The Paraeducator Suite

Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8

Customizing Learning Solutions
Introduction

Working closely with the leadership teams of its member districts, Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 is entering into its second year of offering the Paraeducator Suite through our Eduplanet21 Online Learning Institute. We’ve received positive feedback with regard to the scope of the suite, ease of access, resources gained, and strategies and techniques that can be easily implemented into the everyday responsibilities of paraeducators working with learners across four counties. Our Paraeducator Suite has the attention of neighboring IUs and will soon reach across Pennsylvania.

The Paraeducator Suite transforms the traditional approach of "sit and get" to a more customized and flexible format for paraeducators to access anytime, anywhere, and at a more digestible pace. The Suite anchors its content in the ten performance-based standards identified and promulgated by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education endorses the use of these ten CEC performance-based standards and their corresponding required knowledge and skills, as they define the basic content for the initial preparation and ongoing professional learning practices of special education paraeducators in Pennsylvania.

The 10 Paraeducator Standards

Paraeducator Standard #1: Foundation of Special Education
Paraeducator Standard #2: Development and Characteristics of Learners
Paraeducator Standard #3: Individual Learning Differences
Paraeducator Standard #4: Instructional Strategies
Paraeducator Standard #5: Learning Environments & Social Interactions
Paraeducator Standard #6: Language
Paraeducator Standard #7: Instructional Planning
Paraeducator Standard #8: Assessment
Paraeducator Standard #9: Professional & Ethical Practice
Paraeducator Standard #10: Collaboration
The Paraeducator Suite offers you a selection of 15 Learning Paths. Have a voice and choice in customizing your district’s paraprofessionals’ learning plan. Remember, paraeducators are required to obtain 20 hours of professional learning annually.

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<th>Learning Path Title</th>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Standard</th>
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<td>PSLP7: Classroom Management</td>
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<td>PSLP16: The Foundation of Literacy</td>
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Learning Path Titles & Descriptions

PSLP1: Welcome to the Cohort & Importance of Paraeducators
Introduces paraeducators to the cohort, Eduplanet21 and how they will be progressing through Learning Paths. This path focuses on the importance of paraeducators in their roles and responsibilities as a member of the system of support for all students.

PSLP2: Law Review
Explore the laws that govern inclusive practices and confidentiality for students with exceptionalities. Learners will be able to define and apply presumed competence for all students.

PSLP3: Collaborative Efforts
Paraeducators will analyze the roles and responsibilities of each member of the multidisciplinary team as well as identify and apply relationship building strategies that can be implemented to maximize student outcomes.

PSLP4: Clear Communication/Appreciating Diversity
Paraeducators will understand and apply person first language. They will explore diversity in the classroom/community and communicate professionally when working with teachers, students, parents, administrators, outside agencies, and colleagues.

PSLP5: My Role in Lesson Planning
Participants will identify the distinctions between paraeducators and teachers in the lesson planning process. Learners will explore the structure of a lesson plan, identify their responsibilities in Instructional delivery and support, and evaluate and adjust current practice to better meet the needs of our learners.

PSLP6: Accommodations & Modifications
Learners will compare and contrast accommodations and modifications, create a paraeducator handbook that outlines when and how accommodations and modifications are implemented with students.
PSP7: Classroom Management
Paraeducators will explore and apply a variety of techniques and tools that can be incorporated in the classroom. Learners will be able to reinforce a comprehensive classroom management system utilizing evidence-based practices.

PSP8: Instructional Activities
Learners will explore the components of explicit, direction instruction; identify learning targets, potential barriers, and accommodations and modifications that overcome barriers; and apply strategies to meet the needs of all students.

PSP9: Student Assessment & Shared Decision-Making Process
Paraeducators will explore different types of classroom assessment, identify the role of the paraeducator during data collection, and apply best assessment practices in the classroom.

PSP10: Time & Task Management
Learners will identify and apply effective strategies for time/task management, explore executive functioning as it relates to self and student, and apply strategies to assist with executive functioning for both paraeducators and students.

PSP11: Guidelines for Efficacy
This Learning Path will illustrate the factors that contribute to paraeducator efficacy (knowledge, input, continuing education, team building). Learners will explore the correlation of relationships and paraeducator effectiveness and efficacy. This Learning Path will summarize how each Learning Path contributes to increased paraeducator efficacy and student outcomes.

PSP12: Dealing with Student Behavior: Beyond Classroom Management
Do you get frustrated with student misbehavior? What do you do after you feel like you tried everything? First, you must understand that there is a reason for all behavior. You should also understand that your response to misbehavior has an effect on what a student does next. In recent years, the ratio of students that exhibit emotional and behavioral problems, at school, has steadily increased, bringing an even greater challenge to your daily work. This is your opportunity to learn how to recognize different levels of behavior, differentiate between emotional outbursts and misbehavior, and learn strategies to prevent and intervene with common student behaviors in effective ways that can improve behavior.

