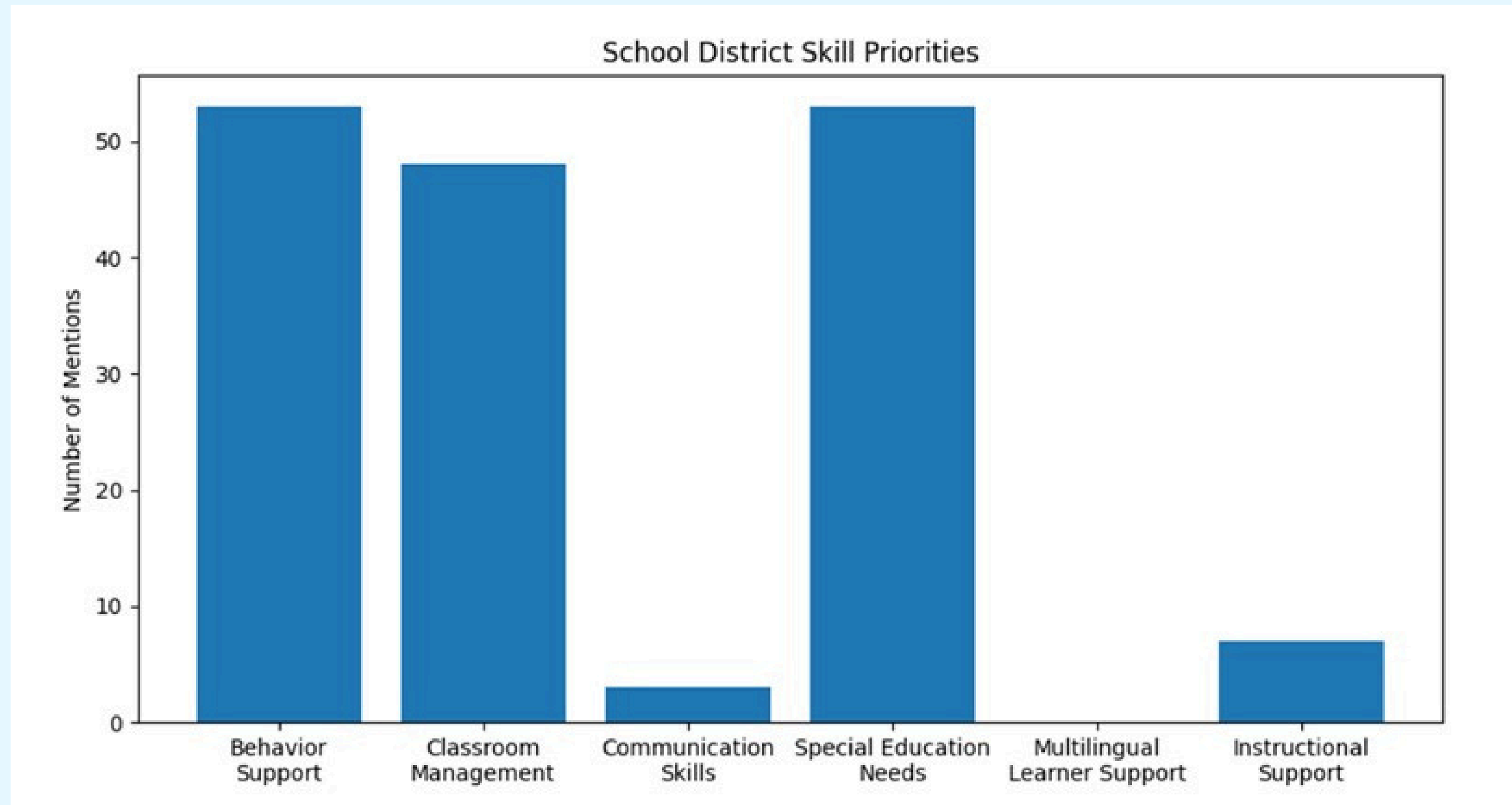
What Paraprofessionals Told Us



Behavior management, classroom support, and special education needs emerged consistently.



What School Districts Told Us



Districts emphasized practical behavior support, classroom support, and special education skills.



A woman with curly hair and glasses, seen from the back, looking towards a classroom. The background is blurred, showing other people seated at tables.

From Data to Curriculum

- Collaborative curriculum development across institutions
- Practitioner and subject matter expert involvement
- Focus on practical classroom application
- Flexible, adult learner-centered delivery
- Workforce-informed and continuously improving design



Program Structure

**Level 1:
Essential Foundations**

**Level 2:
Advanced Professional
Learning**

**Level 3:
Content-Specific
Expertise**

36 hours of stackable workforce-aligned professional development

**Topics include classroom management, IEPs, ABA fundamentals, multilingual learner support,
and executive functioning**



Pilot Implementation & Early Results

Bergen Community College successfully completed Level 1 and Level 2 pilot

Strong student demand and waitlists

Second cohort already planned

Participants reported increased confidence and practical classroom application

Pilot feedback informing future program refinement



Building Educator Career Pathways

- Paraprofessional Certificate
- Alternate Route Teacher Preparation
- P-3 / K-6 Licensure Pathways
- Master's Degree Opportunities with The College of New Jersey
- Creating stackable educator workforce pathways



Lessons Learned

Community colleges can respond quickly to workforce needs

1

Listen

Start with workforce and employer input

2

Collaborate

Collaborate early and often

3

Design

Design around adult learner realities

4

Refine

Use continuous improvement processes





What's Next

- Continued pilot implementation
- Additional cohorts and expansion
- Expanded district partnerships
- Ongoing curriculum refinement
- Exploration of statewide scalability





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Thank You!