

Special Education Guide to  
Paraeducator  
Federal and State Laws

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# Chapter 1: How does the Federal Law work?

Before diving into the role of paraprofessionals in schools, it helps to understand how federal education law actually works — because it isn't a single document you can pull up and read from start to finish. Instead, it's a layered system built from laws passed by Congress and detailed rules issued by the U.S. Department of Education. Understanding how these layers fit together helps schools stay compliant, protects staff, and — most importantly — safeguards students' right to a free appropriate public education.

## How Federal Education Law Is Built

Think of federal education law as a two-step system: Congress writes the law, and a federal agency explains how to carry it out.

Step 1: Congress writes the law.

When Congress passes an education law, it becomes part of the *United States Code* (U.S.C.) — the permanent, official record of all federal statutes. Education law lives in **Title 20** of the U.S. Code (written as *20 U.S.C.*). Laws you've probably heard of — the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, and Every Student Succeeds Act — all fall under Title 20.

This is the law. Not a suggestion, not a guideline. What Congress writes here creates real legal obligations for schools.

Step 2: The Department of Education explains how to follow it.

Once Congress passes a law, it directs federal agencies to put it into practice. For education, that agency is the U.S. Department of Education, and it publishes its rules in the *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR). Education regulations live in **Title 34** of the CFR (written as *34 CFR*).

Title 34 defines the terms used in Title 20 — words like *instructional support*, *supervision*, and *personnel qualifications* — and spells out exactly how schools must implement what the law requires. These regulations are just as legally binding as the law itself. They can't contradict the law or lower the protections it establishes; they can only clarify and apply it.

The simplest way to remember it: **Title 20 says *what* schools must do. Title 34 says *how* to do it.** Schools must follow both the U.S. Code and the Code of Federal Regulations. Neither alone is enough.

Here's a practical example of how they work together:

**20 U.S.C. (the law):** *"Paraprofessionals may provide instructional support under appropriate supervision."*

**34 CFR (the regulations):** *"Here is what 'instructional support' means. Here is what 'appropriate supervision' requires. Here is what is — and is not — permitted in schools."*

A district that follows the regulations but violates the statute is breaking the law. A district that follows the statute but ignores the regulations is also breaking the law. Both apply, always.

### **The History Behind Today's Rules: ESEA, NCLB, and ESSA**

The federal education law in Title 20 is also known as **Public Law 114-95**, but it has carried several names over the decades — each reflecting a major reauthorization that updated its requirements while building on the foundation before it.

#### **The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) — 1965**

ESEA was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson and established the federal government's role in education, with a particular focus on equity and access for students from low-income families. From the beginning, it included requirements for paraprofessionals tied to the use of federal funds.

#### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB) — 2002**

NCLB was a reauthorization of ESEA — meaning it didn't create a separate new law, but rather amended and updated the original. Signed by President George W. Bush, NCLB introduced some of the clearest language ever written about paraprofessionals in schools. It required instructional paraprofessionals to:

- Hold specific qualifications
- Work under the *direct supervision* of a certified teacher
- Limit their role to reinforcing and supporting instruction — not delivering it independently

NCLB made explicit what had long been assumed: paraprofessionals are a support role, not a replacement for a certified educator.

## **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) — 2015**

ESSA, signed by President Barack Obama, replaced NCLB — but it didn't erase what NCLB put in place. The core paraprofessional protections were carried forward. ESSA shifted some accountability responsibilities to individual states, but the fundamental requirements around paraprofessional qualifications, supervision, and role boundaries remained intact.

You can read the full text of ESSA at:

<https://www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ95/PLAW-114publ95.htm>

One important nuance: when people reference 2004 Title I guidance about paraprofessionals, that guidance is still relevant today — even though it predates ESSA. Why? Because unless Congress or the Department of Education explicitly rescinds prior guidance, it continues to apply, especially when the underlying statutory language hasn't meaningfully changed. ESSA retained the same core paraprofessional framework that NCLB established, so earlier clarifications still align with and reinforce current law.

That means the 2004 Title I paraprofessional guidance, the current ESSA statutory language, and 34 CFR regulations all point in the same direction. They aren't in conflict — they build on each other.

### **Here's the big picture in plain terms:**

- **Title 20 U.S.C.** tells schools what Congress requires.
- **Title 34 CFR** tells schools how to meet those requirements.
- **ESSA** is the current version of Title 20, carrying forward paraprofessional rules first made explicit under NCLB.

Together, ESEA, NCLB, and ESSA form an unbroken legal thread spanning 60 years — consistently protecting students by ensuring that instruction comes from qualified educators, while allowing paraprofessionals to play a vital support role under appropriate supervision.

This is the foundation. Everything that follows about what paraprofessionals can and cannot do is rooted in this framework.



# Chapter 2: Who Are Paraprofessionals and What Do They Do?

Here's something that surprises many people: the word "paraprofessional" isn't a job title — it's a legal category. A school employee is considered a paraprofessional based on what they do, not what their name badge says. Any staff member who provides instructional or student-support services under the supervision of certified staff, without holding primary instructional authority, falls within this category under federal law.

That matters because schools use dozens of different titles for these roles. You might see any of the following on a staff roster:

**General Instructional Support** Instructional Aide, Teacher's Aide, Teacher's Assistant, Paraprofessional Educator, Classroom Aide, Intervention Aide, Reading or Math Support Aide, Title I Paraprofessional, Academic Support Assistant, Bilingual Paraprofessional, Early Childhood Class Aide, Preschool Paraprofessional

**Special Education Support** Special Education Aide, One-to-One (1:1) Support, Inclusion Aide, Resource Room Aide, Autism Support Aide, Behavior Support Aide, Life Skills Aide, Functional Skills Paraprofessional, Adaptive Skills Assistant, Transition Support Aide, Job Coach (school-based), Community-Based Instruction Aide

**Therapy and Service Support** (working under licensed providers, not independently) Speech Therapy Assistant, Communication Aide, Occupational Therapy Aide (non-licensed), Physical Therapy Aide (non-licensed), Therapy Aide, Sensory Support Aide

Note: Licensed therapy assistants follow separate licensure laws. Unlicensed support staff in these settings fall under paraprofessional guidance.

**Behavioral and Mental Health Support** Behavioral Support Paraprofessional, Emotional Support Aide, Crisis Support Aide, Social-Emotional Learning Assistant, Student Support Assistant, Intervention Support Aide

**Personal Care and Accessibility Support** Personal Care Aide, Health Aide (non-licensed), Mobility Support Aide, Feeding Support Aide, Medical Support Aide (non-nurse), Toileting Support Aide, Safety

Support Aide (These roles may be instructional or non-instructional depending on the specific duties assigned.)

**Early Childhood** Early Childhood Paraprofessional, Head Start Assistant, Preschool Instructional Aide, Developmental Support Aide

**Language and Communication Support** Bilingual Aide, ESL Support Aide, Communication Access Aide, Interpreter/Facilitator (in instructional contexts)

**The Functional Definition: When the Label Applies:** Regardless of title, a school employee is functioning as a paraprofessional when they:

- Work under the supervision of certified staff
- Support instruction, access, behavior, or a student's functional participation
- Do not design instruction or independently evaluate students
- Are not the teacher of record or a licensed service provider

Some roles — clerical staff, lunchroom monitors, custodial workers, bus aides — are not paraprofessionals unless they are assigned instructional or student-support duties connected to classroom or IEP services. The moment a staff member begins providing instructional support, implementing IEP-related activities, or managing student behavior in a support capacity, paraprofessional standards and supervision requirements kick in.

### **What Paraprofessionals Are Permitted to Do**

Federal law — specifically ESSA and 34 CFR 200.59 — permits paraprofessionals to provide instructional support services, but only when working under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. ESSA outlines a specific list of permitted duties:

- One-on-one tutoring (when it occurs outside the time a student would otherwise receive instruction from a teacher)
- Assisting with classroom management
- Organizing classroom materials
- Supporting instruction in computer labs or libraries
- Conducting parent involvement activities
- Acting as translators or interpreters
- Providing instructional support under a certified teacher's direction

What paraprofessionals may not do:

- Develop or plan lessons
- Introduce new concepts or provide direct teaching
- Choose instructional materials independently
- Assign or determine grades or assess student achievement
- Implement IEP-related duties without certified supervision

The line is clear: **paraprofessionals reinforce and support instruction that a certified teacher has already designed and delivered. They do not introduce, replace, or independently carry out that instruction.**

**"Direct Supervision"** : This is one of the most misunderstood requirements in the law — and one of the most important. Direct supervision is not a job title, a signature on a form, or a periodic check-in. The U.S. Department of Education has been explicit: direct supervision is an active instructional relationship, and it is only satisfied when all of the following conditions are met:

1. The certified teacher **plans** the paraprofessional's instructional support duties
2. The certified teacher **prepares** the lessons and instructional activities the paraprofessional carries out
3. The certified teacher **evaluates** the achievement of the students the paraprofessional is working with
4. The paraprofessional **works in close proximity** to the certified teacher and has **frequent contact** with them

ESSA explicitly rejects staffing models in which paraprofessionals operate independently. A program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not legally permissible. A model in which a teacher occasionally visits a classroom while paraprofessionals deliver instruction the rest of the time is inconsistent with federal law. When students are left alone with a paraprofessional to receive instruction that should be delivered by a certified teacher or special education provider, this raises serious concerns about service integrity and the student's right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

The teacher designs, directs, and is responsible. The paraprofessional supports, reinforces, and assists — always within that structure.

