



Job Interview Competition

Overview

The Job Interview Competition is an opportunity for FEA members to develop and practice their interview skills, as well as cover letter and résumé writing skills. In this competition, entrants apply for a position as a paraprofessional (position description can be found below). This includes submitting a cover letter explaining why the entrant is a good candidate for the position, as well as a résumé that details relevant work, volunteer, and educational experiences. The cover letter should complement – not duplicate – the entrant’s resume, explain the reasons for the entrant’s interest in the position and school, and identify his or her own most relevant skills or experiences. The letter should express a high level of interest and knowledge about the position.

Judges will review the cover letters and résumés and — just like any job application/interview process — candidates will be interviewed for a paraprofessional position. Interviews will be held during a Zoom video session at the FEA Regional Virtual Conference at FIU. The judges will act as the school district’s hiring committee and will ask questions of the job candidates one at a time. Since high school graduates are eligible to be employed as paraprofessionals in many districts, this competition offers an immediate opportunity for a real-world application of the work entailed in participation.

This is an individual competition. Only one entry per chapter will be considered. Each chapter must select one student to represent them. Twelve (12) entries total will be accepted for this competition. Entries will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.



Job Interview Competition

Competition Guidelines

- A. The sponsoring teacher must submit the Online Competition Entry Form **by 5:00 pm on Friday, November 5, 2021**.
- B. The contestant must submit a cover letter and résumé by **5:00 pm on Monday, November 8, 2021** via email to feaconference@fiu.edu. The contestant's full name and the name of this competition must appear in the email subject line. Cover letters and résumés received after this deadline will not be considered.
- C. Entrants will apply for the following teaching assistant position: Paraprofessional (see job description included in this PDF).
- D. The cover letter must follow a standard cover letter format; review the information on this link (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/job_search_letters/cover_letters_1_quick_tips/index.html) to see expectations for formatting and content of a successful cover letter. Note: You do not need to already possess a high school diploma to participate in this competition but be sure to indicate in your materials when you expect to receive the diploma.
- E. The cover letter must be typed and in English. It should not exceed one page.
- F. The résumé may follow a standard résumé format; review the information on this link (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/resumes_and_vitas/index.html) to see expectations for formatting and content of a standard résumé. However, students may use alternative résumé formats if they feel that will put them in the best possible position to obtain the job they are seeking. (Always remember your audience!).
- G. The résumé should be typed and in English. It should not exceed two pages.
- H. The résumé should include at least two references.
- I. All information in the cover letter and resume must be truthful.
- J. The interview will last for approximately 5 to 7 minutes. All students will be asked similar interview questions by a panel of judges acting as the district's hiring committee.

Judging and Scoring

- A. The judges' decision is final.
- B. Contestants agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules and Code of Ethics for Virtual Events and the decisions of the judges.
- C. The entry will be scored using the Job Interview Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. The sponsoring teacher must complete and submit the Online Competition Entry Form.
- B. The link to access the Online Competition Entry Form will be available on the Eventbrite Online Event page.



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Job Description

Title: Paraprofessional

Qualifications:

1. Have a high school diploma or equivalent at start of employment. (Note: You do not need to already possess a high school diploma to participate in this competition but be sure to indicate in your materials when you expect to receive the diploma.)
2. Proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking the English language.
3. Have authorization to work in the USA.
4. Have a clear record of service from prior employers, if any.

Please send application materials to:

Smithfield Independent School District

Attn: Melanie Jackson, Director of Human Resources

214 Arthur Avenue

Smithfield, USA 01776

Smithfield Independent School District is seeking paraprofessionals for the coming school year. Paraprofessionals are teaching assistants who provide instructional services to students under the general supervision of a certified teacher. In New York City, most paraprofessionals work in special education and early childhood education settings. Full-time paraprofessionals receive a generous benefits package (healthcare, paid leave, pension, etc.) and may avail themselves to opportunities such as tuition assistance and paid release time for college study. According to glassdoor.com, the national average salary in 2020 for full-time paraprofessional educators is \$33,302.

Performance Responsibilities

The role of the paraprofessional is to assist teachers with class work and/or assist with the daily care of students with emotional, cognitive, physical handicaps, autism, and other special needs. Their responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the following tasks:

1. One-on-one or small group instruction as outlined by the teacher.
2. Reinforcing behavior through the use of positive behavior support.
3. Teaching daily living skills such as independent feeding, dressing, toileting.
4. Aiding occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech teachers and adaptive physical education providers during instruction.
5. Guiding and assisting students in small group instruction settings with class routines and in transitioning from one activity to the next.
6. Teaching students, under direction of teacher in the following areas: recreation, motor, vocational, socialization and communication utilizing the workshop model in Literacy and Mathematics.
7. Assisting students with ambulation within the school premises and on class trips.
8. Collecting data documenting student behavior for instructional purposes.
9. Writing anecdotal information concerning student behavior.
10. Providing language assistance for bilingual students.

