

PARA EDUCATOR

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE HANDBOOK

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NOTE: Visit eDocs, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES electronic document library, to ensure the utilization of the most current version of the forms located in this handbook.

PRO PRACTICE

Pro Practice meetings began in 1988 to provide an opportunity for union and management to get together to discuss issues before they became major problems. The intent of the forum has been to discuss issues that impact large numbers of employees rather than discussing individual situations. The expected outcome of these meetings was to resolve as many issues as possible at this level.

Both union and management representatives sit on this committee.

This booklet explains mutual agreements that have been an outcome of these meetings. Prospectively, you will be given an annual update on any agreements that are a result of this committee.

Assignments

Classroom Assignments:

- Teacher aides and teaching assistants are to remain in their scheduled assignments. Under no circumstance will a paraeducator be taken from one classroom to serve as a substitute in another classroom. The dual disruption does not justify such a move.
- Classroom teacher aides are responsible for the entire class – bus duty, lunch duty, physical and educational needs, as determined by the teacher.

Individual Aides:

- One-on-one teacher aides are responsible for one assigned student. They are responsible for bus, lunch, specials, physical and educational needs as determined by the teacher. They are to remain with student during these times.
- One-on-one teacher aides are approved by the school district and must be hired by BOCES for one designated student because of physical and/or behavioral needs. These aides are to be with their student, only. In the event designated student is absent, these aides can be reassigned within the building.
- In the event a classroom aide or one-on-one aide is absent, or a position is vacant and a substitute isn't provided, the classroom aide or the one-on-one aide is only responsible for their duties as outlined above.

Breaks

Paraeducators are eligible for up to one (1) 15-minute break per work day. This break may not be guaranteed since classroom activities and student needs must come first.

This break may not be combined with the half-hour lunch period.

Community Bus Assignment

This is a stipend assignment for Paraeducators located at sites where BOCES has buses for community outings. These community ed drivers are Paraeducators who are to perform Paraeducator duties, as well as the additional assignment of driving a school bus for these buildings. When assigned a community outing they are to report to that class and remain with that class for the day. If no outing is assigned, they are to report to the building administrator for reassignment.

The professional school bus driver responsibilities entail maintaining a safe, clean, friendly environment for their students to ride in as well as faithfully filing out and submitting all required paperwork. They must be prompt for all pick ups and drop offs. They must provide courteous service to school officials, company administrators and students. Additionally, an employee must be patient and understanding. The employee must keep company arranged appointments and attend all meetings. The employee must obtain and maintain Department of Motor Vehicles 19A and New York State Education certification and comply with Federal Motor Carrier and Department of Transportation regulations. Additionally, an employee in this class must hold a Commercial Driver's License in the appropriate class for the school bus they operate with a P endorsement.

Responsibilities Outside of Normal Teacher Paraeducator Job Description:

- Drive the bus as needed to community outings, and/or internship sites
- Maintains appropriate paperwork for the bus
- Maintains appropriate licensing for bus driving
- Must maintain DMV 19A and New York State Education certification
- Must deliver and pick up the school bus repairs and inspections as needed

Full Performance Knowledges, Skills, Abilities, and Personal Characteristics

Actively maintain the skills required by the Department of Motor Vehicles 19A and New York State Education certification, which includes, but is not limited to, periodically attending refreshers, taking road and written tests, submitting to random drug/alcohol testing and physical performance testing.

Minimum Qualifications

Applicants must hold a Commercial Driver's License in the appropriate class for the school bus they operate with a P endorsement. Must be employed, or be eligible for employment, as a full time teacher aide for Eastern Suffolk BOCES.

Duty-Free Time for Para Educators at the Technical Centers

Teacher aides and Teaching assistants at the Technical Centers are entitled to a maximum of 1.5 hours of duty-free time during the day. This is inclusive of .50 of an hour for lunch and one extra hour provided to them since their work days are generally one hour longer than that of most other Para Educators in the agency.

It is appropriate, therefore, for these Para Educators to have duty-free time from 10:15 to 11:45 A.M. (inclusive of lunch), or any other modification with the same time parameters, as appropriate.

Evaluations

Teacher aides and teaching assistants are to be formally evaluated annually at the end of the school year.

A teaching assistant's evaluation must be completed on the "Professional Staff Evaluation Form (Annual Summary).

Teacher aides are evaluated on the Paraeducator Staff Evaluation Form (Teacher Aide Annual Summary).

