PROVISO AREA FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

"QUALITY EDUCATION WITH CARE FOR THE HUMAN SPIRIT".

PAEC CENTER BOARDROOM - 9:00 AM

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

AGENDA

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **STRATEGIC PLANNING**
   Presentation by Ms. Nimisha Bhatt from West 40
3. **PAEC ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT UPDATES**
   The information is attached.
4. **CLOSED SESSION**
5. **RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION**
6. **APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES**
7. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**
   A. **APPROVAL OF PAYROLL**
   B. **APPROVAL OF BILLS**
   C. **APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL REPORT**
8. **OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
9. **NEW BUSINESS**
   A. **APPROVAL OF CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT REPORT**
   B. **CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT**
   C. **PROVISO TOWNSHIP GLADIATOR**
   D. **THE ANSWER, INC. FACILITY USE AGREEMENT.**
10. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S INFORMATIONAL REPORT**
    A. **CURRENT DISTRICT CHILD COUNT 2026-2027**
       The information is attached.
    B. **CURRENT ENROLLMENT AND CLASSROOM STAFFING PATTERNS 2026-2027**
       The information is attached.
    C. **TRANSITION REPORTS**
       The information is attached.
    D. **INITIAL REFERRALS**
       The information is attached.
    E. **POLICE REPORTS**
       PAEC Elementary student eloped, PAEC staff was monitorinf thru contact with parent; communication was confirmed by the parent upon student arrival.
    F. **PAEC ACTIVITY FUND**
       The information is attached.

G. **PAEC PROGRAM UPDATES**
The information is attached.

H. **PAEC EVENTS**
The information is attached.

I. **"PAINTING BRIGHT FUTURES" PARADE**

J. **FOIA**

K. **STRATEGIC PLAN**

L. **ROOF 2027**

11. **OTHER/ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE GOVERNING BOARD**

12. **BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**
None

13. **MEETING RECAP**
1. PAEC's "Painting Bright Futures" parade was a tremendous success, with Board members, Superintendents, representatives from all of our member districts, state office representatives, Mayors and representatives, West 40, Lions Club and other community leaders, and companies such as the Perkins Funeral Home participating. The neighborhood, including our neighbor school came out with enthusiasm to support and cheer us on!
2. The consultant from West 40 (Ms. N. Bhatt) presented the Strategic Plan for PAEC to the Executive Board.
3. The Executive Board recommends to the Governing Board to approve the continued lease for The Answer, Inc.

4. The Executive Board recommends to the Governing Board to approve the lease for the Gladiator Wrestling Club.
5. Initial discussions regarding replacing the roof over the gym at PAEC High School. This cost will be incorporated into the O&M budget.

14. **NEXT MEETING**
The next PAEC Executive Board meeting will be on _____. District #___ will be facilitating the meeting. _____ will be the Executive Board Representative for the Governing Board's _____ meeting.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

PAEC ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT UPDATES
FROM SEPTEMBER 2026

Business Department

- Treasurers' Report
- Cost Sheets

IT Department

- The next phase of the transition from Divine Infant to Thurgood Marshall focused on the installation of the school's networking infrastructure. This phase has been successfully completed. All server racks, firewalls, access points, and networking equipment have been installed and are fully operational.
- The final phase of the project is now scheduled to be completed in the coming weeks and will include the Comcast installation and camera system.
- Additionally, with the start of the new school year, all updated staff devices have been distributed. The distribution of student devices is currently underway and will continue as we work to ensure all students have the technology they need for the school year.

Buildings and Grounds Department

- Davey Tree Expert Company removed large tree branches fallen onto the Elementary playground.
- KCW completed preventative maintenance on 3 roof top units on the High School gym.
- Midway Moving company moved PAEC Academy into Thurgood Marshall.
- A passenger van was delivered and replaced the Chevrolet passenger van.
- The parking lot was sealcoated and stripped as part of the geothermal project.

Human Resources

- Managed and scheduled 16 background checks
- Onboarded 11 direct hires & 8 contractors
- Processed 4 terminations
- Participated in the Business Department's monthly meeting
- Ongoing interviews for various positions
- Participated in AASPA School HR Bootcamp on August 5-6, 2026
- Participated in Welcome Back Parade/Bash Planning Meeting August 7, 2026
- Attended the West40 HR Network Meeting on August 14, 2026
- Participated in the Strategic Planning Leadership Meeting on August 25, 2026

PAYROLL AGENDA
AUGUST 2026

	GROSS	FICA	RETIREMENT	BENEFITS	TOTAL	
						PAYROLL 8/14/2026
Education Fund	$84,401.36	$3,976.44	$4,560.00	$19,516.22	$112,454.02	
Building Fund	$21,151.24	$1,606.33	$1,178.12	$4,558.47	$28,494.16	
TOTALS	**$105,552.60**	**$5,582.77**	**$5,738.12**	**$24,074.69**	**$140,948.18**	
	GROSS	**FICA**	**RETIREMENT**	**BENEFITS**	**TOTAL**	**PAYROLL 8/31/2026**
Education Fund	$109,606.66	$4,471.31	$5,058.83	$37,635.81	$156,772.61	
Building Fund	$19,238.96	$1,461.46	$1,071.61	$4,783.45	$26,555.48	
TOTALS	**$128,845.62**	**$5,932.77**	**$6,130.44**	**$42,419.26**	**$183,328.09**	
GRAND TOTALS	**$234,398.22**	**$11,515.54**	**$11,868.56**	**$66,493.95**	**$324,276.27**	