**Title I Paraprofessionals Non-Regulatory Guidance**  
**US Department of Education March 1, 2004 (excerpt)**

(full document can be found in the back of the book)

**D. PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS**

D-1. What are the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals?

Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support must work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [Sections 1119(g)(3)(A)] A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. [§200.59(c)(2) of the Title I regulations] As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

**Federal law creates some important clarity around special education settings specifically.**

**Inclusion models require certified special education involvement.** When a paraprofessional pushes into a general education classroom without a certified special education teacher providing instruction, monitoring, or supervision, special education services are simply not being delivered — regardless of what the schedule says. Paraprofessionals support inclusion; they don't deliver special education services independently.

**Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) must be introduced by certified staff.** SDI — the instruction tailored specifically to a student's disability-related needs — must be designed and first delivered by a certified special or general education teacher. Paraprofessionals may reinforce, generalize, or help a student practice skills that have already been taught. They may not introduce new concepts, modify instructional methodology, or independently implement SDI.

A useful way to remember the distinction:

The certified teacher **introduces, explains, models, and assesses** new learning. The paraprofessional **reinforces, practices, prompts, and supports access**.

**Progress monitoring and IEP data collection are the responsibility of certified staff.**

Paraprofessionals may assist with practice activities or informal observation, but they may not be solely responsible for collecting or analyzing data used to determine progress toward IEP goals.

**Confidentiality, Communication, and Boundaries:** Paraprofessionals handle sensitive information about students every day, which creates real responsibilities around confidentiality and professional conduct.

Information shared must be objective, role-appropriate, and shared only with those who have an educational need to know. Paraprofessionals should avoid public discussions about students and maintain confidentiality beyond the boundaries of their specific assignment. A practical standard: Would this be okay if it were my child?

When academic or behavioral questions arise, paraprofessionals should redirect them to certified staff rather than answer independently. Paraprofessionals also have a responsibility to support students' relationships with peers and their growing independence — teams must actively guard against paraprofessionals becoming a student's primary social connection or inadvertently creating overreliance.

While IDEA does not prohibit paraprofessionals from attending IEP meetings, whether and how they participate is a district-level decision. Having a clear, consistent policy helps ensure a uniform and professional approach.

**A note on parent rights:** ESSA includes parent right-to-know provisions. Parents have the right to request information about whether their child is being instructed by a teacher or a paraprofessional and the qualifications of those individuals. Claims that paraprofessional roles or identities are confidential are not supported by federal law.

**The Big Picture:**

IDEA and ESSA work together, not against each other. ESSA governs how paraprofessionals may be used in schools. IDEA governs what services students with disabilities must receive. Together, they establish a clear and consistent federal standard:

**Paraprofessionals support instruction. They do not replace teachers. Supervision must be real, present, and instructional — not theoretical or administrative.**

Any district practice that assigns paraprofessionals instructional authority beyond their defined support role risks federal noncompliance and, more importantly, compromises the quality of services students with disabilities are legally entitled to receive.



# Chapter 3: Reinforce, Support, Repeat:

## The Paraprofessional's Daily Role

Knowing the law is one thing. Knowing what it looks like on a Tuesday morning in a third-grade classroom is another. This chapter translates the legal framework into practical, day-to-day guidance — what paraprofessionals are permitted to do, what certified staff are responsible for, and how to tell the difference when things get unclear.

The core principle running through everything in this chapter is simple: paraprofessionals support access to instruction. Teachers provide instruction. When that distinction holds, students are protected, staff are protected, and the school is compliant. When it erodes — even gradually, even with good intentions — everyone is at risk.

### **What Paraprofessionals May Do When Properly Trained and Supervised**

#### **Instructional Reinforcement**

The most important word in this section is *reinforcement*. Paraprofessionals may reinforce, revisit, and support practice of skills and concepts that a certified teacher has already introduced. They do not introduce new material, independently select instructional approaches, or take over the teacher's instructional role.

Within those boundaries, paraprofessionals may:

- Reinforce skills and concepts already taught by the certified teacher
- Support guided practice using teacher-provided materials and directions
- Prompt students to apply strategies the teacher has already modeled
- Rephrase or restate teacher directions using the same language the teacher used
- Help students follow along during lessons — tracking text, highlighting, organizing materials
- Support completion of teacher-assigned work without adding new instruction
- Encourage independence through scaffolds the teacher has already introduced (checklists, visual supports, anchor charts)
- Model expected classroom behaviors that have already been taught

## **Behavioral and Self-Regulation Support**

Students with disabilities often need consistent support managing their behavior, emotions, and regulation throughout the day. Paraprofessionals play a meaningful role here — but always within plans that certified staff have created and approved.

This includes:

- Implementing behavior supports outlined in the IEP, Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), or classroom plan
- Prompting use of coping strategies the teacher has already taught (movement breaks, breathing, calming tools)
- Supporting emotional regulation using approved tools — fidgets, calm corners, visual supports
- Reinforcing positive behaviors using teacher-approved systems
- Redirecting behavior using consistent, pre-taught strategies
- Supporting transitions to reduce dysregulation or anxiety
- Monitoring safety during periods of heightened behavioral need

## **Accommodations and Access Supports**

Accommodations are not instruction — they are adjustments that make instruction accessible. Providing an accommodation is well within a paraprofessional's role.

This includes:

- Implementing accommodations listed in an IEP or 504 plan (extended time, preferential seating, reduced distractions)
- Providing read-aloud or scribing as an accommodation — not as instruction
- Assisting with organization of materials, schedules, and assignments
- Supporting use of assistive technology as trained
- Providing small-group or quiet-space support when assigned by the teacher
- Helping students follow modified routines or pacing already determined by the teacher

## **Non-Instructional Times**

Non-instructional settings — hallways, lunchrooms, playgrounds, assemblies — are still part of the school day, and for many students with disabilities they present some of the greatest challenges.

Paraprofessionals provide important support during these times, including:

- Supporting students during transitions between classes
- Supervising lunch, recess, arrival, dismissal, and assemblies
- Reinforcing social skills and school-wide expectations
- Supporting safe movement throughout the building
- Assisting with behavior regulation in unstructured settings
- Supporting participation in school activities and events

It's worth stating clearly: these supports are essential and legally appropriate. They do not constitute instruction. They also should not be used to reduce or substitute for required special education minutes — non-instructional support is in addition to services, not a replacement for them.

## **Personal Care and Health-Related Supports**

When included in a student's plan and when the paraprofessional has been appropriately trained, personal care and health-related support is a legitimate and important part of the role. This may include:

- Assisting with toileting, hygiene, and dressing
- Supporting feeding or positioning
- Assisting with mobility and transfers
- Monitoring health or safety needs according to student plans
- Supporting self-care goals outlined in the IEP

These activities are legal, appropriate, and do not constitute instruction.

## **Family, Team, and School-Wide Support**

Paraprofessionals also contribute to the broader functioning of the school and student support team. This includes:

- Communicating observations to the teacher
- Attending IEP meetings when invited by the team
- Reading and following student plans relevant to assigned duties
- Maintaining confidentiality of student records
- Following district and school protocols

- Participating in training and professional development
- Supporting arrival and dismissal procedures
- Assisting in libraries, media centers, or labs
- Helping supervise field trips and school events
- Providing translation or interpretation when trained
- Assisting with parent involvement activities
- Supporting testing environments as assigned

**What This Looks Like by Subject Area:** Understanding the boundary between reinforcement and instruction becomes clearer with concrete examples. Here's how it plays out across common academic areas.

### **Reading**

The certified teacher introduces: The phonics pattern, comprehension strategy, or decoding skill. They model it, explain when to use it, and lead guided practice.

The paraprofessional reinforces by:

- Prompting the student to use the strategy ("Check the vowel sound we practiced")
- Pointing to the anchor chart or visual the teacher created
- Listening as the student rereads familiar text, encouraging accuracy and fluency
- Asking the student to explain how they used the strategy
- Tracking engagement or error patterns to report back to the teacher

### **Math**

The certified teacher introduces: The math concept — regrouping, fractions, word problem strategies. They model multiple examples, explain the process, and introduce vocabulary.

The paraprofessional reinforces by:

- Prompting students to follow the teacher's steps ("What's the first step she showed us?")
- Encouraging use of manipulatives the teacher approved
- Supporting students in completing practice problems already assigned
- Checking that students are using the correct method — not giving answers
- Redirecting students to visuals or examples the teacher provided

## Writing

The certified teacher introduces: Sentence structure, paragraph organization, or writing strategy. They model writing, explain expectations, and review the rubric.

The paraprofessional reinforces by:

- Prompting use of the writing checklist
- Asking guiding questions ("Did you include a topic sentence like the teacher showed?")
- Encouraging revisions using teacher-provided feedback
- Supporting organization through highlighting, color-coding, or graphic organizers

Not permitted: composing sentences for the student, correcting content independently, or introducing new writing strategies.

**Social Skills:** The certified teacher introduces: The social skill — turn-taking, requesting help, peer interaction. They model scenarios and explain expectations.

The paraprofessional reinforces by:

- Prompting the student to use taught phrases or behaviors
- Supporting peer interaction during group work
- Encouraging generalization of the skill across different settings
- Providing quiet reminders during real-life situations

Not permitted: teaching new social skills independently or acting as the student's primary communication partner.

**Executive Function and Independence:** The certified teacher introduces: Organization systems, routines, and self-management strategies.