Half-Day Absences

Half days are taken by the clock. In other words, if an employee's lunchtime falls during the period when he/she is out on approved time, he/she is not compensated/given an extra lunch period during the portion of the day he/she is at work. If lunchtime occurs during the half day that the para is scheduled to be at work, then he/she *does* take a lunchtime.

Hepatitis Shots

All paraeducators are eligible for the hepatitis vaccine series at no cost through a BOCES-approved clinic. If an employee chooses to have the shot given by their own physician, BOCES will reimburse the employee up to \$200 upon completion of the series.

Hiring Relatives

Relatives should not be hired for the same building when at all possible.

This can create an uncomfortable environment if the employee is in a supervisory position.

In-Service - Guidelines

Workshops taken outside the employee's work day may be eligible for in-service credits.

All BOCES' sponsored workshops do not need administrative approval. Non-BOCES workshops without the Director's approval will not be eligible to be used toward the educational incentive.

Upon completion of 75 hours (which equals three [3] credits), the employee must immediately complete the Educational Incentive Reimbursement form and forward it to Human Resources. Documentation showing course completion must be attached to this form.

Interviewing Committee

Paraeducators must be represented on the interview committee, where appropriate, as referenced in the Hiring Practices Manual.

Job Responsibilities for Teacher Aides and Teaching Assistants

Teacher Aide

The duties of a Teacher Aide are to assist teachers in non-teaching duties. Some examples of typical duties for Teacher Aides are:

1. The management of records, materials, and equipment.
2. The management of the physical and behavioral needs of children.
3. Tending to the physical needs of children, especially multiply handicapped Special Education students.
4. Supervising students in areas such as cafeterias, playgrounds, and at dismissal.
5. Assisting with the scoring and duplication of tests and quizzes.
6. Monitoring students while performing tasks assigned by the teacher.
7. Other related tasks as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor.

Teaching Assistant

The Teaching Assistant may, under the general supervision of a licensed or certified teacher, be involved in direct instruction of students. Their duties are to assist teachers by performing functions such as:

1. Working with individual or small groups of pupils on special instructional projects.
2. Providing the teacher with input about pupils to assist the teacher in developing appropriate learning experiences.
3. Assisting pupils by using available instructional resources and assisting the teacher by aiding in the development of instructional materials.
4. Utilizing their own special skills and abilities by assisting in a variety of programs, such as foreign language, arts, crafts, etc..
5. Assisting in other related instructional work as may be required, and in performing any or all of the duties assigned to the Teacher Aide.
6. Other related tasks as may be assigned by the immediate supervisor.

***Any foreign language-speaking paraeducator cannot be used to interpret/translate except in the classroom in dealing with their assigned student(s).
Under no circumstances should a paraeducator be asked to babysit for sibling(s) while a parent is in the building.***

Observations for Teaching Assistants

All untenured teaching assistants may be formally observed no more than five (5) times per year. An evaluator may informally observe and give constructive guidance more often if deemed necessary.

Tenured teaching assistants may be formally observed no more than three (3) times per year and at least one (1) formal observation should occur during the second semester.

Paraeducators Employed as Bus Aides

Paraeducators who are also employed by a bus company are expected to perform all responsibilities of an Eastern Suffolk BOCES' paraeducator. This additional employment cannot impact arrival time, bus duty assignments, etc., that are expected of all full-time paraeducators.

A paraeducator who misses a staff meeting because of responsibilities as a bus employee is required to meet with a building administrator to receive information disseminated at the staff meeting. The meeting with the administrator is to take place during the paraeducator's own time (i.e. lunch or break) and should occur within one week of the staff meeting.

Paraeducators as Substitutes

Substituting for Classroom Teacher:

When a teacher calls in to report his or her absence, whether or not a special request to use the classroom paraeducator as a substitute was made, the following procedures apply:

- Substitute calling service attempts to secure a certified teacher for the position. If one is found, the certified person will be the substitute.

OR

- If a certified substitute is not available, an uncertified person will be hired and instructed to report to the building of the absent teacher to serve as either a substitute paraeducator or substitute teacher. The principal will make the decision as to which person will serve as the teacher and which will serve as the paraeducator.

Part Time and Shared Aides

When a student is enrolled in BOCES on a partial or half day basis (i.e. half in district, and half in academic, CTE or TSP), and individual aide service is required, an individual aide shall be assigned during the time of that student's attendance. This assignment shall be considered a part time Individual Aide.

When a student requires intensive management or custodial support service that does not rise to the level of requiring an individual aide, he or she can receive that additional support in a shared aide format. In order to accomplish this, another student with a similar level of need must be in the same class, and the aide will provide service as needed to both students utilizing the general model that is employed by classroom paraprofessionals.