ACTION ITEM – PERSONNEL REPORT
September 2026

A. Employment

1. Mariah Martinez — 1:1 Program Assistant (D87)
   Effective Date: August 24, 2026
   Compensation: $23,009
   Location: PAEC Center CCA

2. Allene Hunt — Food Service Assistant
   Effective Date: September 2, 2026
   Compensation: $16.47 per hour
   Location: PAEC Center

3. Twanesha Jones — Program Assistant
   Effective Date: September 8, 2026
   Compensation: $24,064 (prorated to $22,058.67)
   Location: PAEC Center Autism

B. Resignations

1. Saramayah Rosado — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Resignation Date: August 17, 2026

2. Alma Nofal — Program Assistant
   Resignation Date: August 17, 2026

3. Patricia Altiere — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Resignation Date: August 21, 2026

4. Courtney Herbert — Program Assistant
   Resignation Date: August 17, 2026

C. Transfers

1. Eunice Ayeh — Program Assistant (PAEC Center Aut-High School)
   Effective Date: August 17, 2026
   Transfer from: PAEC Center Aut -Elementary

2. Chelsey Ellis — Program Assistant (PAEC Center Aut-Elementary)
   Effective Date: August 17, 2026
   Transfer from: PAEC Center Aut -High School

3. Taraj Thompson — 1:1 Program Assistant PAEC Center CCA-(D209)
   Effective Date: August 17, 2026
   Transfer from: PAEC Center Center CCF-(D91)

4. Gwen Washington — 1:1 Program Assistant (PAEC Center CCA)- D209
   Effective Date: August 17, 2026
   Transfer from: PAEC Center CCF Program Assistant

5. Eldemira Sanchez — 1:1 Program Assistant (PAEC Center Autism)- D87
   Effective Date: September 1, 2026

Transfer from: PAEC Center Autism (D93)

D. Terminations

There are no terminations at this time.

E. Amendment from June Personnel Report

1. Nicole Fleming — Social Worker
   Effective Date: August 17, 2026
   Compensation: $61,629 for 2026-2027 School Year
   Location: PAEC High School

F.

G. Intermittent Leave of Absence

1. Jennifer Almodovar — Teacher
   Effective Date: September 1, 206
   Will be personal leave
   Utilizing available sick days during leave

H. FMLA

1. Sheri Olczak — Nurse (PAEC Academy)
   Effective Date: September 2, 206 - October 28, 2026
   Will be medical block leave
   Utilizing available sick days during leave

2. Paul Mikelson — Occupational Therapist
   Effective Date: October 1, 206 - October 7, 2026
   Will be medical block leave
   Utilizing available sick days during leave

ACTION ITEM – CONTRACTUAL REPORT
September 2026

A. Delta T

1. Melissa Mims — 1:1 Program Assistant (D87)
   Effective Date: August 25, 2026
   Compensation: $33 per hour
   Location: Whittier

A. RoHealth

1. Joshua Matthews — Registered Behavior Technician
   Effective Date: August 24, 2026
   Compensation: $42 per hour
   Location: PAEC 803 & Jefferson

2. Nyah Scott — 1:1 Program Assistant (D93)
   Effective Date: August 28, 2026
   Compensation: $42 per hour
   Location: PAEC Academy

3. KeShawn Jackson — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Effective Date: August 28, 2026
   Compensation: $42 per hour
   Location: PAEC Center Autism

4. Odessey Stewart — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Effective Date: August 28, 2026
   Compensation: $42 per hour
   Location: PAEC Center CCA

5. Quintavia Mitchell — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Effective Date: August 28, 2026
   Compensation: $38 per hour
   Location: PAEC Center Autism

6. Keyanna Turner — 1:1 Program Assistant (D209)
   Effective Date: August 28, 2026
   Compensation: $38 per hour
   Location: PAEC Center Autism

C. Transfers

1. Vanessa Burns — 1:1 Program Assistant (PAEC Center autism)-D87
   Effective Date: September 1, 2026
   Transfer from: PAEC Center Aut -D93

PAEC PROGRAM UPDATES
AUGUST 2026

PAEC Academy

1) **Academics**

PAEC Academy is settling into our new home at Thurgood Marshall Elementary, and things are slowly but surely coming together! Our Smart Boards and Chromebooks have been delivered, and our internet is now up and running, allowing teachers and students to begin getting more comfortable in their new learning spaces. We are still patiently waiting for our copier to arrive, but that hasn't stopped the start of benchmarking. Our teachers are especially eager to dive into our new Corrective Reading curriculum with students. Corrective Reading provides structured instruction in both decoding and comprehension, two important areas of need for many of our Tigers, and we are excited to begin using these resources to help strengthen their foundational reading skills and build greater confidence as readers.

2) **Program Information**

a. Student Count	60		b. Hospitalizations	0
c. Transitions	N/A		d. Police Involvement	0
e. Time Outs	0		f. Restorative Meetings	0
g. Restraints	0			

3) **Interesting Information**

09/03/26 - Back to School Parade on Main Campus
09/04/26 - School Improvement Day
09/07/26- LABOR DAY/NO SCHOOL!
09/11/26- 1 Hour Late Start/Students start at 9:45am
09/17/26 - PAEC Academy Open House 4pm-6pm

PAEC Early Childhood

ACADEMIC UPDATE

The theme for August was back to school. The students were introduced to the school routines of how to come in, line up, walk to the classroom, sit at circle time, work at the table, play, play, and more play. They worked on the school vocabulary (e.g. school supply names, circle time, work time, playtime, snack, and bathroom)

ACADEMIC TARGETS

The COLORS, SHAPES, LETTERS, and NUMBERS were introduced using songs, play, and art activities.