The paraprofessional reinforces by:

- Prompting use of planners, checklists, or schedules
- Supporting task initiation and completion
- Encouraging independence before stepping in
- Gradually fading support as skills improve

Not permitted: managing the student's work for them or becoming a permanent substitute for skill development.

## The Paraprofessional's Role in Data Collection

Paraprofessionals are often the closest person to a student during the school day. That proximity makes them uniquely valuable when it comes to observation and data collection — two activities that directly support a student's educational program when done correctly.

The key word is *correctly*. Data collection is a defined, directed activity. It is not independent analysis, and it is not instructional decision-making. When a paraprofessional collects data, their role is to observe accurately, record objectively, and report promptly. What happens with that information after it's collected belongs to the certified teacher or licensed service provider — not the paraprofessional.

Paraprofessionals may collect data only when directed by a certified teacher or written student plan, and only using tools the teacher has provided. Within those parameters, appropriate data collection includes:

- Frequency counts — how often a specific behavior or response occurred
- Duration tracking — how long a student remained engaged, on-task, or in a dysregulated state
- Task completion — whether work was completed independently, with prompting, or with assistance
- Response to strategies — how the student responded to supports or interventions already introduced by the teacher
- Environmental factors — time of day, setting, transitions, or other contextual details that may be relevant
- Use of supports and accommodations — whether visual supports, breaks, prompts, or assistive technology were used and how the student responded

These observations can be recorded through checklists, tally marks, logs, timers, anecdotal notes, or digital systems — whatever format the teacher has assigned. The format matters less than the accuracy. Objective, consistent data collection gives teachers and service providers the information they need to evaluate progress and adjust plans.

The paraprofessional's role in this process is to observe, record, and share. Nothing more.

Analyzing what the data means, determining whether a student is making progress, deciding whether an instructional approach should change, or making any kind of educational or programmatic decision — those responsibilities belong entirely to the certified teacher or licensed service provider. Even if patterns seem obvious, even if something appears to be working or not working, interpreting data and acting on it is outside the paraprofessional's role.

This isn't a limitation on the paraprofessional's value — it's a protection. When paraprofessionals stay in the observer-and-reporter role, the data they collect is clean, objective, and usable. When they begin

filtering observations through their own interpretations, the integrity of that data is compromised, and students can end up with plans built on incomplete or skewed information.

The certified teacher is responsible for:

- Defining what data is collected and why
- Providing the tools and instructions for collection
- Analyzing the data once collected
- Determining student progress
- Making any instructional or programmatic decisions

The paraprofessional is responsible for:

- Collecting data accurately and consistently as directed
- Recording objective observations without editorializing
- Noting observable patterns and relevant contextual details
- Reporting to the supervising teacher in a timely manner
- Assisting with fidelity checks when directed

## **Classroom and Instructional Support Tasks**

Beyond data collection, paraprofessionals provide a range of practical support that keeps classrooms running smoothly and instruction accessible. These tasks are essential to the instructional environment — even when they aren't instruction themselves.

Appropriate classroom support includes:

- Preparing materials for lessons — copying, cutting, organizing, assembling
- Setting up instructional spaces or learning stations designed by the teacher
- Assisting with technology setup and troubleshooting
- Supporting classroom management routines
- Supervising students during teacher-led instruction
- Monitoring engagement during whole-group lessons
- Helping maintain a structured, predictable environment

These tasks directly support learning without crossing into instructional territory. A well-prepared classroom, a smoothly running routine, and consistent environmental structure all contribute to student access and regulation — which is exactly what the paraprofessional role is designed to provide.

Data collection and classroom support are two of the most practical, day-to-day expressions of the paraprofessional role. Done well, they make teachers more effective and students better supported. Done outside the defined boundaries — interpreting data, making independent decisions, or operating without direction — they introduce risk for students and staff alike.

Observe accurately. Record objectively. Report promptly. Support the environment the teacher has designed. That is the role, and it matters.

### **A Note on Fading Support**

One of the most important — and most overlooked — responsibilities of a paraprofessional is the active effort to become *less necessary* over time. Paraprofessional support should facilitate student independence and peer relationships. When a student becomes reliant on a paraprofessional as their primary support person, that's a signal that the team needs to reassess. Overreliance, social isolation, and the paraprofessional becoming a student's primary social partner are outcomes that teams must actively work to prevent. The goal is always greater independence — not greater dependence.

When something feels unclear — when a moment arises and a paraprofessional isn't certain whether a particular action falls inside or outside their role — there is one question that cuts through the ambiguity:

"Am I helping the student practice what the teacher already taught — or am I teaching something new?"

If it's practice: stay in the role and provide the support. If it's new: stop, and bring the question to the certified teacher.

This isn't about limiting what paraprofessionals can contribute. It's about protecting students' right to receive instruction from qualified educators, protecting paraprofessionals from being placed in impossible positions, and ensuring that the support provided is actually grounded in a plan designed by someone with the training and authority to make those decisions.

Paraprofessionals are essential. Their presence, consistency, and daily support can be the difference between a student thriving or struggling. Staying within the defined role isn't a limitation — it's what makes the work legally sound, professionally appropriate, and genuinely good for students.

# Chapter 4: Inclusion in General Education Settings

## What Inclusion Actually Requires

Being physically present in a general education classroom is not the same as being included in it. True inclusion means a student is actively participating — engaging with instruction, interacting with peers, and building independence within the shared environment. The paraprofessional's role in an inclusive setting is to make that participation possible, not to become the student's permanent bridge to it. Nor is it to be their personal teacher. This distinction shapes everything about how paraprofessional support should look in a general education classroom. The goal is access and engagement — not proximity and dependence.

## The Inclusion Role: What's In and What's Out

In inclusive general education classrooms, paraprofessionals may:

- Help students follow classroom routines and directions
- Implement accommodations listed in the IEP or 504 plan — discreetly and consistently
- Prompt appropriate classroom behaviors using strategies already taught
- Support attention and self-regulation in a low-profile, non-disruptive way
- Encourage peer interaction and participation in group activities
- Gradually fade assistance as the student builds independence and confidence
- Help students use self-advocacy strategies they've already been taught

Paraprofessionals may not:

- Serve as the student's primary instructor
- Speak for the student when the student is capable of communicating for themselves
- Isolate the student from peers or create a "paraprofessional bubble" around them
- Replace or substitute for special education instruction
- Make instructional or placement decisions

Behavioral support in inclusive settings follows the same structure. The certified teacher designs behavior plans, teaches expectations, and models routines. The paraprofessional reinforces them — using the same language and cues as the teacher, providing reminders and prompts, supporting transitions, and helping students self-monitor with teacher-approved tools. Creating behavior plans, changing expectations, or applying consequences that haven't been approved by the team is outside the paraprofessional's role.

### **A Word on Over-Reliance**

One of the most well-intentioned mistakes in inclusive settings is also one of the most harmful: the paraprofessional becoming a student's primary interaction partner. When this happens, the student's relationship with the teacher and classmates gets crowded out. Peers stop initiating. The student stops looking to the teacher for cues. Independence stalls.

Best practice requires actively working against this pattern. That means stepping back when the student can manage, reducing prompts as skills develop, and making space for the student to engage directly with the classroom community. The measure of good paraprofessional support in an inclusive setting isn't how much help is provided — it's how much help becomes unnecessary over time.

### **During Whole-Group Instruction**

When the teacher is delivering instruction to the full class, the paraprofessional's role is supportive and observational. The teacher leads. The paraprofessional helps the student stay present, engaged, and regulated enough to access what's being taught.

What this looks like in practice:

- Positioning near a student who needs cues to attend
- Using quiet, nonverbal prompts — pointing to the board, tapping the paper, showing a visual cue
- Helping a student follow along with materials the teacher has already prepared (finding the correct page, highlighting where to look, lining up manipulatives)
- Redirecting attention using pre-taught tools like visual schedules, first/then boards, or cue cards

- Supporting regulation with approved tools — movement breaks, fidgets, headphones, calm-down cards
- Whispering reminders of teacher-given directions using the same words the teacher used

What it does not look like:

- Teaching a new concept or explaining the lesson in a different way
- Answering academic questions that add to, change, or extend what the teacher said
- Pulling a student aside to reteach during whole-group instruction
- Replacing teacher instruction with independent explanations

If a student becomes overwhelmed mid-lesson, the paraprofessional may help them access a pre-taught regulation strategy or a scheduled break consistent with the IEP or behavior plan. The lesson continues with the teacher. The paraprofessional supports the student's ability to return to it.

### **During Small-Group Instruction**

Small-group settings require particular attention to role clarity. When a certified teacher plans the lesson and remains present or in close proximity, a paraprofessional may assist with implementation — helping students practice skills, monitoring engagement, supporting turn-taking, and providing encouragement.

The teacher determines the instructional goal, selects the materials, and explains what students are working toward. The paraprofessional carries out support within that structure.

Paraprofessionals may:

- Help students practice skills the teacher already taught
- Encourage participation and turn-taking
- Prompt students to try independently before offering help
- Reinforce directions using the same language and expectations the teacher used
- Support behavior, attention, and regulation within the group
- Assist with materials — handing out cards, setting up manipulatives, tracking turns
- Model how to use supports the teacher has already introduced

Paraprofessionals may not:

- Run a group independently in a separate room
- Plan lessons or determine what will be taught
- Introduce new strategies, content, or instructional methods
- Provide instruction without the teacher present or actively supervising
- Count independent paraprofessional time as special education service minutes

If a paraprofessional is supporting one small group while the teacher works with another in the same room, direct supervision is still required. The teacher must remain able to observe, intervene, and adjust instruction as needed — not simply be somewhere in the building.

