

Arkansas Department of Education - Special Education Unit Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities Personnel Development, July 2019

Personnel Development Activities

Paraprofessional Supports and Training

The Arkansas Department of Education – Special Education Unit (ADE-SEU) maintains a registry of paraprofessional training on MySped, which includes required courses taken by paraprofessionals serving students with special needs.

Six 1-hour Special Education Training Modules are available through ArkansasIDEAS for all licensed Arkansas educators and administrators. These Modules address the Foundations of Special Education and student Behavior and are required Modules for paraprofessionals as well as long term special education substitutes and teachers on additional licensure plans for special education.

Other quality courses are available for paraprofessional training through ArkansasIDEAS by means of its non-licensed section. The Special Health Care Needs Training Module is currently being finalized. The updated PowerPoint will be placed on the ADE-SEU Paraprofessional webpage for use by districts and educational cooperatives once it has been reviewed and approved by the ADE.

Recruitment and Retention

The ADE-SEU supports the recruitment and retention of educational personnel at the local level through collaboration with educational service cooperatives.

The ADE-SEU now has agreements with two out of state Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) that offer programs for Visual or Hearing Specialists. The ADE-SEU will be supporting recruitment and training of licensed Arkansas teachers seeking to add Visual or Hearing Specialist certifications by means of stipends, available after certification and time spent teaching in a qualified position.

SEU Personnel Development Staff actively partners with the ADE's Teacher Recruitment and Retention program by attending and supporting all "Become an Arkansas Teacher" events and works with Educator Prep and Licensure Units to attract and support persons interested in becoming special education teachers. SEU staff also directly assist teachers and others interested in entering the field of Special Education by providing information via phone and email.

Staff at ADE-SEU work with personnel at the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) to share information about the Teacher Opportunity Program (TOP), State Teacher Education Program (STEP), and loan forgiveness programs. These programs encourage new personnel to enter the field and current educators to acquire special education licensure.

Educational Interpreters

Each year the ADE-SEU surveys districts to assess needs regarding educational interpreters. The ADE-SEU will be collaborating to offer free Educational Interpreter Performance

Assessment (EIPA) opportunities for interpreters working in educational settings and has scheduled its yearly free workshop for July 18-19, 2019, to help Educational Interpreters increase their skills and assist them in obtaining their license and credentials required for working in public schools. The ADE-SEU collaborates with the Arkansas School for the Deaf, Arkansas Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (ARID) and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Interpreter Education Program Stakeholder group to support Educational Interpreters and schools in Arkansas.