FESTIVITIES: We celebrated starting school with pictures with a school bus balloon and pictures doing all the school activities with our new and returning friends.

PROGRAM UPDATE: The EC program welcomed a new teacher to the program. Julie Zay comes to us with years of experience working with early childhood students and has all her required certifications to work in an early childhood special education program.
We were happy to have our Music teacher, Craig Christenson, return and play for us on the last Friday of August.

STUDENT COUNT: We started with 18 students. We have 11 students returning to the program and 7 new students. Two students will be joining us in September. The evaluation team will be testing two students for October start dates.

PAEC Therapeutic Day Elementary School
Back to School Update — August 2026

Staff began the school year with a full week of professional development in August, building on that foundation with a half-day Staff Institute on September 4th to continue preparing for the year ahead. This strong start reflects the dedication and readiness our team brings into every school year.

This year, our elementary program has been intentionally restructured to strengthen consistency and outcomes for students. Each grade band — K-2, 3-5, and 6-8 — is now staffed with a certified teacher, ensuring clear instructional accountability across the elementary level. We have also introduced a significantly structured classroom model within each grade band, along with a dedicated behavior support classroom designed to reduce disruptions during core instruction. Together, these changes have allowed classroom teachers to maintain instructional momentum while ensuring students with escalated behavioral needs receive targeted support in an appropriate setting — a shift that has already made a meaningful, positive difference in our building.

September Happenings:
- September 3, 2026 - Painting Bright Futures Parade
- September 4, 2026 — ½ Day Staff Institute
- September 15, 2026 — Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Kickoff
- September 16, 2026 — Open House, 4:00–6:00 PM. We look forward to welcoming students, parents, families, and stakeholders back for another great school year.

We are proud of the momentum our school has built heading into this year, and we look forward to sharing continued success with the Board in the months ahead.

Transitions	0		Restraints	3
Hospitalizations	0		Isolation Room	3
Police/Ambulance Calls	1 *student eloped, Bellwood 88		Restorative Meeting	0

PAEC Therapeutic Day High School

Academics

The 2026–2027 school year is off to a strong start, and students have successfully adjusted to their individual schedules and classroom routines. Students continue to demonstrate a positive focus on their academic, social-emotional, and individualized goals as they work toward achieving success throughout the school year.

The Fall MAP Testing window is scheduled for September 7 through September 18. These assessments will provide valuable information regarding student growth and instructional needs.

On September 8, classes will begin their Hispanic Heritage Projects. Students will work collaboratively on these projects in preparation for the annual Hispanic Heritage Assembly on October 14. This year's theme, "Unidos Somos Más," or "Together, We Are More," will provide students with an opportunity to celebrate Hispanic heritage, culture, history, and contributions while emphasizing the importance of unity and community.

Happenings

Our Senior Student Council, along with Ms. Fields, organized the first Spirit Week of the school year, which will take place from August 31 through September 4.

On September 3, we will participate in the first Districtwide Back to School Parade Celebration. This event will allow students and staff to celebrate the beginning of the school year and build a strong sense of school community.

All students will receive a spirit wear shirt purchased with the Wing Stop Grant, representing our proud school colors, along with the class year in which they will graduate. We look forward to celebrating school spirit, student engagement, and a positive start to the 2026–2027 school year.

Transitioning Students

Student behavior levels, attendance, and academic performance are monitored weekly to ensure that students continue to meet the mainstream criteria established for the PAEC HS Program and Proviso.

PAEC HS currently has four students from Proviso West and one student from Proviso East who transitioned at the start of the 2026–2027 school year. We are anticipating four more students at the end of the first quarter if they meet their goals.

Physical Management	0		**Ambulance**	0
Police Calls	0		**Restorative Meeting**	2

26/27 Current Enrollment: 66 student**s**, but should be 71 once 5 students complete registration.

Vocational Program

The High School Vocational Program is excited to begin another successful school year! Our high school vocational team consists of Ms. Lindsey Holsten, Vocational Counselor, and Luis Tafoya, Vocational Coordinator. Together, we work closely with students, families, staff, community agencies, and local businesses to help our students prepare for life after high school.

Our focus is on creating meaningful opportunities that support each student's individual goals, whether they are pursuing college, trade school, employment, vocational training, or greater independence after graduation.

Postsecondary Planning & Career Readiness

We work closely with our senior students to help them identify their goals and determine what they would like to pursue after graduation. This may include college, trade school, employment, vocational training, or other community-based programs.

Once students identify their goals, we help make direct connections with the agencies, schools, and employers that can support them after graduation. Our goal is to make the transition from high school to adult life as smooth and successful as possible.

We also provide students with opportunities to participate in postsecondary-focused field trips. Students visit colleges and universities, trade schools, job fairs, Job Corps, and other community organizations based on their individual interests. These experiences allow students to explore their options firsthand and make informed decisions about their futures.

APEX Learning & Credit Recovery

Our department also facilitates the APEX Learning platform, which PAEC utilizes for credit recovery. APEX provides students, who are behind in credits, with an opportunity to complete high school courses outside of the traditional school day.

This program gives students additional flexibility and support while helping them work toward meeting graduation requirements and staying on track to graduate.

Work-Based Learning & Vocational Training

A major component of our program is providing students with real-world work experiences. We have developed partnerships with local businesses, organizations, and community programs that provide students with opportunities for paid employment, volunteer experiences, hands-on job training, and career exploration.