### **During Independent Work Time**

Independent work periods are among the most common times for paraprofessional support — and among the most frequently misunderstood. The name says it all: the goal is *independence*. The paraprofessional's job during this time is to support that goal, not undermine it by doing the work alongside or instead of the student.

Appropriate support includes helping students understand directions that have already been given, ensuring materials are organized, and reminding students of strategies the teacher has already taught — pointing to an anchor chart, prompting use of a checklist, or encouraging a student to reread a question before asking for help.

What paraprofessionals should actively avoid is hovering. Constant proximity signals to the student — and to classmates — that the student cannot work without help. If a student is genuinely struggling, the paraprofessional's job is to observe, document the pattern, and report it to the teacher. The teacher then adjusts instruction. The paraprofessional does not step in to reteach in the moment.

Paraprofessionals may:

- Help students understand directions that were already given
- Prompt use of tools — checklists, visuals, anchor charts, sentence frames
- Encourage persistence, organization, and task completion
- Help students apply strategies for breaking tasks into steps, as previously taught
- Observe and take notes on student struggles or patterns to share with the teacher

Paraprofessionals may not:

- Give answers or solve problems for students
- Reteach lessons or introduce new explanations
- Modify assignments independently
- Hover beside a student throughout the entire work period
- Complete work on a student's behalf

### **During Centers or Rotations**

When classrooms use centers or rotational activities, paraprofessionals often support transitions and engagement. The certified teacher is responsible for designing center activities, determining their instructional purpose, and ensuring alignment with student goals. The paraprofessional helps students move through the structure the teacher has built.

For example: if a center involves sorting words by vowel sound — a skill the teacher has already taught — the paraprofessional may prompt students to check their work, remind them of the sorting rule, or encourage a peer to help. What they may not do is introduce a new skill, change the task, or determine whether a student has mastered the content.

Paraprofessionals may:

- Help students transition between centers smoothly
- Remind students of center expectations and routines
- Support completion of teacher-planned tasks
- Prompt use of visual directions or models
- Encourage peer interaction and cooperative behavior
- Support regulation and engagement during transitions

Paraprofessionals may not:

- Change the activity or materials
- Introduce new instruction or skills
- Decide independently when a student has mastered content
- Teach independently at a separate station in place of the teacher

### **What Direct Supervision Actually Looks Like in Practice**

Throughout all of these settings, direct supervision is the thread that makes the paraprofessional's work legally sound and educationally meaningful. It isn't administrative. It isn't passive. It's an ongoing, active instructional relationship.

In practice, direct supervision includes:

- Scheduled planning time between the teacher and paraprofessional — so the paraprofessional understands what to do and why
- Teacher-developed lesson plans and support activities given to the paraprofessional before the lesson begins
- Ongoing review of collected data — the teacher regularly uses what the paraprofessional observes to adjust instruction
- Frequent check-ins and real-time course correction — the teacher is available and engaged, not just present on paper
- Observation and feedback on how the paraprofessional is implementing supports
- Documentation that reflects instructional alignment between the teacher's plan and the paraprofessional's role

A useful example: a teacher designs a small-group reading lesson, models the strategy, provides written guidance to the paraprofessional, reviews fluency data weekly, and adjusts instruction based on student progress. The paraprofessional reinforces the instruction. The teacher owns it. That's the model — and it's what protects everyone in the room.

Direct supervision cannot be symbolic, indirect, intermittent, or paperwork-based.

If the teacher cannot see, hear, guide, and immediately correct instruction, supervision is not direct.

Direct supervision means the teacher plans the instruction, is present and engaged, observes implementation, and remains legally responsible for what occurs.

# Chapter 5: Copies of Laws

## **Public Law 114-95 also known as ESSA:**

20 U.S.C. § 6311(g)(2)

(2) Assurances

Each State plan shall contain assurances that-

(A) the State will make public any methods or criteria the State is using to measure teacher, principal, or other school leader effectiveness for the purpose of meeting the requirements described in paragraph

(1)(B);

(B) the State educational agency will notify local educational agencies, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, schools, teachers, parents, and the public of the challenging State academic standards, academic assessments, and State accountability system, developed under this section;

(C) the State educational agency will assist each local educational agency and school affected by the State plan to meet the requirements of this part;

(D) the State will participate in the biennial State academic assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 4 and 8 of the National Assessment of Educational Progress carried out under section 303(b)(3) of the National Assessment of Educational Progress Authorization Act (20 U.S.C. 9622(b)(3)) if the Secretary pays the costs of administering such assessments;

(E) the State educational agency will modify or eliminate State fiscal and accounting barriers so that schools can easily consolidate funds from other Federal, State, and local sources to improve educational opportunities and reduce unnecessary fiscal and accounting requirements;

(F) the State educational agency will support the collection and dissemination to local educational agencies and schools of effective parent and family engagement strategies, including those included in the parent and family engagement policy under section 6318 of this title;

(G) the State educational agency will provide the least restrictive and burdensome regulations for local educational agencies and individual schools participating in a program assisted under this part;

(H) the State educational agency will ensure that local educational agencies, in developing and implementing programs under this part, will, to the extent feasible, work in consultation with outside intermediary organizations (such as educational service agencies), or individuals, that have practical

expertise in the development or use of evidence-based strategies and programs to improve teaching, learning, and schools;

(I) the State educational agency has appropriate procedures and safeguards in place to ensure the validity of the assessment process;

(J) the State educational agency will ensure that all teachers and paraprofessionals working in a program supported with funds under this part meet applicable State certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification;

(K) the State educational agency will coordinate activities funded under this part with other Federal activities as appropriate;

(L) the State educational agency has involved the committee of practitioners established under section 6573(b) of this title in developing the plan and monitoring its implementation;

(M) the State has professional standards for paraprofessionals working in a program supported with funds under this part, including qualifications that were in place on the day before December 10, 2015; and

(N) the State educational agency will provide the information described in clauses (ii), (iii), and (vii) of subsection (h)(1)(C) to the public in an easily accessible and user-friendly manner that can be cross-tabulated by, at a minimum, each major racial and ethnic group, gender, English proficiency status, and children with or without disabilities, which-

(i) may be accomplished by including such information on the annual State report card described subsection (h)(1)(C); and

(ii) shall be presented in a manner that-

(I) is first anonymized and does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student;

(II) does not include a number of students in any subgroup of students that is insufficient to yield statistically reliable information or that would reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student; and

(III) is consistent with the requirements of section 1232g of this title (commonly known as the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974").

## 34 CFR § 200.58 Qualifications of paraprofessionals

### (a) *Applicability.*

(1) An LEA must ensure that each paraprofessional who is hired by the LEA and who works in a program supported with funds under subpart A of this part meets the requirements in paragraph (b) of this section and, except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, the requirements in either paragraph (c) or (d) of this section.

(2) For the purpose of this section, the term “paraprofessional”—

(i) Means an individual who provides instructional support consistent with § 200.59; and

(ii) Does not include individuals who have only non-instructional duties (such as providing technical support for computers, providing personal care services, or performing clerical duties).

(3) For the purpose of paragraph (a) of this section, a paraprofessional working in “a program supported with funds under subpart A of this part” is—

(i) A paraprofessional in a targeted assisted school who is paid with funds under subpart A of this part;

(ii) A paraprofessional in a schoolwide program school; or

(iii) A paraprofessional employed by an LEA with funds under subpart A of this part to provide instructional support to a public school teacher covered under § 200.55 who provides equitable services to eligible private school students under § 200.62.

(b) *All paraprofessionals.* A paraprofessional covered under paragraph (a) of this section, regardless of the paraprofessional's hiring date, must have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(c) *New paraprofessionals.* A paraprofessional covered under paragraph (a) of this section who is hired after January 8, 2002 must have—

(1) Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education;

(2) Obtained an associate's or higher degree; or

(3)

(i) Met a rigorous standard of quality, and can demonstrate—through a formal State or local academic assessment—knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate—

(A) Reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics; or

(B) Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

(ii) A secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is necessary, but not sufficient, to meet the requirement in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section.

(d) *Existing paraprofessionals.* Each paraprofessional who was hired on or before January 8, 2002 must meet the requirements in paragraph (c) of this section no later than January 8, 2006.

(e) *Exceptions.* A paraprofessional does not need to meet the requirements in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section if the paraprofessional—

(1)

- (i) Is proficient in English and a language other than English; and
  - (ii) Acts as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children under subpart A of this part; or
- (2) Has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities.  
(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 6319(c)-(f)) [82 FR 31707, July 7, 2017]

### **34 CFR § 200.59 Duties of paraprofessionals.**

- (a) A paraprofessional covered under § 200.58 may not be assigned a duty inconsistent with paragraph (b) of this section.
- (b) A paraprofessional covered under § 200.58 may perform the following instructional support duties:
  - (1) One-on-one tutoring for eligible students if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher.
  - (2) Assisting in classroom management.
  - (3) Assisting in computer instruction.
  - (4) Conducting parent involvement activities.
  - (5) Providing instructional support in a library or media center.
  - (6) Acting as a translator.
  - (7) Providing instructional support services.
- (c)
  - (1) A paraprofessional may not provide instructional support to a student unless the paraprofessional is working under the direct supervision of a teacher who meets the requirements in § 200.56.
  - (2) A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if -
    - (i) The teacher plans the instructional activities that the paraprofessional carries out;
    - (ii) The teacher evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working; and
    - (iii) The paraprofessional works in close and frequent physical proximity to the teacher.

