

Newsletter



In this issue you will find:

- Meet the Central Rivers AEA's IT team.
- Looking for upcoming events at Central Rivers AEA? Check out the latest via our webpage.
- What's new in our On-Demand Library? We now have over 200+ content pieces where you can engage in smaller portions of learning when you need it. Check it out!
- Nominations for the Paraeducator Awards are **Now Open!**
- License Renewal Opportunities. It is always a good idea to know your renewal date and review the renewal requirements for your license type.
- Substitute Authorization and Paraeducator Generalist Certification Courses.
- Looking to receive one or both of our newsletters electronically? Use the form below to indicate your interest.

Kay's Corner

Welcome to the second edition of the Central Rivers AEA Professional Learning newsletter! As we head into winter, we are excited to highlight the many learning opportunities available to educators in our region. Here are some of the highlights:

The latest on-demand content highlights work from Grant Wood AEA. Chronic Absenteeism is an area that many have expressed as an area of need. Consultants from Grant Wood AEA created professional learning on the topic of chronic absenteeism and are sharing it with everyone across the state! We also have featured content from Charlotte Dungan, an expert in Artificial Intelligence. Lastly- to address the requests for behavior and engagement support, we have added three on-demand content from Doug Fisher!



New Look coming soon! We are excited to announce a change in the course catalog. We will be using a new course catalog system to provide a more user-friendly experience for both instructors and students.

We are committed to providing high-quality professional learning opportunities to educators in our region. Be sure to check out our website and newsletters for more information on upcoming classes, workshops, and trainings.



Meet the Information Technology Team

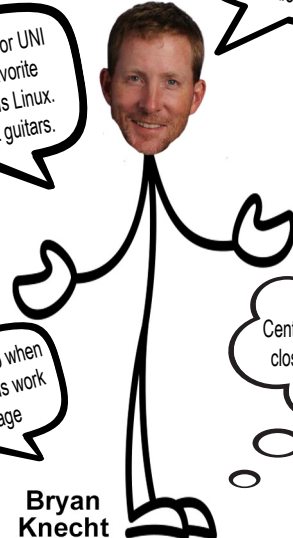
My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is working with people who are passionate about improving the lives of children.

I grew up on a berry farm. I am the only child in my family who was born within the United States. I am a mother of all boys.

I have been with Central Rivers AEA for 23 years. Before that I ran the IT department at ISU's Extended & Continuing Education department. I earned my BA and MBA degrees from UNI.



Played varsity golf for UNI for four years. Favorite operating system is Linux. I play and collect guitars.



Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is get a massage or go to hot yoga.

When I am not working, I enjoy traveling internationally and learning about other cultures.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is work on my acreage

Favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is working closely with all departments at CRAEA.

Sarah Nelson

Bryan Knecht

Director of IT and Special Programs

IT Manager

"Create the highest, grandest vision possible for your life, because you become what you believe." Oprah Winfrey

"It is what it is."

Got my Computer Network Management degree 13 years ago.

Married for 25 years, have two bio daughter, our foster boy, that we consider our son, just had a little boy.

I graduated with a BA from UNI in Leisure, Youth & Human Services. After graduation, I moved to Hawaii for two years to work for the Department of Defense as a Recreation Manager for Pearl Harbor Military Base. After Hawaii, I moved back home to Cedar Falls where I worked for the YWCA, Camp Adventure & Western Home Communities in a variety of coordinator positions.



I love finding adventures. I enjoy wakeboarding, surfing, scuba diving and anything in the ocean! I have two kiddos, one boy and one girl.



Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is being outside (fishing, around a fire pit, gardening).

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is being able to help schools when needed.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is get a massage or go to hot yoga.

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is working with people who think and operate with a tech-forward mindset.

Terry Davis

Ashley Samek

IT Support Engineer

IT Special Programs Coordinator

"Everything happens for a reason."

"I live my life a quarter mile at a time."

