



Job Interview Competition

Overview

The Job Interview competition offers FEA members a unique opportunity to refine their interview skills and enhance their abilities in cover letter and résumé writing. In this event, participants will apply for a paraprofessional position, as described below.

Participants must:

1. Submit a cover letter detailing their qualifications for the position.
2. Provide a résumé that outlines relevant work, volunteer, and educational experiences.

The cover letter should:

- Complement, not duplicate, the résumé.
- Explain the entrant's interest in the position and the school.
- Highlight the most relevant skills or experiences.
- Show a high level of enthusiasm and understanding of the position.

Judges will:

1. Review the cover letters and résumés.
2. Conduct on-site interviews at the FEA Regional Conference at FIU, simulating a real-world hiring process.

Judges will act as a school district's hiring committee and will interview candidates one at a time. Given that high school graduates can often be employed as paraprofessionals, this competition provides a valuable, real-world application of the skills participants develop.

Participation Details

- This is an individual competition.
- Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted. Each chapter must select one student to represent it.
- A maximum of twelve (12) entries total will be accepted, on a first-come, first-served basis.

The guidelines for the FIU Job Interview Competition are adapted from the national Educators Rising competition guidelines and are used for educational purposes. All credit for the original competition structure, objectives, and evaluation criteria goes to Educators Rising. FIU's adaptations are intended to align with our institutional context and support student success within our programs.



Job Interview Competition

Competition Guidelines

- A. The competitor must submit a cover letter and résumé by **5:00 pm on Friday, November 6, 2026**. The cover letter and resume must be attached to a single email as PDF files. The email should be sent to feaconference@fiu.edu. The email subject line must include the competitor's full name and the name of the competition. Cover letters and resumes received after this deadline will not be considered.
- B. Entrants will apply for the following teaching assistant position: Paraprofessional (see job description included in this PDF).
- C. 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.
- D. The cover letter must be typed and in English. It should not exceed one page.
- E. 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 believe it will put them in the best possible position to secure the job they are seeking. (Always remember your audience!).
- F. The résumé should be typed and in English. It should not exceed two pages.
- G. The résumé should include at least two references.
- H. All information in the cover letter and resume must be truthful.
- I. 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. Competitors must be present at the scheduled time; otherwise, they will be disqualified.
- B. The judges' decision is final.
- C. Competitors agree to be bound by the FEA General Competition Rules.
- D. The entry will be scored using the Job Interview Competition rubric.

How to Enter

- A. This is an individual competition. Only one (1) entry per chapter will be accepted.
- B. All entries for individual and/or chapter competitions must be submitted by the chapter's sponsoring teacher via the Online Competition Entry Form **by 5:00 pm on Friday, October 30, 2026**.
- C. Entries submitted by email will not be accepted.



Job Interview Competition

Job Description

Title: Paraprofessional

Please send application materials to:
Smithfield Independent School District
Attn: Melanie Jackson, Director of Human Resources
214 Arthur Avenue
Smithfield, USA 01776

Qualifications:

1. Have a high school diploma or equivalent at the 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.

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. Paraprofessionals may work in a variety of educational settings, including special education and early childhood education. Full-time paraprofessionals may receive benefits such as healthcare, paid leave, retirement benefits, tuition assistance, and opportunities for continued education. According to ZipRecruiter.com, the national average annual salary for full-time paraprofessional educators in 2026 is \$34,266.

Performance Responsibilities

The role of the paraprofessional is to assist teachers with classroom work and/or provide daily care to students with emotional, cognitive, and physical disabilities, 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 using positive behavior support.
3. Teaching daily living skills such as independent feeding, dressing, and toileting.
4. Aiding occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists, 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 the direction of the 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>.*

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Cover Letter & Resume

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Cover Letter Clarity	Reflects the professional caliber of the 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 giving 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 praiseworthy 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.	The student's credentials and accomplishments require significant strengthening to make a compelling case for their qualifications for the position. Does not complement a cover letter or reflect 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 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Resume Clarity	Reflects a professional caliber, with all aspects organized and clearly understandable. All vital information is included and clearly marked.	Reflects a commendable student caliber, with 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 the need for significant redesign and rewriting to improve 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 the 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 the 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 the cover letter, which weakens the impact.	The student's credentials and accomplishments require significant strengthening to make a compelling case for their qualifications for the position. Does not complement the cover letter or reflect excessive redundancy with it, which weakens its 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).

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Interview

Points Available	Accomplished 16 – 13	Commendable 12 – 9	Developing 8 – 5	Needs Improvement 4 – 1
Understanding of Position	Demonstrates deep knowledge and understanding of the job position and its duties/requirements. Creates a very compelling case of 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 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 fit for the position.	Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding of the position. Does not create a compelling case for why he/she is 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 a 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 who 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	