Position Type: Part-time or Full Time

Positions Available: 10

**Some material in this document was edited and reproduced from <http://schools.nyc.gov/Careers/SubPara>.*



Job Interview Competition

Cover Letter & Resume

Points Available	Accomplished 8 – 7	Commendable 6 – 5	Developing 4 – 3	Needs Improvement 2 – 1
Cover Letter Clarity	Reflects professional caliber of organization and clarity in expressing interest in the position and providing evidence for the student's qualifications.	Reflects commendable student-caliber organization and clarity in expressing interest in the position and providing evidence for the student's qualifications.	Reflects developing organization and clarity in expressing interest in the position and providing evidence for the student's qualifications.	Reflects need for a significant redesign/rewriting for organization and clarity.
Cover Letter Strength	Reflects outstanding, professional-caliber credentials and accomplishments to make an overwhelming case for the student's qualifications for the position. Expertly complements résumé without redundancy.	Reflects commendable credentials and accomplishments to make a commendable but not overwhelming case for the student's qualifications for the position. Succeeds mostly in complementing résumé with minimal redundancy.	Reflects developing credentials and accomplishments that indicate steps in a positive direction but do not yet make a sufficient case for the student's qualifications for the position. Reflects some redundancy with résumé, which weakens impact.	Credentials and accomplishments need significant strengthening in order to make a sufficient case for the student's qualifications for the position. Does not complement cover letter or reflects excessive redundancy with résumé, which weakens impact.
Cover Letter Mechanics	Reflects a professional-quality document. Contains no errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a commendable, student-level document with 1 or 2 errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a document in need of some proofreading and/or revision. Contains 3 or errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a document in need of a significant review. Contains more than 4 errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).



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Cover Letter & Resume

Points Available	Accomplished 8 – 7	Commendable 6 – 5	Developing 4 – 3	Needs Improvement 2 – 1
Resume Clarity	Reflects professional caliber of having all aspects organized and clearly understandable. All vital information is included and clearly marked.	Reflects commendable student-caliber of having all aspects organized and understandable. All vital information is included and marked.	Reflects inconsistent organization and clarity in the document. Some vital information is missing or not clearly marked.	Reflects need for a significant redesign/rewriting for organization and clarity. Irrelevant information may be present.
Resume Strength	Reflects outstanding, professional-caliber credentials and accomplishments to make an overwhelming case for the student's qualifications for the position. Expertly complements cover letter without being redundant.	Reflects commendable credentials and accomplishments to make a commendable but not overwhelming case for the student's qualifications for the position. Succeeds mostly in complementing cover letter with minimal redundancy.	Reflects developing credentials and accomplishments that indicate steps in a positive direction but do not yet make a sufficient case for the student's qualifications for the position. Reflects some redundancy with cover letter, which weakens impact.	Credentials and accomplishments need significant strengthening in order to make a sufficient case for the student's qualifications for the position. Does not complement cover letter or reflects excessive redundancy with cover letter, which weakens impact.
Resume Mechanics	Reflects a professional-quality document. Contains no errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a commendable, student-level document with 1 or 2 errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a document in need of some proofreading and/or revision. Contains 3 or 4 errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).	Reflects a document in need of a significant review. Contains more than 4 errors in mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation, formatting, capitalization).



Job Interview Competition

Interview

Points Available	Accomplished 8 – 7	Commendable 6 – 5	Developing 4 – 3	Needs Improvement 2 – 1
Understanding of Position	Demonstrates deep knowledge and understanding of the job position and its duties/requirements. Creates a very compelling case for why he/she is an excellent fit for the position.	Demonstrates commendable knowledge and understanding of the job position. Offers some reasons that create a decent but not compelling case for why he/she is a fit for the position.	Demonstrates some knowledge and understanding of the position. Creates a partial but ultimately not compelling case for why he/she is a fit for the position.	Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding of the position. Does not create a compelling case for why he/she is a fit for the position.
Depth of Responses	Provides consistently specific, logical, and comprehensive, on-topic responses to judges' questions.	Provides mostly specific, logical, and comprehensive, on-topic responses to judges' questions.	Provides mostly inconsistent or superficial responses to judges' questions. Responses may lack specificity, logic, or direct correlation to the heart of the question.	Provides minimal depth, specificity, logic, or direct correlation to the heart of the questions.
Professional Demeanor	Reflects professional-caliber body language, dress, speech, sincerity, and confidence.	Reflects commendable student-caliber body language, dress, speech, sincerity, and confidence.	Reflects developing understanding of what is entailed in professional-caliber body language, dress, speech, sincerity, and confidence.	Reflects minimal understanding of what is entailed in professional-caliber body language, dress, speech, sincerity, and confidence.
Overall Impact & Persuasiveness	Reflects a highly qualified candidate who is well-prepared to excel in the position.	Reflects an employable candidate is prepared to try out his/her skills in the position.	Reflects a candidate not yet ready for the position but who is currently on the road to preparedness.	Reflects a candidate who needs significant skill-building and preparation before being ready to excel in the position.
Points Available	4		0	
Hired?	YES		NO	