Dominic Toretto

Meet the Information Technology Team

I have supported IT at John Deere, Covenant Health System, Greater Iowa Credit Union and Iowa Prison Industries.

I am married with three children and one grandchild, I have always enjoyed hobbies; playing guitar, electronics, ham radio, blacksmithing, antiques. I have a black lab named Luna.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is currently I am watching a three season history of the Roman Empire, learning to cook better, and downsizing my tool collection to make more space for making things with the tools I have left.

Favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is it inspires me to work with so many dedicated people.

Karl Langenwalter
Systems Engineer

"Its better to burn out than to fade away."

I have a CDL. I like to go canoeing in the Boundary Waters. I have 3 children.

I have 16 years of experience in Educational IT ranging from Pre-k through Post Secondary Ed.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is cook yummy foods.

Favorite part about CRAEA is the people are the best part of CRAEA.

Jess Lamp
System Support Specialist

"A human being should be able to change a diaper, plan an invasion, butcher a hog, conn a ship, design a building, write a sonnet, balance accounts, build a wall, set a bone, comfort the dying, take orders, give orders, cooperate, act alone, solve equations, analyze a new problem, pitch manure, program a computer, cook a tasty meal, fight efficiently, die gallantly. Specialization is for insects." Robert A. Heinlein

1. I have driven to Alaska.
2. I have walked the set of SNL (Saturday Night Live)
3. I have been in a punk rock band

As a proud graduate of the University of Northern Iowa, I received both an Electronic Media/Communication and Management Information Systems degree with honors. I also have completed a Microcomputer Systems & Applications certificate program and hold a Certified Cybersecurity Rubric Evaluator distinction. In total, I have 17 years of IT experience with the majority of those years specializing in the field of education.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working is:
1. I love to golf and be outdoors
2. I love to build unique LEGO sets
3. I love to play and listen to music from all genres

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is team atmosphere.

Matt Goblirsch
Technology Services Coordinator

"If we wonder often, the gift of knowledge will come." Arapaho

I've fractured both of my wrists (not at the same time). I have an English Language and Literature degree. Recently got a labradoodle puppy

I have three years of experience in computer knowledge, ranging from retail systems to educational services.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is spending time with my dad and dog.

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is working with the incredible students and staff in the various school districts that I serve!

Zach Schroeder
School Technology Specialist I

"So it goes."
Kurt Vonnegut

Meet the Information Technology Team



My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is it is a place where you can actually tell how much they appreciate that you work here.


IT since 1996. I've been working in education for 20+ years.

Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is traveling, cooking and doing computer stuff.

I like to travel. I like to hike/walk briskly. I'm somewhat boring.

Charles Spath
IT Specialist II

"Once you've got a task to do, it's better to do it than live with the fear of it."



23+ years in IT

Favorite things to do when I'm not working are DIY, home improvement, walks and other hobbies.

Three facts about me...
1. Male
2. 6'1"
3. Bald

Favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is fixing computers.

Paul Yarrow
IT Technician

"That's all I have to say about that."
Forrest Gump



Favorite thing to do when I'm not working...is to try new restaurants, spend time with family and friends, shop & crafts.

I love to travel, sing & spend time with my family.

I was a (SAM) School Administrative Manager at Cardinal Elementary.

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is the positive culture and my kind co-workers.

Jamie Pedersen

Administrative Assistant for Integrated Services

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."



I'm a member of the Meskwaki Nation, I like to travel and I like to learn about everything!

When I'm not working my favorite thing to do is curl up with my dogs and a book.

I joined the IT team a little over a year ago - at the front desk as the receptionist, I'm someone people will often come to when they are having issues with technology. Before I worked at the AEA I was a receptionist in a school and I spent some time as a cocktail server.

My favorite part about Central Rivers AEA is the ability to grow my skills while supporting the staff that supports my community.

