

1:1 PARAEDUCATORS

In the last several years, there has been a vast increase in the request for 1:1 paraeducators, both in inclusive services and in the special education classroom. The philosophy of this Cooperative is to provide an adequate number of certified and/or classified staff to meet students' required needs. A true 1:1 para has been reserved for a very small percentage of students, much less than 1% of our total population. There is a significant difference between a student needing small group time in which they receive individual attention, those that need some 1:1 interventions for behavior or other areas periodically throughout the day and a legitimate 1:1 para being needed. An example of a true 1:1 para would be for an included student with significant physical needs that warrants constant monitoring of medical signs and symptoms and assistance with any physical transfers, etc. The expectation within a special education classroom would be to adequately staff the room to meet student needs as opposed to designating a 1:1 para on the IEP.

In IEP's, instead of writing that a 1:1 para is needed, with the rare exception of those described above, some examples would be:

“The student needs assistance during (list activities or subjects).”

“The student requires constant or continual assistance during (list).”

An expectation of the Cooperative is that all teachers will work with varying levels of abilities and ages in different subjects. Although 1:1 paras are required from time to time, a 1:1 para can have several negative effects for a student such as codependence or overdependence, learned helplessness and reducing the student's interactions with peers.

Because of the significant increase in requests for 1:1 paras, we are changing our procedures for determining the need. First, if you foresee a possible need for a 1:1 para, you must contact your Cooperative administrator for discussion and invite them to the IEP meeting at a time where the Cooperative administrator can attend. If a student is in Interrelated and currently has a 1:1 para on the IEP, you must contact your Coop administrator and invite them to the next IEP meeting.

Second, the enclosed documentation must be filled out when putting a 1:1 paraeducator on a student's IEP. The form will need to be filled out by the team during the IEP meeting. You do not need to fill out the form if you are not considering a 1:1 para on the IEP.

When you are submitting schedules documenting the need for an additional para (not necessarily 1:1) for your classroom, the documentation will need to be signed by the building principal. When requesting additional paras, the schedule must include the following:

- **Schedules of teacher and all other paras**
- **Number of students being served during each reported time period**
- **Areas which cannot be covered with current paras**
- **Any additional information regarding specific student needs**

Before determining para support for any student, the following questions should be used as a guide:

- What natural supports can be provided by the regular education teacher &/or peers?
- What accommodations, modifications, methods and strategies can be put in place before considering an additional person? This could include some type of assistive technology.
- When is support needed ? What subjects and types of activities?
- When can the student be independent?

Special education teachers need to directly serve students who are in inclusion. If a paraeducator is covering students in inclusion, the special education teacher must still know and work with the students. It is recommended that the special education teacher schedule a regular time, about twice a month, where the special education teacher goes to inclusion and the para works with students in the resource room.

If you have questions about the information or procedures in this memo, please contact your Cooperative administrator.