Minnesota Department of Education

DATE: December 5, 2012

TO: Superintendents
Special Education Directors
Paraprofessionals
Building Principals
Title 1 Directors

FROM: Joan Breslin Larson
Supervisor, Division of Special Education

RE: Paraprofessional Recognition Week, January 13, 2013

Paraprofessional Recognition Week is scheduled for January 13-19, 2013. As part of the celebration of this event, the Minnesota Department of Education would like to share strategies that schools may use to honor and recognize paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessionals are individuals who work in a variety of positions in a school district. Their roles include, but are not limited to those who work as instructional assistants, Title 1 Paraprofessionals, pupil support assistants, special education paraprofessionals, job coaches, lunch room and playground assistants, hall monitors, media center assistants, and more!

During Paraprofessional Recognition Week, it is appropriate to recognize and celebrate the contributions of paraprofessionals working in schools. Here are some suggestions:

- Encourage school staff to visit with paraprofessionals and acknowledge their contributions.
- Send information home to parents and students acknowledging the role of paraprofessionals.
- Recognize your school's paraprofessionals with appropriate tokens of appreciation such as a certificate, a handwritten note acknowledging contributions, etc.
- Award priority parking in the parking lot to a paraprofessional for a day or a week.
- Construct a bulletin board at school highlighting the contributions of paraprofessionals.
- Serve refreshments in the school for parents, faculty and administration to gather and recognize the paraprofessionals working in the school.
- Highlight Paraprofessional Recognition Week in the school or district newsletter.
- Acknowledge paraprofessionals' contributions through school newsletter articles highlighting the work of one or more paraprofessionals.
- Invite local radio stations to broadcast the names of paraprofessionals, the schools in which they work, and the scope of their work.
- Recognize one or two paraprofessionals each day of the week, announcing their name and role in the school during daily announcements.
- Organize an appreciation lunch for paraprofessionals served by school administrators and teachers to be held during Paraprofessional Recognition Week.
- Introduce and thank paraprofessionals in front of the school community.

Please share this information with your staff.