Carolyn Wanatee

Receptionist/Secretary

"Stop running from fear and instead allow yourself to grow comfortable with its existence." *Lindo Bacon*

New look coming soon!

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We are committed to providing high-quality professional learning opportunities to educators in our region. Be sure to check out our website and newsletters for more information on upcoming classes, workshops, and trainings.



License Renewal Opportunities

It is always a good idea to know your renewal date and **review the renewal requirements for your license type**. You will want to allow four to six weeks for processing your renewal. In most cases, if your license has expired you must stop teaching or apply for an extension.

Iowa accepts licensure renewal credits from many approved Iowa providers. Credits need to be earned after the issue date of the current license, or be no more than five years old if the license is expired.

For a comprehensive list of all available courses across all AEAs, visit the **AEA Course Catalog**. For a listing of upcoming learning opportunities at Central Rivers AEA, check out the upcoming **Classes, Workshops, and Trainings** on our website. You can also visit **AEA Learning Online** to manage your account, access training modules, and complete self-paced courses.

Central Rivers **On-Demand Library** also offers micro-credential learning that can be taken for one License Renewal Credit. These are available to educators and staff serving schools within Central Rivers AEA so we can ensure timely feedback.



To check your current license renewal credits from your AEA Account, you can **download your transcript**.



What's new in the On-Demand Library?

15 Minutes

Big Ideas with AI

What is AI and what impact does it have on education?

[More Details](#)

60 Minutes

Chronic Absenteeism Overview

A definition of chronic absenteeism and the impact it has on students will be shared. The importance of using chronic absenteeism as a data metric...

[More Details](#) **PART 1**

60 Minutes

Chronic Absenteeism Overview

A definition of chronic absenteeism and the impact it has on students will be shared. The importance of using chronic absenteeism as a data metric...

[More Details](#) **PART 2**

60 Minutes

Chronic Absenteeism Overview

A definition of chronic absenteeism and the impact it has on students will be shared. The importance of using chronic absenteeism as a data metric...

[More Details](#) **PART 3**

15 Minutes

Newcomers: How Can I Communicate with Students and Families?

Do you have students arriving from another country or that are new to English? Do you want to be prepared for how you can communicate? This video will provide you beginning considerations and present different technology tools that can be utilized to ensure communication and successful interactions!

[More Details](#)

20 Minutes

Teaching Students to Drive Their Learning

Students know what it feels like to engage. Now it's time to provide the language and opportunities to set their level of engagement intention.

[More Details](#)

10 Minutes

Structured Teaching: Work Systems

Do you have students on the Autism Spectrum or who have other developmental learning challenges? Would you like a strategy to help your students engage in multiple tasks during instruction and independent work?

[More Details](#)

10 Minutes

Using the S.E.T.T. Framework to Consider Assistive Technology Needs

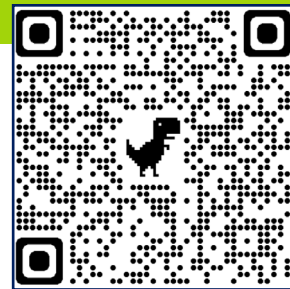
What should a team consider when selecting assistive technology for a student?

[More Details](#)

2023-2024 Professional Development Calendar/Current Events

Looking for upcoming events at Central Rivers AEA? Check out the latest via our [webpage](#).

ParaPost! Empowering Paraeducators: Recognitions, Resources, and Reframing Perspectives



Nominations for the Paraeducator Awards are **now open!** These awards aim to honor the dedication, commitment, and hard work of paraeducators who play a crucial role in supporting teachers and students in diverse educational settings. As we navigate the complex landscape of education, recognizing the unsung heroes behind the scenes becomes increasingly important, and the Paraeducator Award nominations provide a platform to celebrate the outstanding efforts of these individuals. Use the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/ABCparaeducator> to nominate a deserving paraeducator **today!**

Exciting news for the education community unfolds with the imminent launch of The Para Institute. This upcoming initiative promises to be a hub of resources, training, and professional development opportunities specifically tailored for paraeducators. By focusing on the unique challenges and responsibilities that paraeducators face, The Para Institute aims to enhance their skills, empower their role in the educational process, and foster a community of continuous learning. As the demand for specialized support in classrooms grows, initiatives like The Para Institute are crucial in equipping paraeducators with the tools they need to excel in their vital roles. As planning for 2024 commences, please see the November/December issue of *The ParaPost* to complete the **Google Survey** so the planning committee can design the best possible experience!