(d) A paraprofessional may assume limited duties that are assigned to similar personnel who are not working in a program supported with funds under subpart A of this part - including non-instructional duties and duties that do not benefit participating students - if the amount of time the paraprofessional spends on those duties is the same proportion of total work time as the time spent by similar personnel at the same school.

### **34 CFR § 200.61 Parents' right to know.**

#### *(a) Information for parents.*

(1) At the beginning of each school year, an LEA that receives funds under this subpart must notify the parents of each student attending a title I school that the parents may request, and the LEA will provide the parents on request and in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following:

(i) Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.

(ii) Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.

(iii) Whether the teacher is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.

(iv) Whether the parent's child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

(2) A school that participates under this subpart must provide to each parent—

(i) Information on the level of achievement and academic growth, if applicable and available, of the parent's child on each of the State academic assessments required under section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA; and

(ii) Timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.

#### *(b) Testing transparency.*

(1) At the beginning of each school year, an LEA that receives funds under this subpart must notify the parents of each student attending a title I school that the parents may request, and the LEA will provide the parents on request in a timely manner, information regarding any State or LEA policy

regarding student participation in any assessments mandated by section 1111(b)(2) of the ESEA and by the State or LEA, which must include a policy, procedure, or parental right to opt the child out of such assessment, where applicable.

(2) Each LEA that receives funds under this subpart must make widely available through public means (including by posting in a clear and easily accessible manner on the LEA's website and, where practicable, on the website of each school served by the LEA) for each grade served by the LEA, information on each assessment required by the State to comply with section 1111 of the ESEA, other assessments required by the State, and, where such information is available and feasible to report, assessments required districtwide by the LEA, consistent with section 1112(e)(2)(B)-(C) of the ESEA.

*(c) Language Instruction for English learners —*

*(1) Notice.*

(i) An LEA using funds under this subpart or title III of the ESEA to provide a language instruction educational program as determined under title III must, not later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year unless paragraph (c)(1)(ii) of this section applies, inform parents of an English learner identified for participation or participating in such a program of the information in section 1112(e)(3)(A) of the ESEA.

(ii) For a child who has not been identified as an English learner prior to the beginning of the school year but is identified as an English learner during such school year, an LEA must notify the child's parents during the first two weeks of the child being placed in a language instruction educational program consistent with paragraph (c)(1)(i) of this section.

*(2) Parental participation.* An LEA receiving funds under this subpart must implement an effective means of outreach, consistent with paragraph (c)(3) of this section, to parents of English learners to inform parents how the parents can—

(i) Be involved in the education of their children; and

(ii) Be active participants in assisting their children to—

(A) Attain English proficiency;

(B) Achieve at high levels within a well-rounded education; and

(C) Meet the challenging State academic standards expected of all students.

(3) *Parent meetings.* Implementing an effective means of outreach under paragraph (c)(2) of this section must include holding, and sending notice of opportunities for, regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of English learners assisted under this subpart or title III.

(4) *Basis for admission or exclusion.* A student may not be admitted to, or excluded from, any federally assisted education program on the basis of a surname or language-minority status.

(d) *Notice and format.* The notice and information provided to parents under this section must meet the requirements in § 200.2(e).

### **34 CFR § 300.156 Personnel qualifications.**

(a) *General.* The SEA must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

(b) *Related services personnel and paraprofessionals.* The qualifications under paragraph (a) of this section must include qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals that—

(1) Are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services; and

(2) Ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession—

(i) Meet the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section; and

(ii) Have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and

(iii) Allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

### **34 CFR § 200.58 Qualifications of paraprofessionals**

(a) *Applicability.*

(1) An LEA must ensure that each paraprofessional who is hired by the LEA and who works in a program supported with funds under subpart A of this part meets the requirements in paragraph (b) of this section and, except as provided in paragraph (e) of this section, the requirements in either paragraph (c) or (d) of this section.

(2) For the purpose of this section, the term “paraprofessional”—

(i) Means an individual who provides instructional support consistent with § 200.59; and

(ii) Does not include individuals who have only non-instructional duties (such as providing technical support for computers, providing personal care services, or performing clerical duties).

(3) For the purpose of paragraph (a) of this section, a paraprofessional working in “a program supported with funds under subpart A of this part” is—

(i) A paraprofessional in a targeted assisted school who is paid with funds under subpart A of this part;

(ii) A paraprofessional in a schoolwide program school; or

(iii) A paraprofessional employed by an LEA with funds under subpart A of this part to provide instructional support to a public school teacher covered under § 200.55 who provides equitable services to eligible private school students under § 200.62.

(b) *All paraprofessionals.* A paraprofessional covered under paragraph (a) of this section, regardless of the paraprofessional's hiring date, must have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(c) *New paraprofessionals.* A paraprofessional covered under paragraph (a) of this section who is hired after January 8, 2002 must have—

(1) Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education;

(2) Obtained an associate's or higher degree; or

(3)

(i) Met a rigorous standard of quality, and can demonstrate—through a formal State or local academic assessment—knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate—

(A) Reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics; or

(B) Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

(ii) A secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is necessary, but not sufficient, to meet the requirement in paragraph (c)(3)(i) of this section.

(d) *Existing paraprofessionals.* Each paraprofessional who was hired on or before January 8, 2002 must meet the requirements in paragraph (c) of this section no later than January 8, 2006.

(e) *Exceptions.* A paraprofessional does not need to meet the requirements in paragraph (c) or (d) of this section if the paraprofessional—

(1)

(i) Is proficient in English and a language other than English; and

(ii) Acts as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children under subpart A of this part; or

(2) Has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities.

20 USC 1435 (a)(8)-(9): Requirements for statewide system

(8) A comprehensive system of personnel development, including the training of paraprofessionals and the training of primary referral sources with respect to the basic components of early intervention services available in the State that -

(A) shall include -

(i) implementing innovative strategies and activities for the recruitment and retention of early education service providers;

(ii) promoting the preparation of early intervention providers who are fully and appropriately qualified to provide early intervention services under this part; and

(iii) training personnel to coordinate transition services for infants and toddlers served under this part from a program providing early intervention services under this part and under part B (other than Section 49), to a preschool program receiving funds under Section 49, or another appropriate program; and

(B) may include -

(i) training personnel to work in rural and inner-city areas; and

(ii) training personnel in the emotional and social development of young children.

(9) Policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including the establishment and maintenance of qualifications that are consistent with any State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the area in which such personnel are providing early intervention services, except that nothing in this part (including this paragraph) shall be construed to prohibit the use of paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, to assist in the provision of early intervention services under this part to infants and toddlers with disabilities.

**Section 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(14)(B)**

Related services personnel and paraprofessionals

The qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals that—

(i) are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services;

(ii) ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession meet the requirements of clause (i) and have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and

(iii) allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this subchapter to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this subchapter to children with disabilities.

20 U. S. C. § 1451 (b). purpose; Definition of personnel; program authority

(b) Definition of Personnel. In this subpart the term ‘personnel’ means special education teachers, regular education teachers, principals, administrators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, and early intervention personnel serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or children with disabilities, except where a particular category of personnel, such as related services personnel, is identified.

# US Dept. of Ed 2004 Guidance Document

## Title I Paraprofessionals Non-Regulatory Guidance

US Department of Education

March 1, 2004

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### **Summary of Major Changes**

This updated version March 1, 2004, of the Title I Paraprofessionals Non-regulatory Guidance is reorganized so that all questions addressing similar topics are in the same section. In addition to a number of minor and technical changes, the following questions are new or have been significantly revised:

B-15 is revised to highlight the discretion LEAs have for distinguishing “new” and “existing” paraprofessionals in the case of paraprofessionals hired prior to January 8, 2002, but laid off and subsequently rehired after January 8, 2002. The revised response includes an example of what a district policy addressing this issue might say. B-16 clarifies that LEAs have the discretion to determine that a paraprofessional meets Title I qualification requirements if the individual was previously determined to meet those requirements when employed by another LEA . A new question (B-19) is added to say that, in general, the paraprofessional requirements do not apply to individuals working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. A new question (B-20) is added to clarify that the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in Head Start programs unless the paraprofessional is working in a Head Start program jointly funded with Title I, Part A funds and the paraprofessional’s salary is paid with Title I, Part A funds. B-22 is revised to clarify that “two years of study” at an institution of higher education means the equivalent of two years of study defined by the institution of higher education rather than the State educational agency. The guidance includes a new question (B-25) describing how continuing education credits may be used to meet the requirement that a paraprofessional complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education. A new question (C-5) is added stating that Title I, Part A funds may be used to pay for the paraprofessional assessment.

D-1 addressing the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals is expanded to include examples of programs that are inconsistent with the statutory and regulatory requirements.

A new question (D-2) is added to clarify that the direct supervision requirements apply to paraprofessionals who work for a third-party contractor.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

A-1. Title I, Part A as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act, has new requirements for paraprofessionals. Why is this important?

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, is designed to help disadvantaged children reach high academic standards. Properly trained paraprofessionals can play important roles in improving student achievement in Title I schools where they can reinforce and augment a teacher's effort in the classroom. Unfortunately, studies indicate that paraprofessionals are used in many Title I schools for teaching and assisting in teaching when their educational backgrounds do not qualify them for such responsibilities. Title I of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB Act requires that paraprofessionals meet higher standards of qualification, and ensures that students who need the most help receive instructional support only from qualified paraprofessionals.

A-2. What is a paraprofessional?