Presenters for Paraeducator Workshops

Presenters at paraeducator workshops are eligible for a stipend. The current rate for each 15-hour workshop is \$450. The stipend(s) is(are) paid through the Paraeducator Professional Practice fund.

Reimbursement for Field Trips

Any paraeducator required to attend a field trip either during the school year or as part of their summer school assignment will be reimbursed for all related expenses.

The "Expense Voucher" form should include the paraeducators' expenses, and receipts must be attached.

Return from Leave-of-Absence

When a paraeducator returns from a leave-of-absence, they are guaranteed assignment back in the same program.

Roles and Job Responsibilities of Classroom Paraprofessionals

The roles and responsibilities of teacher aides and teacher assistants, in collaboration with the BEES Vice President, must be clarified in regard to instructional versus management/custodial duties. Considerations include:

- NCLB guidelines.
- Increasing instructional requirements related to N.Y.S. standards.
- Veteran teaching assistant staff who have met E.S.B. requirements for college credits (60).
- Veteran teacher aide staff who have historically filled classroom positions.

Current Status: A number of programs are already configured with teaching assistants in each classroom, which is consistent with the academic needs of the students enrolled. This configuration is consistent with their role to assist in the academic instruction of the students in their assigned class. It is important to note that the role of the classroom paraprofessional at E.S.B. is not limited to traditional instructional duties, but extends to a more comprehensive role in working with the student's overall needs. Several programs are in the process of transitioning to this configuration, and have a mix of teaching assistants or teacher aides in classroom assignments. Specific programs in which classroom paraprofessional assignments primarily deal with student management/custodial needs are correctly staffed with teacher aides.

Recommendation: It is recommended that programs with increasing academic standards, which require academic instructional support, will continue the current move toward staffing classroom paraprofessional positions with teaching assistants. Those programs that are currently transitioning will continue to do so, filling classroom positions with teaching assistants when vacancies occur. In this manner, current teacher aide's contributions to the program and agency will be respected, and these valued employees will not be displaced by a dramatic overhaul of the program staffing configuration. It is expected that this staffing transition will be completed over a period of three to five years.

Next Steps: To achieve this goal, it is agreed that we will:

- Identify Programs that will utilize teaching assistants as classroom paraprofessionals, based on academic need/Regents Diploma status
- Assess the current status of those identified programs in meeting this new goal.
- Implement an ongoing strategy of placing teaching assistants in classroom paraprofessional positions when vacancies occur to increase instructional capacity, without displacing valued teacher aide staff.

Salary Increase – Aide to Assistant

An aide who receives an appointment to an assistant position shall be placed on the next level of the Assistant salary schedule that represents a salary increase.

The Human Resources Department will prepare a posting at least once per year to advise all aides who have achieved 60 credits that they are eligible to apply for teaching assistant positions.

Seniority Determination

1. Original full-time appointment date in current title (includes credit for time as a Regular Substitute immediately preceding a probationary appointment). Adjusted for leaves of absence without pay.
2. Date of Board Meeting appointing the employee to current title (earlier Board meeting prevails).
3. Credit for prior service, full- or part-time, as a contract employee in any title. (Skip if none. If none and tied, go to tiebreaker #4).
4. Date of first administrator's signature on the appointment notice to current title.
5. Date of first application.

Sign Language Interpreter Responsibilities

Each sign language interpreter is assigned to an individual student.

Unless their individual student is absent, the sign language interpreter is not to be given responsibilities for other students.

Special Appointments/Regular Substitutes

- When a paraeducator is on approved unpaid leave, they shall be replaced by a special appointment (regular substitute) for the duration of the leave. The number of special appointments/regular substitutes shall equal the number of paraeducators on (an) approved leave(s).
- A paraeducator in a special appointment position can be given a probationary position, when one becomes available, as long as it is in the same building/program.

Student Information Access

All classroom personnel are to have access to their students' records.

Summer School Positions

BOCES contract paraeducators are to be given first opportunities for summer school positions.

When summer school is held in the same building or program that the paraeducator works during the regular school year, he/she will be given the first opportunity for these positions. Paraeducators in other programs will be considered for summer school employment prior to non-BOCES employees.

Vacant Positions

Classroom vacancies of three weeks or longer in duration must be filled with a probationary employee.

Individual aide positions must be filled immediately after district approval.

Workshops

Any workshop as part of the paraeducator program given after school can be used for educational incentive. These workshops have already been approved by administration and do not need a Director's additional approval.