Amidst these developments, there's a call to "flip the script" on how we perceive student behavior. The notion of reframing negative labels, such as "unmotivated," to more positive and empowering terms like "easygoing," underscores the importance of nurturing a positive learning environment. This paradigm shift not only benefits students by fostering a more supportive atmosphere but also encourages paraeducators to approach their work with a fresh perspective. Additionally, a Para HelpLine has been made available, providing a platform for educators to submit questions and seek guidance. This resource, accessible by emailing questions to tkesler@centralriversaea.org, exemplifies a commitment to creating a collaborative and supportive network within the education community, where knowledge-sharing and problem-solving contribute to the overall success of paraeducators and the students they serve.

We see the difference that you are making in students' lives across the state of Iowa. Keep up the great work!

Check out our current **Paraeducator Newsletter** and previous issues on our website. If you want to receive them electronically, please fill out this **form**.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

By the Numbers!

Did you know in 2022-23 Central Rivers AEA offered **808** courses/workshops and had **4,923** course/workshop participants?

Also, our on-demand system has received **52,527** page views between August 1st and December 19th with **231** pieces of content!

Sub Authorization and Para Certifications

Substitute Authorization

Do you know someone who has an AA, BA or at least 60 hours of coursework and would be interested in serving as a substitute? Encourage them to earn their substitute authorization! There is only one required class and they can earn their sub authorization in as little as five weeks! Cost for the course is \$100.

#204756 CR - Substitute Authorization

Start Date

April 1, 2024

End Date

May 5, 2024

Paraeducators who do not have their AA, BA or at least 60 hours of advanced coursework can also serve as sub but are limited to their own special education classroom and are limited to five consecutive days in your assigned SPED classroom. *Note: The Substitute Authorization endorsement added to a paraeducator certificate only works if the Paraeducator is assigned a classroom. If they are not assigned to the classroom they may not sub for that class.*

Paraeducator Generalist Certification Courses

Central Rivers AEA also offers an opportunity for adults to obtain a Paraeducator Generalist Certification. There are many advantages to earning your certification:

- **Deepen your knowledge:** Taking certification courses can equip you with advanced skills and strategies to better support individual student needs.
- **Expand your career opportunities:** Certification unlocks more career paths, like becoming a lead paraeducator, instructional coach, or even pursuing a teaching degree. Additional specialized training can make you a more competitive candidate for higher-level positions.
- **Increase your earning potential:** Advanced training and certifications can sometimes lead to higher salaries or access to bonuses and incentives. Check with your school district to see what they offer for those with certifications.

The paraeducator certification is a series of three courses (from any AEA). Central Rivers AEA offers these courses as a blended opportunity (Virtual, Face-to-Face and online coursework). Together, these three courses cover all six competencies. The cost for each course is \$120

#204124 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program

Course I Introduction/Foundation

Start Date

April 18, 2024

End Date

June 13, 2024

#204317 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program

Course II Instructional Support

Start Date

March 28, 2024

End Date

June 7, 2024

#204318 CR - Paraeducator Generalist Certification Program - Course III Behavioral Support

Start Date

March 28, 2024

End Date

June 7, 2024

Check out our website [Substitute Authorization & Paraeducator Certification Information](#) for all things paraeducator and substitute authorization.

Reach out to Angie Gansen at agansen@centralriversaea.org for more information regarding courses and registration.