



OPEPP Updates

3246 Henderson Rd. | Columbus, OH 43220 | 614.897.0020 | OPEPP.org

OPEPP Spring 2021 Virtual Academy

As we begin the second half of this academic year, it is time to plan and prepare for the OPEPP Spring 2021 Virtual Academy! The Academy is an event designed for OPEPP partner district teams to come together and engage in high-quality professional learning. This year's Spring Academy is scheduled for **April 27 from 1:00–4:00 pm**. The focus for this year's Academy is literacy. Details, including an agenda and registration information will be provided in March.

OPEPP Toolkit: Guidance and Resources to Support Remote Teaching and Learning

Because paraprofessionals are integral to educator teams, whether in face-to-face or remote teaching environments, paraprofessionals are especially valuable when they are equipped with resources that support their use of technology to help students learn. This toolkit represents a compilation of such resources.

The OPEPP toolkit has two main purposes: 1) to provide general guidance to educators for how paraprofessional services might be used in remote teaching and learning settings; and 2) to serve as a repository of resources for paraprofessionals and teachers in the facilitation of virtual instruction and support of students. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Professional Learning Opportunities

OPEPP is pleased to offer online workshops to assist school districts in more effectively using paraprofessional services to support student learning. Paraprofessionals, teacher-parapro teams, and other district, school, and agency personnel are invited to participate. Topics include the following:

- *What Do You Sense? An Overview of Our Seven Primary Senses*; and
- *OPEPP's Behavior Management Professional Development Series—Part 1*

All workshops offer a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Contact hours are provided for participants who attend Zoom sessions and complete workshop assignments. Details, including registration information, can be found [here](#).

Stay Informed!



Follow us on Twitter to network with other paraprofessionals and to keep up with the latest in OPEPP! Our handle is @OOpepp.



Stories from the Field

The mission of Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) to “educate all students with rigor and care in a culture of excellence to develop engaged citizens who are prepared for life.” CPS recognizes that their talented, passionate paraprofessionals play an integral role in preparing students for life and that adequate support and training are essential; thus, the district has partnered with the OPEPP project to improve their utilization and empowerment of paraprofessionals so that CPS continues to strive to become a district of destination.

The CPS OPEPP Team was formed in September 2020, meets monthly, and includes paraprofessionals and staff from human resources and talent development, support staff, administrators, curriculum, teachers and the AFSCME union. Nearly half of the team members have been or currently are paraprofessionals.

In 2020, over 800 CPS paraprofessionals utilized the “Communication and Collaboration” modules on the OPEPP website during district-wide professional development. In their exit surveys, paraprofessionals mentioned a change in their knowledge and skills, such as learning “reminders for active listening” and “gain[ing] confidence on how to speak up when there is a communication barrier.” The OPEPP team continues to search for ways to bolster their training offerings for paraprofessionals, including planning for paraprofessional-specific training during the first week back to school in fall 2021. The team is also taking a closer look at the district’s paraprofessional job descriptions to ensure that they accurately reflect the expectations and responsibilities of paraprofessionals.

Through their partnership with OPEPP, the CPS team has included paraprofessionals in planning and decision making related to their roles. Completion of the district audit revealed the need to provide more direct support to paraprofessionals, so the team looks forward to continued partnership with OPEPP to learn best practices related to utilizing paraprofessionals effectively. CPS is grateful for the guidance and support of their OPEPP consultant, Judy Hassel, whose vast experience with strengthening educational systems has brought a much needed wide-lens to the work.

On December 16, 2020, the CPS Board of Education adopted an [Anti-Racism Policy](#), which is aimed at eliminating all forms of racism in the district. In alignment with this new policy, the CPS OPEPP Team is committed to ensuring that any new policy, procedure or systems of support that are developed for paraprofessionals will actively reduce or eliminate inequities and racism in the district.



**Meet members
of the CPS
OPEPP Team!**