

## **Station 2 - Paraeducator Hiring Phenomenon/ Including Draft Policy to Recruit January 8, 2025**

Workshop Facilitators: Administrator Melissa Haberern and Paraeducator Kerin Edwards

### **Hiring Process of Paraeducators:**

- The special education administration is responsible for the hiring process for all special education paraeducators. This includes resume screening, scheduling interviews, conducting interviews, checking references, communication to HR, communication back to the candidate and communicating to buildings where paraeducators will be placed.
- Hiring paraeducators is a year long process due to constant resignations throughout the school year.
- The special education administration has conducted the hiring process for 30 paraeducator positions from July 2024 to present.
- 12 Resignations since school started (August 2024)
- Each paraeducator hire takes approximately 3 hours to complete the entire hiring process from start to finish.
- Each paraeducator hired requires training when they start which is the primary role of the special education case manager, BCBA and or school psychologist. (ex. Full day PMT training, Mandated Training, ABA Training, BIP Training, Orientation to student and their IEP)
- Paraeducator applicants often come with little to no experience. Some have experience in a daycare setting, have worked as a CNA or are stay at home caretakers whose child just started school full-time. Every once in a while we are fortunate to find someone with school based experience but this is not the norm.
- The most recent candidate pool is not invested in the job. Absenteeism rate is very high making it very challenging to successfully run our specialized programs. Quality special education staff is at risk for burnout due to the constant need to cover those who do not come to work.

### **Numbers of Full-time Paraeducators by School and Current Openings (numbers do not include part-time paras)**

- 16 Center School / 2 openings
- 11 Crystal Lake / 0 openings
- 14 Windermere / 0 openings
- 12 EMS / 1 openings
- 21 EHS / 2 opening
- 7 ECLIPSE / 1 opening
- 6 E-BASES / 1 opening
- 8 S-BASES / 1 opening
- 15 PK / 0 openings
- Total: 110 Full-time Special Education paras

### **Possible Remedies to Mitigate Challenges:**

- Currently, using an agency to assist with recruiting candidates (forced solution and a costly one). Benefit is they have a larger pool and positions can be filled at a faster rate. Con, the cost of the para is greater than if we hired the para on our own and 1 out of 4 hires not working out with the agency.
- New draft policy allowing all paid employees to have the option of sending their child to Ellington High School even if they do not reside in town at a discounted tuition rate.
- When hired, candidate is given credit for their experience and are brought in higher on the pay scale
- Exploring paraeducator starting pay rate to be more competitive