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee of an LEA who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds.

"Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support," includes those who (1) provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (2) assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials, (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (4) conduct parental involvement activities, (5) provide instructional support in a library or media center, (6) act as a translator, or (7) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [Title I, Section 1119(g)(2)]

Because paraprofessionals provide instructional support, they should not be providing planned direct instruction, or introducing to students new skills, concepts, or academic content.

Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I, Part A.

## B. REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

B-1. What are the qualification requirements for Title I paraprofessionals?

(1) All Title I paraprofessionals must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(2) Additionally, except as noted below, paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds must have—

Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or Met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness).

Paraprofessionals hired on or before January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds must meet these requirements by January 8, 2006. [Section 1119(c) and (d) of Title I]

Paraprofessionals who only serve as translators or who only conduct parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but do not have to meet the additional requirements. [Section 1119(e)]

B-2. Are there any requirements outside of Title I that apply to the hiring of paraprofessionals?

Yes. Under section 2141(c) of Title II of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB Act, if a State educational agency (SEA) determines that an LEA (1) has failed to make progress toward meeting the annual measurable objectives established by the State for increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each LEA and school and for increasing the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development, and (2) has failed to make adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years, the SEA must enter into an agreement with the LEA. This agreement must include a plan that the LEA will use to meet its annual measurable objectives and that prohibits the use of Title I, Part A funds to fund any paraprofessional hired after the date the initial determination was made, with two exceptions. The exceptions are—

The agreement must permit the use of Title I, Part A funds to hire a paraprofessional after the date of the determination if the hiring is to fill a vacancy created by the departure of another paraprofessional paid with Title I funds and the newly hired paraprofessional meets the statutory qualification requirements;

The agreement may allow the use of Title I, Part A funds to hire a paraprofessional after the date of the determination if the LEA can demonstrate— that a significant influx of population has substantially

increased student enrollment; or that there is an increased need for translators or assistance with parental involvement activities.

To whom do the requirements apply?

**B-3. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a schoolwide program?**

The requirements in B-1 apply to all paraprofessionals in a Title I schoolwide program, without regard to whether the position is funded with Federal, State, or local funds. In a schoolwide program, Title I funds support all teachers and paraprofessionals.

**B-4. How do the new requirements apply to paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program?**

In a Title I targeted assistance program, the requirements in B-1 apply to all paraprofessionals who are paid with Title I, Part A funds (but not to paraprofessionals paid with State or local funds in targeted assistance programs).

**B-5. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals, such as home-school liaisons, whose duties consist solely of parental involvement activities?**

A paraprofessional with duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other educational requirements in B-1.

**B-6. How do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals who work solely as translators or bilingual aides?**

A paraprofessional who is proficient in English and a language other than English and acts solely as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children under Title I, Part A, must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other educational requirements in B-1.

**B-7. How do the requirements apply to persons who work with special education students?**

The requirements for persons who work with special education students differ depending upon their duties. If a person working with special education students does NOT provide any instructional support (such as a person who solely provides personal care services), that person is not considered a paraprofessional under Title I, Part A, and the requirements in B-1 do not apply. If a person works in a Title I targeted assistance program, has instructional support duties, and is paid, in whole or in part, with Title I, Part A funds, the requirements in B-1 apply. If the person is not paid with Title I, Part A funds, however, the requirements in B-1 do not apply.

If a person works in a Title I schoolwide program and has instructional support duties, the B-1 requirements apply without regard to the source of funding that supports the position.

B-8. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to persons paid with funds under Title I, Part B (Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants and all subparts, including Even Start), Part C (Education of Migratory Children), or Part D (Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk)?

The paraprofessional qualification requirements in B-1 do not apply to individuals paid with funds under Title I, Part B (Student Reading Skills Improvement Grants and all subparts, including Even Start), Part C (Education of Migratory Children), or Part D (Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk), unless these individuals are working in a schoolwide program under Part A or the paraprofessional is paid, in whole or in part, with Part A funds. (See B-3.)

B-9. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I, Part A funds meet the new requirements?

Yes, such a paraprofessional must meet the requirements outlined in B-1.

B-10. How do the requirements apply if a person performing non-instructional duties becomes an instructional paraprofessional?

In this case, the person is a “paraprofessional” as defined for Title I purposes and must meet the requirements in B-1. In other words, the individual would have to hold a secondary diploma or its equivalent and meet the new qualification requirements. However, as an existing employee of the LEA, the individual would be considered an existing paraprofessional and would have until January 8, 2006 to demonstrate competency through postsecondary education or a formal State or local assessment.

B-11. What if a person has both instructional support and non-instructional duties?

In this case, the person must meet the requirements in B-1, because he or she carries out some instructional support duties.

B-12. Do the new requirements for paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to LEAs or schools that do not receive Title I, Part A funds?

No. If an LEA does not receive Title I, Part A funds, the requirements do not apply. Similarly, if an LEA receives Title I, Part A funds, but a school within that LEA does not receive Title I, Part A funds, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in that school.

B-13. Do existing paraprofessionals have until January 8, 2006, to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent?

No. Section 1119(f) requires that all paraprofessionals have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent without regard to the date they were hired. This requirement took effect on the date of enactment of the NCLB Act (January 8, 2002) and was, for the most part, already in effect because the prior law required most paraprofessionals to hold a secondary diploma or its equivalent.

B-14. Would a paraprofessional, hired on or before January 8, 2002, and currently working in an LEA in a non-Title I program, be considered a “new” paraprofessional (and subject to the requirements for new paraprofessionals) if that individual is re-assigned to a program supported with Title I funds?

A new paraprofessional is a paraprofessional who is newly hired by an LEA. If a person is working as a paraprofessional in a non-Title I school in the same district, he or she is not considered to be a new paraprofessional if he or she transfers to a Title I school within that district.

B-15. Do the Title I requirements for new paraprofessionals (explained in B-1) apply to paraprofessionals who are laid off and then recalled? In other words, are these individuals “new” or “existing” paraprofessionals?

The statute and regulations state that “new” paraprofessionals are paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 (the date of enactment of the NCLB Act), and “existing” paraprofessionals are paraprofessionals hired before that date. An LEA has discretion to define its policies for distinguishing “new” and “existing” paraprofessionals in the case of paraprofessionals hired before

January 8, 2002, but laid off and subsequently rehired after January 8, 2002. These policies might say, for example: A paraprofessional who was initially hired on or before January 8, 2002, but who, because of the LEA’s fiscal constraints, was laid off at the end of one school year— Is considered an “existing” paraprofessional if the individual was rehired when the LEA recalled laid-off paraprofessionals such that the individual has continuous years of employment; Is considered a “new” paraprofessional if the individual did not rejoin the LEA when it recalled laid-off paraprofessionals if and when the individual is rehired.

B-16. Once a paraprofessional has met the requirements in B-1, is the status of being qualified “portable”? That is, can the paraprofessional be deemed qualified in other LEAs within a State?

An LEA may, at its discretion, determine that a paraprofessional meets the Title I qualification requirements if the individual was previously determined to meet these requirements when employed by another LEA.

B-17. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in schools as part of the AmeriCorps program?

The National Community Service Act states that AmeriCorps volunteers are not considered employees of the entities where they are placed (42 U.S.C. 12511 (17B)). Unless AmeriCorps volunteers are considered

employees of a school district under State law, the paraprofessional requirements in section 1119 (see items B-1 and B-5) do not apply. However, even though the requirements do not apply, districts should make every effort to ensure that AmeriCorps volunteers who provide instructional support in a Title I program have the skills necessary to assist effectively in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics or in reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

**B-18. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to volunteers?**

No. Volunteers are not paid employees of an LEA and the paraprofessional requirements do not apply to them. However, school officials are encouraged to work with volunteers to ensure they have information and training necessary to carry out the activities they are performing, as appropriate.

**B-19. Do the paraprofessional requirements apply to people working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs?**

In general, the requirements do not apply to individuals working in 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs. However, the requirements would apply to paraprofessionals paid with Title I, Part A funds in a 21st Century afterschool program funded jointly with Title I funds in a targeted assistance school, and to paraprofessionals working in a 21st Century afterschool program that is part of a Title I schoolwide program. The requirements do not apply to staff of 21st Century programs who are not employees of the LEA.

**B-20. Do the requirements apply to paraprofessionals working in Head Start programs?**

In general, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in a Head Start program. However, the requirements would apply to paraprofessionals working in a Head Start program that is jointly funded with Title I, Part A, funds and the paraprofessional is paid with Title I funds; for example, a program where Title I funds the instructional component and Head Start funds the remainder of the program activities. The requirements would also apply when a Head Start program is part of a Title I schoolwide program.

**Note:** Although Head Start funds may not be combined in a Title I schoolwide program school (Federal Register notice of Thursday, September 21, 1995), all staff working in a Title I schoolwide program school are considered Title I staff and all students are Title I students.

**B-21. Some paraprofessionals work in programs for children ranging in age from birth to age 20 that are supported by Title I, Part A, funds. Are they required to meet the Title I requirements?**

Paraprofessionals in a targeted assistance program who are paid with Title I, Part A, funds or paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a schoolwide program school must meet the qualification requirements regardless of the age of the children being served.

What is the requirement for two years of study at an institution of higher education?

B-22. The statutory language refers to “two years of study at an institution of higher education.” [Section 1119(c)(1)(A)] What does “two years of study” mean?