Our current work-based learning opportunities include:

- After-School Janitorial Program: Students are paid to assist with cleaning and maintaining PAEC school buildings. This program provides students with hands-on experience while teaching important workplace skills such as responsibility, teamwork, time management, and professionalism.
- Firehouse Subs Partnership: Students receive hands-on experience in a fast-paced food service environment while developing customer service, communication, teamwork, and job-specific skills.
- Wingstop Partnership: Students have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the food service industry and learn about the expectations and responsibilities of working in a restaurant setting.
- Financial Literacy Program: We facilitate a 10-week financial literacy program with Jose Villa, Vice President of Retail Banking at Proviso Community Bank. Students learn practical skills related to money management, budgeting, banking, saving, and financial decision-making.

- RR Trade School Partnership: Students interested in the skilled trades are given opportunities to explore different career pathways and gain exposure to trade-related fields, helping them determine whether a career in the trades is a good fit for them.
- West 40 Food Pantry Volunteer Partnership: Students participate in volunteer experiences at the West 40 Food Pantry. These opportunities allow students to develop work habits, contribute to their community, and gain valuable experience that can support their postsecondary goals.
- Level Up Workforce Development Program: Students participate in workforce development activities focused on building essential employment skills, including resume development, interview preparation, workplace expectations, and career readiness.
- Ronald McDonald House Partnership: Students assist with household duties and learn valuable skills related to responsibility, teamwork, maintaining a work environment, and contributing to a community organization.

We are continually working to expand our community partnerships and create additional opportunities that meet the individual needs, interests, and postsecondary goals of our students.

PAEC Center School
The school year has started! The students arrived and routines are being established, friendships being formed and staff excited for the start of the school year!

Staff received CPI Training, completed CIBS training, IEP review and got classrooms in order!

Domain meetings have begun. IEPs will start at the beginning of September.

P.E., Home Living and Music have also started. Students are still getting used to waking up and being on a schedule. It isn't always easy, but it's exciting!

August 31 begins Spirit Week! We look forward to the Back to School Parade! Our Special Events Committee met and have planned the year full of exciting activities for our students to enjoy!

We look forward to a productive school year!

PAEC Behavior Intervention (BI) Team
The PAEC Behavior Intervention Team continues to provide behavioral support and interventions to reduce undesired behaviors within the Proviso Township school districts.

The Elementary Behavior Coaches are required to implement the 8-Week Step Interventions & Support Curriculum developed based on evidenced-based data and documenting.

Total number of PAEC Behavior Intervention Team: 13
Active: 12
Projected total number for 2026/2027 Academic Year is (14)
The elementary level position has been posted and is looking to fulfill 1 position.
Proviso East: 3
Proviso West: 3
District 87: 2 (currently 1)
Floating Coaches (District 88, District 93, District 92, District 87): 7

There were a total of 0 individual student referrals in August.
There were a total of 1 classroom referrals submitted in August.

District 87 -Jefferson Primary | Sunnyside Intermediate | Whittier Primary | Riley Intermediate | Northlake Middle School | MacArthur Middle School

Sunnyside Elementary:

Whittier Primary:

Jefferson Primary:

District 92 - Lindop School
Kindergarten Classroom referral: A referral was submitted due to several students who have been struggling with following classroom expectations and routines. The Coordinator conducted an observation 8/31 and will be assigning an appropriate Coach to provide classroom management strategies and additional support.

District 88 - Lincoln Primary | Grant Primary | Grant Elementary | Lincoln Elementary | McKinley Elementary | Thurgood Marshall Elementary | Roosevelt Middle School

McKinley Elementary:

Lincoln Elementary:

Grant Primary:

District 93 - Hillside Elementary

District 209 - Proviso East High School | Proviso West High School | Proviso Mathematics and Science Academy

There are currently a total of 6 Behavior Interventionists assigned to 209; 3 are assigned to East and 3 are assigned to West.

Interventionists are now assigned to Grade Level Principals. The 209 district continues to follow the process of implementing a MTSS Framework within the Panorama system to ensure equitable and responsive circles of support for students. All BI's will follow this framework under the leadership of Deans and their assigned GLP's.
The Coordinator is discussing with Principal Fox-Crump the possibility of implementing a referral system process for Behavior Interventionist student caseloads. More information will be provided.

PAEC OT/PT Department

Staff adjustments: New Staff for this school year have started. OT continues to have a 0.35 FTE vacancy, but at this time, OT staff are covering the need. Will monitor caseload assignments over the next few months before deciding to hire new staff for this OT vacancy.

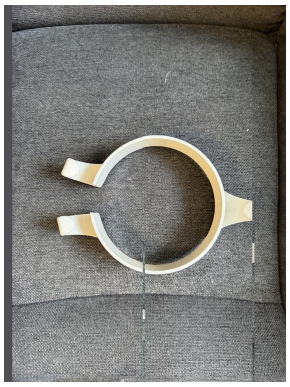
Activities of the department:

1. The OT/PT staff continue to get equipment supplies to students for in-person learning.
2. The Assistive Technology (AT) Team is working on helping therapists, teachers, students,

and families use their communication devices at school.

