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As an assistant principal, I have valued my role in working with building level paraeducators. These professionals are strategic and valued members of our staff and I have worked hard to empower them by increasing their skill base and giving them a voice within our school community. By working directly with our paraeducators and teams, I have helped them to determine needs for professional development to ensure their success in working with both students and staff. Over the years, I have provided professional development in the areas of academic instruction, behavioral interventions, school-wide management systems, technology, organization, and the implementation of the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) when working with students with special education needs.

I have coordinated professional learning opportunities involving resources within the building, such as our reading and math support teachers, technology and media staff, interventionists and special education team. I have also worked with county level staff to provide additional professional learning opportunities for our paraeducators and share opportunities to further their formal education if desired.

In addition, I have worked with our paraeducators to develop a schedule that allows them time to work with students, complete duties and responsibilities, as well as participate in the ongoing professional development opportunities with their fellow teaching teammates. The paraeducators that I have worked with over the years have found their voices and have become important and invaluable members of the staff. They are the first to join committees and the first to offer their support and assistance wherever it is needed in the building. It is important that we lift up these essential staff members and help them to recognize their significant impact on students, staff and the school community.