“Two years of study” means the equivalent of two years of full-time study, as defined by the institution of higher education (IHE). For some IHEs that may mean 12 credit hours per semester (requiring a total of 48 credit hours), while in others it may mean 15 credit hours a semester (requiring a total of 60 credit hours).

B-23. What does the term “institution of higher education” mean?

Section 9101(24) of the ESEA, amended by the NCLB Act, incorporates the definition of institution of higher education found in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act. It defines an “institution of higher education” as an educational institution in any State that – admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;

is a public or other non-profit institution; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association or, if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

B-24. Is a paraprofessional required to take a specific course of study?

No. However, paraprofessionals must be able to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics, or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness [Section 1119(c)(1)(C)]. For this reason, a paraprofessional who chooses to meet the qualification requirements by completing two years of study in an institution of higher education and has coursework to complete in order to do so, is encouraged to take courses that will enable the paraprofessional to demonstrate knowledge of these subject areas.

B-25. May continuing education credits (CECs) be used to meet the requirement that paraprofessionals complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education?

A State or LEA, as appropriate, may count CECs toward the requirement that a paraprofessional complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education if the CECs are part of an overall training

and development program plan and an institution of higher education accepts or translates them to course credits.

### C. PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT

C-1. One option for meeting the new educational requirements is for paraprofessionals to demonstrate their knowledge and ability through a formal State or local academic assessment. What is the purpose of this assessment?

To help improve student achievement, Title I paraprofessionals must have the appropriate knowledge and ability to assist in instructing students and be competent in required instructional techniques and academic content areas. Additionally, because students need good language role models and because communication is essential to effective instructional support, Title I paraprofessionals should also demonstrate that they are competent in basic literacy skills, including the ability to speak and write standard English. The assessment is one way for Title I paraprofessionals to demonstrate knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading arts, writing, and mathematics; or reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

C-2. Does “assessment” mean a “paper and pencil test” only, or could the assessment be a performance assessment evaluating demonstrable skills?

The law does not require a paper and pencil test. However, there must be evidence that the assessment is valid and reliable. Also, the assessment results must be documented, i.e., there needs to be a record of the assessment and the individual’s performance on that assessment. Should a State or LEA decide to use or allow more than one type of assessment, each assessment should be evaluated against the same standards.

C-3. When must the assessment be administered for newly hired paraprofessionals?

For a paraprofessional hired after January 8, 2002, the assessment must be administered and passed before an individual is hired to work as a Title I paraprofessional.

C-4. What factors should States take into consideration in approving State or local paraprofessional assessments?

The following guidelines may assist an SEA in approving assessments:

SEAs and LEAs have flexibility to determine the content and format of any assessment of paraprofessionals. For example, while an appropriate assessment might be entirely a written test, it

alternatively could be a combination of a written test on content (reading, writing, and math) and a demonstration of competence in instruction (assessed through observations via a series of rubrics).

The content of the assessment should reflect both the State academic standards and the skills expected of a child at a given school level (preschool, elementary, middle, or high school), and the ability of the candidate to effectively provide instructional support to assist students in mastering the content. Clearly, the assessment should be rigorous and objective. Furthermore, each evaluation should have a standard that the candidate is expected to meet or exceed. These standards for evaluation must be applied to each candidate in the same way.

The results of the assessment should establish the candidate's competence as a paraprofessional relative to the standards in section 1119(c)(1)(C), or target the areas where additional training and staff development may be needed to help the candidate meet those standards before being hired. The results should be documented and the LEA should retain that documentation.

Moreover, an SEA may wish to officially establish the assessments it has determined meet the statutory requirements, the extent to which State policies permit LEAs to develop, select or implement their own assessments for paraprofessionals, and the requirements, if any, the State places on any local assessment. Keeping such formal approvals on file, along with an explanation as to how the State (or local) assessments meet these requirements, would be one way of making sure that the State (or local) assessments on which LEAs rely comply with the law. The SEA could then communicate this information to LEAs, so that each LEA is clear as to what the options are when it comes to assessing paraprofessionals.

C-5. May Title I funds be used to pay for the paraprofessional assessment? Yes.

#### D. PROGRAMMATIC REQUIREMENTS

D-1. What are the requirements for the supervision of paraprofessionals?

Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support must work under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher. [Sections 1119(g)(3)(A)] A paraprofessional works under the direct supervision of a teacher if (1) the teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraprofessional carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher. [§200.59(c)(2) of the Title I regulations] As a result, a program staffed entirely by paraprofessionals is not permitted.

A program where a paraprofessional provides instructional support and a teacher visits a site once or twice a week but otherwise is not in the classroom, or a program where a paraprofessional works with a

group of students in another location while the teacher provides instruction to the rest of the class would also be inconsistent with the requirement that paraprofessionals work in close and frequent proximity to a teacher.

D-2. Do the direct supervision requirements apply to paraprofessionals who provide services under contract?

Yes, paraprofessionals hired by a third-party contractor to work in a Title I program must work under the direct supervision of a teacher. That teacher does not have to meet the teacher qualification requirements if he/she is also employed by the third party connection.

D-3. Must a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA with Title I funds be under the direct supervision of a highly qualified public school teacher?

Yes, a paraprofessional who provides services to eligible private school students and is employed by an LEA must be under the direct supervision of a highly qualified public school teacher throughout the duration of the services/program being offered. [§200.59 (c)(1)]

## E. FUNDING ISSUES

E-1. What funds are available for helping paraprofessionals in Title I schools meet the new requirements? A number of key ESEA programs authorize funds that may be used:

Under section 1119 of Title I, an LEA must use not less than five percent or more than ten percent of its Title I allocation in school year 2003-2004 (and not less than five percent in subsequent years) for professional development activities to ensure that teachers and paraprofessionals meet the qualification requirements including paying for the paraprofessional assessment. [Section 1119(l) of Title I, §200.60 of the Title I regulations]

LEAs also may use their general Title I funds “to support ongoing training and professional development to assist teachers and paraprofessionals, including paying for the paraprofessional assessment.” [Section 1114(b)(1)(D) and Section 1115(c)(1)(F) of Title I]

Schools and LEAs identified as needing improvement must also reserve funds for professional development and these funds may be used for training paraprofessionals. [Sections 1116(b)(3)(A)(iii) and 1116(c)(7)(A)(iii) of Title I]

Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants funds may be used to provide professional development that “improve[s] the knowledge of teachers and principals, and, in appropriate cases,

paraprofessionals concerning core academic subjects and related activities to improve student academic achievement.” [Section 2123(a)(3)(A)]

Title III, Part A, the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act, authorizes LEAs to use formula grant funds for professional development of teachers and other instructional personnel providing instruction to students needing English language acquisition and language enhancement. [Section 3111(a)(2)(A)]

Title V, Part A, Innovative Programs, authorizes LEAs to use funds innovatively in certain areas for professional development of teachers and other school personnel. [Section 5131(a)]

Title VII, Part A, subpart 7, the Indian Education Program, requires LEAs receiving formula grants to carry out a comprehensive program for meeting the needs of Indian children that, among other things, may include professional development to ensure that teachers and other school professionals have been properly trained. [Section 7114(b)(5)]

Title I and Title II funds may be used jointly for professional development consistent with the statutory requirements of the two programs.

E-2. May Title I and Title II funds be used for professional development to help paraprofessionals become certified and licensed teachers?

Yes. Title I and Title II funds may be used for that purpose.

## OSEP Letter 10/4/2022



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES**

October 4, 2022

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**OSEP 22-01**

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** State Directors of Special Education  
**FROM:** Valerie C. Williams  
Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)  
**SUBJECT:** Personnel Qualifications under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The U.S. Department of Education's (Department) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) is committed to supporting States in the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to all children with disabilities. FAPE includes the provision of special education and related services that meet the requirements of IDEA Part B, which includes ensuring that special education teachers and related services providers are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. This memo is intended to clarify States' obligations regarding the IDEA Part B requirements related to personnel qualifications and alternate certifications. Based on media reports and discussions with States and advocates, OSEP is aware that some States currently have policies and procedures in place that may not be consistent with IDEA requirements. OSEP also recognizes that States are facing many challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the impact it has had on exacerbating the shortage of special education teachers and related services providers across the country. Thus, OSEP believes it is critical to ensure that State educational agencies (SEAs) fully understand the IDEA requirements related to personnel qualifications and alternate certifications and are aware of available resources to support their efforts to meet them.

#### **Personnel Qualifications**

Under Section 612(a)(14) of IDEA and 34 C.F.R. § 300.156, the SEA must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of IDEA Part B are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities. Those qualifications must ensure that each person employed as a public school special education teacher in the State who teaches in an elementary school, middle school, or secondary school: (1) has obtained full State certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through an alternate route to certification as a special educator, if such alternate route meets minimum requirements

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described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.56(a)(2)(ii) as such section was in effect on November 28, 2008), or (2) passed the State special education teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher, except in the case of a teacher teaching in a public charter school. A teacher teaching in a public charter school must meet the certification or licensing requirements, if any, set forth in the State's public charter school law. In addition, public school special education teachers may not have special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and must hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Personnel who have not obtained full State certification as a special education teacher may obtain certification through an alternate route. Specifically, under 34 C.F.R. § 300.156(c)(2), personnel who are participating in a program that provides an alternate route to special education teacher certification must:

- (1) receive high-quality professional development that is sustained, intensive, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction, before and while teaching;
- (2) participate in a program of intensive supervision that consists of structured guidance and regular ongoing support for teachers or a teacher mentoring program;
- (3) assume the functions as a teacher only for a specified period of time not to exceed three years; and
- (4) demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification as prescribed by the State.