3. The OT/PT staff continue to make sure Sensory Rooms and Exploratory Areas at PAEC Center, PAEC Elementary, and PAEC Academy are available and up and running. For districts with Sensory Rooms, the OTs and PTs assigned to those schools are ensuring the Sensory Rooms are up and running.
4. The Assistive Technology team is working together with the Speech Department on getting AAC devices/software for those in the districts and PAEC programs. The team is working closely with D209 to ensure that incoming freshmen, including our district's outplaced students, have devices.
5. On 8-14-26, the Lead OT/PT/AT met with the new OT for orientation.
6. On 8-17-26, the Lead OT/PT/AT met with the new PT for orientation.
7. The Assistive Technology Team conducted an inservice to the teachers titled AT in the Classroom on 8-17-26 from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM in the PAEC Center gym.
8. The OT/PT department conducted their monthly meeting in-person on 8-18-26 from 11:30 to 3:00 PM.
9. The Assistive Technology Team conducted a 30-45 minute hands-on practice and Q & A with AAC devices with classrooms, including the program assistants, on 8-19-26.
10. The OT/PT and AT team began working on required training for the school year, using the ENGAGE program, through Infinitec.
11. The OT/PT Department attended district training appropriate to their school assignments.
12. The OT/PT Department had therapists participate in District 93 (Hillside) Pre-School Screenings at Hillside School on 8-19-26.
13. The OT/PT Department participated in the PAEC Center Special Events meeting on 8-28-26 from 8:00 AM to 8:45 AM.
14. The OT/PT/AT Lead and SLP Lead met with a Spotter representative on 08-28-26 to discuss any needs for contracted therapists and what Spotter has to offer for the school year.
15. Some equipment that Aspire donated was the following:




10 cups - Flo-Trol Convalescent Vacuum Feeding Cup 1 Food Guard 6 Spoons

PAEC Psychology Department

Dr. Michael Cermak, Lead School Psychologist, and his intern, Ms. Ellie Margason, will be attending the Annual Intern Supervision Workshop on September 4th. Workshops include Metasupervision for Practicing Supervisors, Advocating for Socially Just MTSS, and Suicide

Prevent and Self Harm. They will have the opportunity to collaborate with other interns and supervisors from throughout Illinois.

Dr. Cermak has a number of interns and practicum students for the 2026-2027 school year including: Shabeeh Syed, advanced practicum student from The Chicago School; Ms. Arleth Cruz-Martin 2nd year practicum student from Loyola University Chicago, and Mr. Jackson Sheridan, 2nd year practicum student from National Louis University. Additionally, Ms. Mallory Dalally, 2nd year practicum student from The Chicago School, will be working with Ms. Dayle Ashley-Harding. All of the practicum students and interns will be visible throughout PAEC and member districts throughout the school year.

Dr. Michael Cermak will be participating in District 87's Elyssa's Mission depression and suicide screening days on September 22nd, 23rd, 30th and October 1st.

PAEC Social Work Department

1. The PAEC School Social Work Department New Assignments:
   Ms. Elivette Agosto - Proviso East High School
   Ms. Alexandra Murphy - Proviso West High School
   Ms. Nicole Pena - PAEC Elementary School
   Mr. Patrick Rossi –PAEC Academy School

2. PAEC School Social Work Department Meeting:
   Date: Friday, September 18, 2026
   Time: 2:00pm-3:00pm
   Topic: PAEC School Social Work Department Meeting
   Presenter: Ms. Lisa Pirrello, LCSW

3. PAEC Social Work Department's next in-service training will be:
   Date: Friday, September 18, 2026
   Time: 10:00am-1:30pm
   Topic: "Working with Homeless Youth"
   Presenter: Mr. Marion Hardiman of Youth Outreach Services

PAEC Speech/Language Department

- The SLPs at PAEC Center supported the AT team during small group AAC support sessions for the Program Assistants on Wednesday, Aug. 19th.
- The Speech/Language department will have our first monthly department meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd at 11:30 in the PAEC Center Board room. Topics we will be discussing include beginning of the year updates, paperwork requirements, Embrace requirements, AT procedures, and more.
- The Lead SLP is working to find maternity coverage for an SLP in D87 (Chelsea Hands) to begin in October. PAEC Center SLPs will be working to cover for the maternity leave of an SLP in October (Bansari Amin).
- SLPs are working diligently across all districts and programs to support their buildings, students, and classrooms as they are getting into their new routines and expectations.

PAEC Special Olympics
We are excited to build our Special Olympics teams this year and love your support! Currently we are seeking 3 enthusiastic coaches to work with our athletes at PAEC Academy and Center.

Information has been provided for staff who might be interested and we hope to have those positions filled by September 11, 2026. Staff knows that all coaches must have a background check completed before beginning and they will be responsible for managing the team, including planning practices once a week and coordinating with athletes and families, plus ensuring a positive team environment.

PAEC PROGRAMS EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026

All PAEC Programs

Sept. 3 - PARADE! "Painting Bright Futures!"

Sept. 4 - ½ day off for students - PM

Sept. 7 - LABOR DAY - NO SCHOOL

Sept. 11 - 1 hour late start (9:45am)

PAEC ACADEMY

Sept. 17 - Open House 4pm - 6pm

PAEC EARLY CHILDHOOD

Sept. 16 - Open House 4pm - 6pm

PAEC CENTER

Aug. 31 - Sept. 4 - School Spirit Week

Sept. 16 - Open House 4pm - 6pm

Sept. 23 - Hispanic Heritage Fair

PAEC ELEMENTARY

Sept .15 - Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Kickoff

Sept. 16 - Open House 4pm - 6pm

PAEC HIGH SCHOOL

Sept. 1st - 17th - Robotics & STEM after school with PLCCA

Sept.16 - Open House 4pm - 6pm

PROGRAMAS DE PAEC

EVENTOS DE SEPTIEMBRE 2026

TODOS LOS PROGRAMAS DE PAEC

Sept. 3 - DESFILE! "Pintando Futuros Brillantes!"