Human Resources forwards to each facility for distribution to paraeducators a listing and description of these workshops. Each interested paraeducator returns to Human Resources a tear-off slip indicating the workshop(s) they want to take. When there are more interested participants than there is room in the program, selection will be done in Human Resources by a lottery system. Each person will be notified in writing of their selection (or non-selection) for the workshops.

Excessing

Each excessed Teaching Assistant or Sign Language Interpreter will be given every consideration for a vacant Teacher Aide position.

2/5/07

Medical Documentation

According to the para educator contract, each para educator is required to send medical documentation to the Human Resources Office when asked to do so in order to substantiate the need for said sick day.

Only the Human Resources Office can request medical documentation. Building Principals and/or Secretarial staff are not to ask for such notes, this documentation should be sent directly to Human Resources.

3/12/07

In-Service - Guidelines

Workshops taken outside the employee's work day may be eligible for in-service credits.

All BOCES' sponsored workshops do not need administrative approval. Non-BOCES workshops without the Director's approval will not be eligible to be used toward the educational incentive.

Upon completion of 45 hours (which equals three [3] credits), the employee must immediately complete the Educational Incentive Reimbursement form and forward it to Human Resources. Documentation showing course completion must be attached to this form.

11/15/07

Student Teaching Guidelines For BOCES Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants who are in a college program for teaching certification may be approved to student teach while employed at Eastern Suffolk BOCES, utilizing the standard approval process through Human Resources. Their preparation, pre-observation conference and post-observation conference must be done during non-work time; i.e., at lunch time and/or before and after school hours. The actual observation can occur during the workday since instructional responsibilities are part of their job description.

5/12/08

Posting of Vacant Positions

It is agreed that vacant positions for Teaching Assistants and Teacher Aides will be posted periodically during the course of each school year to insure that the provisions of the contract are met.

Postings will occur in September, November and February of each school year, and will include the locations at which positions in each respective title are available.

It is understood that these posted vacancies are available for new employees (Teaching Assistants or Teacher Aides) or as promotional opportunities (Teaching Assistants) and are not intended for voluntary transfers, which will continue to be administered utilizing the established process.

12/23/08

Community Bus Assignment

This is a stipend assignment for Paraeducators located at sites where BOCES has buses for community outings. These community ed drivers are Paraeducators who are to perform Paraeducator duties, as well as the additional assignment of driving a school bus for these buildings. When assigned a community outing they are to report to that class and remain with that class for the day. If no outing is assigned, they are to report to the building administrator for reassignment.

The professional school bus driver responsibilities entail maintaining a safe and clean environment for their students. In addition, the driver must completely and accurately fill out and submit all required paperwork according to timelines. They must be prompt for all pick ups and drop offs. The employee must keep company arranged appointments and attend all meetings. The employee must obtain and maintain Department of Motor Vehicles 19A and New York State Education certification and comply with Federal Motor Carrier and Department of Transportation regulations.

Responsibilities Outside of Normal Paraeducator Job Description:

- Drive the bus as needed to community outings, and/or internship sites
- Maintains appropriate paperwork for the bus
- Maintains appropriate licensing for bus driving
- Maintains DMV 19A and New York State Education certification
- Delivers and picks up the school bus for repairs and inspections as needed

Full Performance Knowledges, Skills, Abilities, and Personal Characteristics

Actively maintain the skills required by the Department of Motor Vehicles 19A and New York State Education certification, which includes, but is not limited to, periodically attending refreshers, taking road and written tests, submitting to random drug/alcohol testing and physical performance testing.

Minimum Qualifications

Applicants must hold a Commercial Driver's License in the appropriate class for the school bus they operate with a P endorsement. Must be employed, or be eligible for employment, as a full time teacher aide for Eastern Suffolk BOCES.

Direct Deposit

It is agreed that staff will be notified via e-mail when Direct Deposit is turned off.

May 26, 2010

Sign Language Interpreters as Substitutes

1. In instances where a Sign Language Interpreter substitutes for a Teaching Assistant, members shall receive an additional \$10.00 per day beginning on the first day of that assignment.
2. This substitute payment is in addition to the employee's regular rate of pay.

Personal Leave Criteria for Educational Purposes

A one semester Educational Leave will be granted in accordance with the contract.

If additional time is needed to complete educational requirements, the Agency will determine whether to grant an additional Personal Leave for educational purposes according to the following criteria:

1. Three (3) years of excellent attendance (average of no more than seven (7) sick days taken for each of three (3) years).
2. Overall average or above average, or ratings of effective or highly effective, end of the year evaluations for certificated staff; or all Satisfactory (S) evaluations for non-certificated staff.
3. Tenured for certificated staff; or completed five (5) year probation period for non-certificated staff.
4. Recommendation of immediate supervisor based on performance and impact of leave on program.
5. Pursuing a degree in an associated educational field.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

Staff members who, as a result of an involuntary transfer, are transferred from a program in one department to a program in another department, must return to the program from which they were transferred upon a vacancy becoming available in their respective job title.

