



**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA
AND
THE POLK EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, INC.**

PARAEDUCATOR-TEACHER APPRENTICE PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Polk Education Association, Inc. (PEA) is the certified bargaining agent for the School District of Polk County, Florida (D/B/A Polk County Public Schools) (PCPS); and the PCPS is the employer and party to the Paraeducator Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with PEA; and,

WHEREAS, The Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentice Program is a teacher pipeline pilot program that will prepare selected Paraeducators to satisfy a competency-based education bachelor's degree through a partnership between PCPS and Polk State University.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree to the program as follows:

- 1. Paraeducator Selection:** Paraeducators will be selected from the pool of qualified candidates. District representatives from Office of Acceleration & Innovation and Teacher Engagement as well as representatives from Polk State College will select participants. Selection is based on strength of application including supervisor recommendation, Personal Objective Statement, and video submission expressing interest in participating in the program.
- 2. Duties and Expectations:** This position exists to provide on the job training as a pathway to earning a bachelor's degree in education. The Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentice provides direct instruction alongside a mentor teacher. All college coursework is completed through competency-based assessments and online and face-to-face learning while performing essential responsibilities. Note: Duration of this position is two (2) years to complete the Teacher Apprenticeship program, not to exceed three (3) years. It may be extended to three (3) years if the apprenticeship changes schools or districts.

The Human Resource Services Division and the Polk Education Association will review any other requests for extension due to extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis. The decision of the Chief of Human Resource Services Division shall be final and binding, and the decision shall not be subject to the grievance procedure.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING PARAEDUCATOR-TEACHER APPRENTICE PROGRAM

Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentices will follow the same work schedule as their mentor teacher with the same 7.75-hour workday, 196-day work calendar with 6 paid holidays, duty-free lunch, and all planning time provisions in Teacher Articles 3 and 6. Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentices cannot be used to sub or cover another position on campus. If the mentor teacher is absent, a substitute teacher must be secured for the mentor teacher's absence. The Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentice cannot be listed as a "teacher of record."

- 3. Pay Schedule:** The Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentice Program is different than a regular paraeducator paygrade as this program is not meant to exceed three (3) years while the apprentice fulfills the requirements of a competency-based bachelor's degree in education. Therefore, the apprentice pay schedule levels are based on completion of program benchmarks.

Level A: Entry Level into the Apprenticeship Program

196 days/year, 1,519 hours/year, 7.75 hours/day

\$21.40 per hour \$32,506 annually

Level B: After completion of Semester 1 \$1,500 bonus

Level C: After completion of Semester 2 \$2,000 bonus

Level D: After completion of Semester 3 \$3,000 bonus

Level E: After completion of Semester 4 \$4,000 bonus

After Human Resources confirms successful completion of a semester, the Paraeducator-Teacher Apprentice will move to the next pay level with the associated one-time bonus to top out at Level E. The bonus will not be prorated. After completion of the entire apprenticeship program with certification requirements, the Paraeducator will be eligible to apply for an instructional position covered under Teacher Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- 4. Teacher Mentors** (See Teacher Article XIV – Professional Qualifications and Assignments): Teachers assigned by the principal/supervisor as the designated Professional Education Competence (PEC) mentor for new hires will be paid a total supplement not to exceed \$500 per assigned mentee teacher, subject to successful completion, upload, review, and approval by Professional Development staff of a minimum of four (4), but not to exceed seven (7) mentoring tools per assigned



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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
PARAEDUCATOR-TEACHER APPRENTICE PROGRAM**

mentee. Completion of less than four (4) and less than seven (7) mentoring tools will result in a prorated supplement of \$71.43 per reviewed and approved mentoring tool. PEC mentors will be paid only once per reviewed and approved tool.

This Memorandum of Understanding will expire June 30, 2028.

POLK EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, INC.

POLK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

By: _____

**Stephanie Yocum
President
Polk Education Association**

By: _____

**Frederick R. Heid
Superintendent
Polk County Public Schools**

Date

7/17/25

Date

7/22/25

- c: Jason Pitts, Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Staff
Joseph McNaughton, III, Associate Superintendent, Chief Academic Officer
Brian Warren, Associate Superintendent, Human Resource Services
Andrew Baldwin, Senior Director, Federal Programs
Tara McDowell, Senior Director, Payroll Department, Business Services
Dr. Curtis Williams, Senior Director, Human Resource Services
Alyson Dort, Director, Title I, Federal Programs
Kellie Jarrett, Senior Coordinator, Federal Programs

Cost Center: 93901000000

Fund: 42041725

Funded Program: G42041725-23

Functional Area: 6400

IIQ Ticket: 217119