Sept. 4 - ½ dia no clases para estudiantes PM

Sept. 7 - DIA DEL TRABAJO - NO CLASES

Sept. 11 - 1 hora de entrada tarde (9:45am)

ACADEMIA DE PAEC

Sept. 17 - Escuela Abierta 4pm - 6pm

PROGRAMA DE EDAD TEMPRANA DE PAEC

Sept. 16 - Escuela Abierta 4pm - 6pm

CENTRO DE PAEC

Agosto 31 - Sept. 4 - Semana de Espiritu Escolar

Sept. 16 - Escuela Abierta 4pm - 6pm

Sept. 23 - Feria de Herencia Hispana

ESCUELA ELEMENTAL DE PAEC

Sept .15 - Inicio de Celebraciones de Herencia Hispana

Sept. 16 - Escuela Abierta 4pm - 6pm

SECUNDARIA DE PAEC

Sept. 1ero - 17th - Robotica y STEM despues de clases con PLCCA

Sept.16 - Escuela Abierta 4pm - 6pm

14th Annual Job Fair @ PMSA















Monette Carlos



How long have you been at PAEC?

I've been working at PAEC since August of 2001

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I love the energy preschoolers bring each day!

I enjoy connecting with them through play and being silly.

I get to be as goofy as I want, and they don't mind one bit!

I also really appreciate working with a supportive team that cares so much about our students.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

I believe it's important to build strong relationships with your students, parents, and coworkers. Once you've earned their trust and respect, collaboration becomes much easier. Staying organized and managing your time effectively are crucial, and flexibility is key since things don't always go as planned. Finally, setting boundaries helps protect your well-being. Don't be too hard on yourself—it takes time to master all of this.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I'm a creative and imaginative person who enjoys turning activities into engaging games.

Celeste Jamison



How long have you been at PAEC?

6 years1

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

What I love most about my job is the variety and the opportunity to make a difference every day. As a Food Service Coordinator and Administrative Assistant/Accounts Payable, I enjoy keeping things organized, helping staff and students, managing important day-to-day operations, and making sure everything runs smoothly. I take pride in being someone others can rely on and in knowing that my work contributes to the success of the entire school.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

IMy advice would be to stay organized, be flexible, and communicate . In a position that involves food service coordination, administrative support, and accounts payable, priorities can change quickly, so it is important to stay on top of deadlines and pay close attention to details. I would also encourage others to build positive relationships with staff, ask questions when needed, and always be willing to learn. Take pride in your work and remember that your position helps keep the organization running smoothly.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

Something interesting about me is that I collect unused gift cards—I also wear a different cologne to match my mood each day. a fun way for me to express how I'm feeling and start my day with a little personality.

Elizabeth Zeman-Brogan



How long have you been at PAEC?

The short answer 18 years

The long answer, I started teaching in 2007
but left for the “greener grass” in 2010,
then came back in 2011
I have worked in therapeutic Elementary
as middle school
and intermediate teacher until I stepped
up to the therapeutic high school.1

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

As a student I struggled academically and with ADHD, while school was hard, I always loved to learn, so I love to bring my love of learning and strategies I have learned to help students learn both academically and social emotional.

This quote sums up working with kids that have a behavior or emotional disability “ In my world there are no bad kids, just impressionable,conflicted young people wrestling with emotions&impulses, trying to communicate their feelings & needs the only way they know how.”

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Communication with your team, and parents is invaluable.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

When I’m not at work, or ubering my two daughters, then I am reading (so far this year I have read 60 books) , in the garden or chilling with my dogs.

Michele Wolter



How long have you been at PAEC?

I am starting my 11th year!

What do you enjoy about

I enjoy working with the littlest kids and seeing them grow and develop their skills. I also enjoy working and collaborating with teachers and other therapists to develop and provide opportunities for children to learn and grow.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

IBe patient, be flexible and try to appreciate the benefits and joys we get from working with these special children! (I am still working on these things myself!)

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I was bitten by a poisonous copperhead snake when I was in my 20's. I am lucky to live to tell the story of such an unusual experience!

Emilie McGowan



How long have you been at PAEC?

This is my 6th year with PAEC as a Speech Language Pathologist.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I really enjoy making genuine connections with students and their families and helping them become better communicators with their peers, teachers and families. I also really love our supervisor, Ann Coenen, as she enables us to grow and thrive as SLP's with her support.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Be flexible, advocate for yourself as a professional and for your students and never stop learning.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I love Disney World and have been there almost 10 times.

Robin Giacolo



How long have you been at PAEC?

I've been at PAEC for 10 years.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I truly enjoy building connections with both students and staff. My favorite part is watching the kids grow over so many years. Day-to-day progress can sometimes feel small, but looking back over the years, seeing them mature into confident and capable young adults is very rewarding.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

School environments come with unique challenges, and if you dwell on those challenges, it will drain your energy fast. Remind yourself daily why you chose this work—the student interactions, the laughter, the great teams we work with. Keeping your eye on the positives makes all the difference.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

Il recently started roller skating for the first time in years! I'm loving every minute of the workout—although my balance is still very much a work in progress!

Lindsey Holsten



How long have you been at PAEC?

This is my 16th year at PAEC.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

Previously, I was the Elementary School Social Worker, & I loved working with all the younger students and the elementary staff. We had a great team and worked so well together. Now, I am the Vocational Counselor on the high school side, and I very much enjoy my new position! I get to help seniors figure out their postsecondary plans, run the work program with my partner, Luis Tafoya, and make sure all students are working toward graduation by running the credit recovery program and evaluating transcripts. The high school team has been extremely welcoming, and they are a fun group of people to work and hang out with!

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

IGet to know your coworkers. This is not an easy job, nor is it an easy population of students, and you will need the help and support of your peers to get through the tough times!

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

My husband and I love to canoe camp. A couple of years ago, we bought a Grumman canoe, which we take out for several days at a time. We travel along the river and camp on the sandbars.