Examples:

1. A staff member at the Milliken Technical Center in the Career, Technical and Adult Education Department is involuntarily transferred to the Brookhaven Learning Center in the Special Education Department. Upon a vacancy occurring in the Career, Technical and Adult Education Department, that staff member must return to Career, Technical and Adult Education.
2. A staff member at the Sayville Academic Center in the Special Education Department is involuntarily transferred to the Suffolk Aviation Academy in the Career, Technical and Adult Education Department. Upon a vacancy occurring in the Special Education Department, that staff member must return to Special Education.

INVOLUNTARY TRANSFERS WITHIN DEPARTMENTS

Staff members who, as a result of an involuntary transfer, are transferred to a program within their respective departments (i.e. – a staff member at the Milliken Technical Center in the Career, Technical and Adult Education Department is involuntarily transferred to the Brookhaven Technical Center, within the same department; or – a staff member at the Sayville Academic Center in the Special Education Department is involuntarily transferred to the Masera Learning Center, within the same department) will be canvassed to determine whether or not they wish to return to the program from which they were involuntarily transferred upon a vacancy becoming available in their original location.

As per standard practice, if a staff member declines the opportunity to return to their original program, that decision shall effectively alter the nature of the transfer to "voluntary", and all rights to return to their original program location will be forfeited.

RECALLS

When staff members are excessed, they are entitled to staff recall or PEL recall. In instances of PEL recalls subsequent to excessing, a staff member will be placed in the department they were excessed from, when an opening within that job category and that department exists. Specific assignments will be determined by the respective Department Director, based on program needs.

In instances in which there are no vacancies within the staff member's "department of origin" at the time of the PEL Recall process, staff members will be placed in existing openings by the appropriate Department Director, based on program needs. If such placements effectively "reassign" staff from one department to another, then due consideration will be given to a voluntary transfer request during the school year that such staff members submit a voluntary transfer request. Such a voluntary transfer will be considered during the school year, as an outcome of the "extraordinary circumstance" created by a PEL Recall that results in a reassignment from one department to another.

All Involuntary Transfer recalls to emerging vacancies will be processed, and an outcome determined as per contract and practice, prior to consideration of any voluntary transfer request.

The "Due Consideration" outlined will in no way be construed as a "right" on the part of the staff member to the approval of the voluntary transfer request. All standard voluntary transfer contract provisions and operational practice will apply.

ITINERANT STAFF

Staff in the following titles is considered itinerant and therefore, can be assigned at the discretion of ESBOCES as needed:

- Sign Language Interpreters
- Bilingual Interpreter Support Staff (Bilingual Aides)

As itinerant staff, assignments may change from year to year and/or during a given school year and are not considered "transfers". Staff in these titles may however submit 'voluntary' requests for specific assignments which will be considered during the annual process of scheduling the assignments of itinerant staff.

Whenever possible, staff will be notified at least one week prior to the start of school in September.

BEES Para Educators: Pro-practice Agreement

APPOINTMENT OF BILINGUAL INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF (BILINGUAL AIDES) TO PART-TIME SPECIAL EDUCATION AIDE POSITION

Staff members, who, as a result of being partially excessed from a 1.0 FTE Bilingual Aide position, who are subsequently appointed to a part-time Special Education Aide position, will be considered a regular substitute in the Special Education Aide position (.5 FTE). Therefore, they will retain placement on the Bilingual Aide seniority list and continue to accrue time on that list only.

Regular substitutes are appointed with an end date and do not accrue seniority.

Reimbursement for Field Trips

Any para educator required to attend a field trip either during the school year or as part of their summer school assignment will be reimbursed for all related expenses. The expense voucher form should include the para educators' expenses, and receipts must be attached.

In the absence of individual receipts, each para educator should submit an expense voucher with a note from his/her supervising administrator confirming that he/she attended the field trip, paid for his/her admission, and is seeking reimbursement.

Foreign Language-Speaking Para Educators

Any foreign language-speaking para educator cannot be used to interpret/translate except in the classroom in dealing with their assigned student(s).

10/7/15

42

(See also page 11)

Supervision of Sibling(s)

Under no circumstances should a para educator be asked to babysit for sibling(s) while a parent is in the building.

10/7/15

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(See also page 11)