PSP13: Effective Characteristics of the Paraprofessional: An Ethical Approach
Paraprofessionals typically assist teachers in the classroom by providing students individual support with lessons, helping to maintain discipline, and collecting data for progress monitoring. Paraprofessionals may also supervise students on the playground, at lunch or on the school bus. Regardless of the age group or needs of the student, effective paraprofessionals share certain characteristics and ethical responsibilities. In this Learning Path, paraeducators will explore vital
responsibilities and professional characteristics of quality paraeducators with a focus on relationship building, ethical decision-making, and maintaining confidentiality in social situations and social media engagements.

PSLP14: Executive Function
Many students with disabilities may experience difficulty with executive functioning skills. When students experience difficulties with executive functioning skills, tasks that require organization, planning, time management, maintaining attention, and flexible thinking (among others) can present a challenge. Through this Learning path, you will learn about the key executive functions and explore a variety of strategies and techniques that you will be able to use and apply to your daily work to support students with impairments in executive functioning.

PSLP15: Autism 101
The 2014 Pennsylvania Autism Census Project data, in comparison with the autism population identified in the original Pennsylvania Autism Census Project, which used data from 2005, indicates a tremendous increase of services received across all age groups since the original census study was released. It also found that adults with autism receiving services were the fastest growing group in Pennsylvania. This dramatic upward trend is expected to continue. As more individuals with autism age into adulthood, it becomes imperative for us to learn more about this complex disorder. Paraeducators will explore the history and definition of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), common characteristics, and research-based interventions that you will be able to implement with the diverse population of students with autism.

PSLP16: The Foundations of Literacy
Paraeducators play an increasingly important role in today’s classroom. But, what role do you play in teaching our students to read? In this Learning Path you will learn the foundation of research-based teaching of literacy. You will explore the five areas of reading instruction and strategies to implement into the everyday classroom.
Conceptual Agreement: Paraeducator Suite

Value Added
Enrolling your paraeducators as members of IU8’s Paraeducator Suite will promote self-efficacy among your staff by building relationship strands that focus on meeting the needs of all students. The Suite is anchored in the ten performance-based standards identified by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). These standards are endorsed by the Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education as they define the basic content for the initial preparation and ongoing professional learning practices of special education paraeducators in Pennsylvania.

Measures of Success
Progress of participants will be measured by:
• Successful evaluations of IU8 staff executing the Suite
• Eduplanet21 Learning Path “activity” discussion feeds, reflections, and quarterly checkpoints of participant progress

Timing
The 2017 Paraeducator Suite window of activity will open on August 14, 2017 and close on June 15, 2018.

Joint Accountability
Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 will:
• Offer appropriate self-paced online adult learning for paraeducators
• Maintain confidentiality relative to discussions and other information
• Share successes and concerns with the district liaison or the IU8 supervisor
• Work with district points-of-contact to provide information as needed and related to quarterly checkpoint data of participant’s progression through the Suite

Districts will:
• Provide a district liaison that will communicate and receive data from IU8, and provide names and email addresses of all paraprofessional to IU 8 Administrative Assistant, Shelby Petrick
• Provide access to a technology device, technology support, and will contact IU8 should you have difficulty with login to Eduplanet21 or functionality of Learning Path content
• Notify and discuss with IU8 Assistant Directors of Education any challenges or concerns that may arise throughout the program school year

Options:
Option 1:
All paraeducators in your district will be enrolled in Cohort 1 of the Paraeducator Suite. Paraeducators will gain access to 20 hours of online, asynchronous professional learning through Eduplanet21.
Cost: $50/participant Number of paraprofessional enrolling in Option 1: ________

Option 2:
All paraeducators in your district will be enrolled in Cohort 2 of the Paraeducator Suite. Paraeducators will gain access to 20 hours of online, asynchronous professional learning through Eduplanet21.
Cost: $50/participant Number of paraprofessionals enrolling in Option 2: ________

Option 3:
This option allows districts to have some paraeducators in Cohort 1 (typically paraeducators new to the district) and some paraeducators in Cohort 2 (paras that already completed Cohort 1 during the 2016-2017 school year).
Cost: $50/participant Number of paraprofessionals enrolling in the Option 1: ________
Number of paraprofessionals enrolling in the Option 2: ________
Terms & Conditions
25% of the total value is required upon acceptance of this proposal. Progress billing will occur quarterly beginning in August 2017.

District Liaison that will work with IU 8 Assistant Directors of Education to receive, review and/or discuss data as needed and address challenges or concerns:

Name:
Title:
Phone number:
Email Address:

Acceptance
Your signature indicates acceptance of this proposal and its terms as described above.

Signature ___________________________ Signature ___________________________________
Title: ______________________________ IU8 Assistant Director of Educational Programs
Date: _____________________ Date: __________________________

Return Agreement to:

Jennifer Anderson
IU8 Assistant Director of Educational Programs and Services
4500 Sixth Avenue
Altoona, PA 16602
Email: janderson@iu08.org
Fax: (814) 949-0984