Andre Cooper



How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been working at PAEC for five years.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

What I enjoy most about my job is that every day is different. Things can change from day to day, or even hour to hour. One moment I may be troubleshooting an issue, and the next I could be dealing with a cybersecurity concern. I enjoy the variety and the fact that there is always something new to solve or learn.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

My advice is to always be willing to learn more. If you are comfortable with cybersecurity, challenge yourself to learn networking. Continue expanding your knowledge and skill set. The opportunities for growth, as well as your potential income, are largely based on the effort you put in and how determined and hungry you are to succeed.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

Outside of work, I am a softball and football coach. Coaching is my true passion. After being a player for many years, having the opportunity to share my experiences, knowledge, and skills with others is truly a blessing. I enjoy helping athletes grow, not only as players but also as individuals.



Natalie K. Turner

How long have you been at PAEC?

10 years1



What do you enjoy about your job/position?

Making a small difference in the lives of our students.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

I Treat each student as an individual, and meet them where they are.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I am afraid of the dark, lol









Iris Cabrera

How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been at PAEC for five years as a direct hire, and prior to that, I worked at PAEC for almost a decade from 2005 to 2014 as a contract employee.1

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I truly enjoy working with students and their families, as it allows me to create meaningful connections and support their growth. Being part of a dedicated team that helps students reach their full potential is very rewarding. Watching children develop, especially in their early years, brings me pride and excitement, as each milestone reflects their hard work and resilience.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

As the only Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant (COTA) at PAEC, I don't have specific advice. However, being available and flexible on a day-to-day basis serves the team well. I also strongly believe that each of us brings unique skills and experiences that go beyond our job titles, and tapping into these strengths can make a real difference in the lives of the students we serve.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

In the past year, I have volunteered to help migrant and Spanish-speaking asylum seekers learn English and adapt to a new culture. Although I was initially unsure of my capabilities, the experience has been rewarding. Witnessing their language progress, from new words to successful conversations, underscores the importance of this work and its positive effects on their lives.



Donna Haney

How long have you been at PAEC?

This is my 11th year at PAEC.

I love working in a special education school.

Previously I have worked in a special ed classroom in a gen ed building. I truly believe our students are happier to have so many peers with similar needs to their own.

I also love that I have so many co-workers who understand the needs and challenges this job brings.1

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I love my job! My students are amazing and so are the staff I work with! I love that I have so many opportunities to be creative. I am so happy to see my students happy and increase their independence throughout the year.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

I would advise anyone working in the area of special education to have a big heart and have fun. I always say, in this field we are either laughing or crying. So have fun and be patient. Our students are so capable. They can achieve their goals but we must wait for them to process and work at their own pace.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I'I have a Blue-fronted Amazon parrot. He is 28 years old and was hatched on the day I got married. His name is Cookie Monster. He is very sweet to me, but has a love-hate relationship with my husband. He loves to be included in whatever we are doing, and will yell if excluded. He loves to eat people food, and his favorites are chicken legs and peanut butter.

Mike Hughes



How long have you been at PAEC?

25 years

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

Helping people; making sure my job is done.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Keep going; have faith and don't let anything turn you bakc.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I have a loud voice and I love to sing throughout the building. I enjoy fising - it's my relaxation.





Michael James

How long have you been at PAEC?

I'm starting my 11th year at PAEC, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have been part of the organization for so many years.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

What I enjoy most is the opportunity to work alongside like-minded individuals who genuinely care about students and their success. I also value being able to serve as an advocate for students and help ensure their needs and voices are heard.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Stay focused on your purpose and your goals. There can be many distractions and competing priorities that can pull you away from what matters most. Keep your focus, remain committed to your goals, and remember why you do the work you do.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

One interesting thing about me is that I used to play the trumpet in a jazz band. We would travel and perform throughout the Toronto and Montreal areas, which gave me the opportunity to experience different places, meet new people, and share my love of music.

Milea Langworthy



How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been with PAEC for 20 years, and I am proud to have dedicated two decades of my career to supporting scholars and helping them reach their fullest potential.s.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

What I enjoy most about my job is the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of my scholars. I love watching them grow, learn, overcome challenges, and achieve things they may not have thought were possible. Every accomplishment, big or small, reminds me why I chose this profession. I don't just want my scholars to be successful in school—I want them to be successful in life. I want every scholar I work with to know that I believe in them, I see their potential, and I will always encourage them to believe in themselves.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

A**lways remember your WHY.** Your WHY is what keeps you going on the difficult days and reminds you why the work you do matters. For me, my WHY is making a difference in the lives of my scholars. I encourage others to lead with patience, positivity, compassion, and consistency. Never be afraid to ask for help, and never hesitate to offer help to someone else. We are stronger when we support one another as a team. Most importantly, believe in your scholars and never underestimate what they are capable of achieving. Sometimes, all a scholar needs is someone to believe in them until they learn to believe in themselves.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

Something interesting about me is that I've written two books! They aren't published yet, but writing is a passion of mine. I love telling stories, encouraging others, and turning life experiences into words that can inspire someone else.



Chris Rentas

How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been at PAEC for 40 years. I completed my last college student teaching placement at PAEC, and they hired me when it ended..

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I enjoy working and interacting with my students, seeing them grow into young adults, and helping prepare them to transition into the real world. Their growth and success are the ultimate reward! I also appreciate working with our amazing team and the support and help they provide; it truly takes a village!

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

I think that, as a special education teacher, you need to be flexible and willing to adapt at any given moment. Also, fostering a strong relationship with your students by building trust and understanding can greatly enhance their confidence and sense of security.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I have worked part-time as a DSP (Direct Support Professional) for Community Support Services for over 20 years. I also enjoy going out to eat and trying new restaurants, and seeing plays and movies.



Esther Littman

How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been at Paec a total of 12 years.

The first 2 were initially as a contract physical therapist.

The last 10 were as a full time employee..



What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I really enjoy the kids, my coworkers and the staff I interact with !

I love the variety of kiddos I've worked with on my caseload. From 3 through 21 year old students with mild developmental delays to those that are more medically complex and fragile, everyone presents a new challenge and new opportunities for appreciation.!

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Besides being flexible, I would say perspective: I believe it's really an honor to work with our kids and I feel grateful. I think we are lucky to touch their lives and their families during such an important period of time. When I have this perspective, I stay calm and see challenges as an opportunity to learn not just problems. If you have the right perspective, it will inevitably help you excel in any position.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

II love listening to live music, gardening, hiking and staying active, especially outdoors. Also, I'm an ovo-lacto-pesco vegetarian :-)



Lori Jones

How long have you been at PAEC?

6 Years

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I get the Weekend, Holidays off, very Peaceful,

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Do one thing at a time, Don't rush yourself.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I love sewing, and traveling the world.



Trainette Latham

How long have you been at PAEC?

I started working for PAEC in December 2008 as a paraprofessional. Over the years, I have been afforded opportunities as the PAEC High School Secretary, Executive Administrative Assistant and now Human Resources/Medicaid Coordinator.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I enjoy working with all of our staff and students. Although I don't get the chance to be around the students like I used to, I love the "Family" atmosphere that our district has.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Give yourself "Grace". Also, don't take things personally. Last but not least, BE A TEAM PLAYER.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I have been a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority for 26 years. Also, I have an extremely large family who gets together Sundays after church for dinner at my Granny's house. My youngest daughter is in competitive gymnastics and tumbling which takes up all of my time.

Vicente Art Izidro-Johnson



How long have you been at PAEC?

I am beginning my sixth school year at PAEC.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I enjoy helping students develop the independence, confidence, and practical skills they need for adult life.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Be patient, remain flexible, celebrate small accomplishments, and always recognize each student's potential.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I have two Dalmatians named Rio and Ocean because I love bodies of water. During our recent summer break, that passion took me to Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in Canada, glaciers in Argentina, and Iguaçu Falls in Brazil.



Paula Parot

How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been a Special Education Teacher at PAEC for 16 years, however, I worked here several years ago and during that time, I taught students at PAEC for seven years. So total years spent at PAEC, 23 years. I was gone for 10 years, so if I had never left, I would have been here 33 years this year.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I love what I do, that is to teach students with disabilities. It is a passion of mine. My whole life since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a special education teacher.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Teaching is an honor to be able to work with children/students with disabilities. I tell them that if they bond with the students, their job becomes easier day by day. The love that the children express is true. I also relay that the students here at PAEC and in the world are born with their disability and our job is to teach them independence to the best of their ability. Progress is determined by their ability to demonstrate a task that they could not do before. Every improvement, academically, functional, and social is HUGE. Do not underestimate their ability. Do not enable them, it's cute when they are little, but not cute when they are big. Read their body language, follow their lead, many times they know what they want and the only way for them to show you or express it may be by pointing, leading you to a destination, or a meltdown. Lastly, many of our students are victims of society, please understand and treat them with respect.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I performed in the Triton Trouper Circus as an acrobatic for 13 years. I have been a High School Gymnastic Coach for 25 years, and currently still coaching. I started my own tumbling company where I travel with my coaching team to a variety of high schools coaching tumbling to High School Cheerleaders Monday - Thursday during the fall season. So when staff goes home after working at PAEC, I continue working additional hours in the evening. I am very passionate about what I do and enjoy my off time by gardening, traveling, socializing with friends, and most of all spending time with my one and only grandson who is my WORLD! We love to spend time in nature, learning about nature, and traveling around the USA to explore natural landmarks (caves, waterfalls, mountains, etc.) and finding man made landmarks (bridges, statues, buildings, etc.)



Niane Serrano

How long have you been at PAEC?

I've worked at PAEC for 12 years.

I started as a 1:1, then became a classroom PA and now I am a social worker.

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I enjoy making a difference, whether big or small.

It makes me feel good when the students show their appreciation toward me.

Even when they don't come right out and say it, they show it in different ways.

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Advice that I would give to others is to stick with what you're doing, stay consistent, and you will see the progress. You're making a difference, even if you think you're not.

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

Fun fact about me: I used to tap dance when I was younger.

Kristal Henry-Starling



How long have you been at PAEC?

I have been working at PAEC for 25 years!!

What do you enjoy about your job/position?

I enjoy working with my coworkers & the students!
I enjoy seeing them both smile & being happy!
When they smile, it's makes me smile,
even on days I might not feel happy!!
Also, I Love to give my coworkers
a hug and a student a hug, if needed, too!!

What advice would you give to others in your position to help them excel?

Some advice for someone working at PAEC is to be observant, respectful, helpful, kind, patient, friendly, positive, compassionate, a good listener a good leader, and the most important rule of all, " The Golden Rule: Treat others like you want to be treated!! In addition, treat everyone with respect and dignity!!

Tell me something interesting or funny about yourself.

I Love doing yoga classes, and walking! I have walked from Bellwood, Illinois to Westchester, Illinois, and Northlake, Illinois to Maywood Illinois! I Love traveling anywhere because anywhere & everywhere I go, I make it an exciting adventure!!

Painting Bright Futures Parade!












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