(Emphases added.)

With respect to related services personnel and paraprofessionals, under 34 C.F.R. § 300.156(b), qualifications must be consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services. In addition, related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession may not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis. Paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, may be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities.

As noted above, the SEA **may not** waive the special education or related services personnel certification or licensure requirements on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis.

Having outlined the requirements under IDEA Part B, this memo also highlights information and resources that may help States meet the requirements.

#### The Department's and OSEP's support for teacher initiatives

The Department, including OSEP, has long been committed to providing support and encouraging evidence-based and innovative and promising approaches to meeting the need for well-qualified special education teachers. Under the leadership of President Biden and Secretary Cardona, this commitment has increased.

On March 28, 2022, Secretary Cardona issued a [call to action](#) for States, school districts, and institutions of higher education (IHEs) to address teacher shortages. The Secretary has encouraged the use of funds under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP) and other federal COVID-19 relief funds to scale up educator preparation programs (EPPs) at IHEs, to work in partnership to address the short- and long-term challenges contributing to the teacher shortage across the country. Additionally, on June 9, 2022, the Secretary released a [fact sheet](#) on the Department's efforts to support the teacher development pipeline to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers. The Department also released a [fact sheet](#) on Federal programs that may be used to sustain ARP investments in key strategies that attract, prepare, support, and retain a diverse teacher workforce and address teacher shortages over the long term. The U.S. Departments of Education and Department of Labor also issued a [Joint Dear Colleague Letter](#) on August 31, 2022, that focuses on the use of Registered Apprenticeship programs for teaching, and ensuring that teachers are paid a livable and competitive wage. On September 27, 2022, the Department [announced](#) 22 new grants totaling more than \$60 million under the Supporting Effective Educator Development program, which will strengthen the teacher pipeline and improve teacher professional development.

#### Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) under ARP

HEERF grant funds can be used to provide stipends, scholarships, and other financial aid to educators-in-training to help underwrite the cost of preparation. For example, HEERF funds can be used to provide teaching residents with stipends to support living expenses, such as housing, or to cover the cost of travel between campus and the school in which they are completing their clinical experience. These funds can also be used to cover the cost of additional courses or pay test fees to earn first or additional teaching licenses or certification. IHEs can discharge institutional student loans, debt, or unpaid balances to their IHEs with their own funds.

OSEP continues to support States in addressing personnel shortages, through OSEP-funded national technical assistance (TA) centers.<sup>1</sup> A number of these centers provide specific TA to support States' efforts to attract, prepare and retain a quality educator workforce. OSEP, through our TA centers, also works closely with relevant stakeholders to synthesize and share innovative solutions that are making a difference in assisting States in their efforts to build and sustain a strong, effective, and diverse educator workforce with the knowledge and skills needed to provide the quality education each child and family deserves.

#### Additional resources include:

##### [Attract, Prepare, Retain: Effective Personnel For All | OSEP Ideas That Work](#)

Information and resources for stakeholders to explore potential strategies and innovative approaches to address the teacher shortage.

##### [FACT SHEET: The U.S. Department of Education - Secretary Cardona's Call to Action to Address the Teacher Shortage](#)

Fact sheet that addresses the teacher shortage and provides examples of States currently leading this work.

##### [Whole Child Policy Toolkit | Learning Policy Institute](#)

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<sup>1</sup> See the TA Centers listed below.

## **Each States Paraprofessional Guidance:**

### **Alabama:**

Rule 290-8-8-.04 - Assurances

(1) Effective August 1, 2014, before receiving any state allocations from the Education Trust fund, all eligible specialized treatment centers operating in the state of Alabama must annually assure their compliance with the following:

(a) Comply with all State and Federal laws and regulations as they pertain to special education students.

(b) Comply with procedural due process relating to applicable notices, timelines and safeguards in accordance with State and Federal laws and regulations.

(c) Comply with the Department's requirements regarding the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals.

(d) Ensure that all students placed in the STC are provided a curriculum consistent in quality and content approved by the department and specialized treatment approved by the appropriate accrediting agency.

(e) Use state-approved student information software for all children in order to complete required forms and pertinent educational information.

(f) Complete requested or required reports in a timely manner.

(g) Maintain all appropriate records and provide them to the Department as requested.

(h) Submit an annual fiscal audit to ensure that federal or state-appropriated funds are expended in an appropriate manner and in accordance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations.

(i) Work with the LEA to ensure that all students participate in the State Assessment Program.

(j) Maintain and safeguard the confidentiality of personally-identifiable data and records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

(k) Ensure students are not discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

(2) Upon submitting an assurance of compliance in each of these areas, an Educational Endorsement of Operation will be awarded to the Specialized Treatment Center from the Department. The endorsement

will be valid for 3 years and can be revoked at any time for failure to comply with the assurances listed above.

(3) Each endorsed Specialized Treatment Center in the State of Alabama may be subject to a visit with or without prior notification by an official of the Department to determine compliance with Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 290-8-8.

## **Alaska:**

### **Paraprofessional Standards [4 AAC 04.220]**

(a) A paraprofessional will demonstrate the ability to:

- (1) practice ethical and professional standards of conduct and continued professional improvement;
- (2) understand how students learn and develop and understand how to assist in providing opportunities that support students' intellectual, social and personal development;
- (3) understand the content areas and apply the elements of effective instruction to support teaching and learning activities;
- (4) motivate and assist students to build self-esteem, develop interpersonal skills, and strengthen abilities in order to become more successful;
- (5) understand the distinction between the roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and evaluation;
- (6) adhere to communication protocols with colleagues, community members, and parents including following instructions, sharing information, and using interpersonal skills to become an effective member of the instructional team;
- (7) understand and implement district and state guidelines for protecting the safety, health and wellbeing of students and staff, including the school district's crisis response plan; and
- (8) utilize technology to assist and enhance teaching and learning.

### **Paraprofessional Requirements [4 AAC 04.220]**

(b) Each district shall ensure that all paraprofessionals employed by the district in a public school in any grades pre-kindergarten through grade 12 have:

- (1) earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; and
- (2) met the standards set out in (a) of this section through an annual evaluation. The annual evaluation must consist of observations and interviews by district personnel qualified to evaluate paraprofessionals.

(c) Except as provided in (d) of this section, and in addition to the requirements of (b) of this section, each district shall ensure that a paraprofessional has met at least one of the following requirements:

- (1) completed at least two years, or 48 semester hours or equivalent, of study at a regionally accredited institution of higher education;
- (2) obtained an associate's or higher degree at a regionally accredited institution of higher education; or
- (3) achieve any of the following

(A) a score of at least 459 on the ParaPro Assessment, published by the Educational Testing Service;  
or

(B) minimum scores on the Higher Education Learning Profile (HELP), published by Educational Resources Incorporated:

- (i) essential math, 54 percent;
- (ii) reading comprehension, 41 percent; and

(iii) written expression, 55 percent.

(C) passed the MasterTeacher, Inc. (Paraeducator) Online Training and Assessments

(i) Assessment 1 Reading, Writing, and Math: Instructional Support, 65%

(ii) Assessment 2 Reading, Writing, and Math, 70%;

(D) passed the specific WorkKeys assessment

(i) workplace documents, Level 4

Alaska Department of Education and Early Development Updated: December 2022

(ii) applied math, Level 4; and

(iii) graphic literacy, Level 3.

(E) meet the qualifying Basic Competency Exam (BCE) scores under 4 AAC 12.310

(i) See webpage ([education.alaska.gov/teachercertification/praxis](http://education.alaska.gov/teachercertification/praxis))

(d) A paraprofessional is not required to meet the requirements of (c) of this section if the paraprofessional

(1) acts as a translator to enhance the participation of English learners or students with disabilities;

(2) has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities; or

(3) has only non-instructional duties, including providing technical support for computers, providing personal care duties, or performing clerical duties.

Definitions [4 AAC 04.900]

(a) In this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise,

(1) "department" means the Department of Education and Early Development;

(2) "paraprofessional" means a person who is not required to have a professional license or certification and who, under the supervision of a teacher or other professional educational service provider, provides instructional or other educational support to a student.

## Arizona:



State of Arizona  
Department of Education

### Arizona Requirements for Instructional Paraprofessionals

Instructional paraprofessionals working in a program supported by Title I funds must meet requirements that were required of the state the day before Dec. 10, 2015 when ESSA was enacted. Section 1111(g)(2)(J) and Section 1111(g)(2)(M) of ESSA address this requirement.

#### Federal Requirements for Paraprofessionals:

According to federal Every Student Succeeds Act (P.L. 114-95) requirements, all K-12 instructional paraprofessionals working in a program supported by Title I funds must meet the following requirements:

- High School diploma or GED **AND** an Associate's Degree or higher **OR**
- Completed two years of study (equaling 60 or more credit hours) from an accredited institution of higher education **OR**
- Obtained a passing score on one of the Arizona Department of Education approved assessments below:
  - ETS ParaPro Assessment (Praxis)
  - ACT Workkeys (Writing, Applied Mathematics & Reading for Information)
  - Master Teacher's ParaEducator PD Now! (formerly ParaEducator Learning Network)

The Arizona Department of Education does not retrieve or retain exam results for paraprofessionals. ADE approved assessment providers can be reached via the following Internet sites/telephone numbers:

- |                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • ETS Parapro Assessment                   | <a href="http://www.ets.org/parapro/">http://www.ets.org/parapro/</a> 1-800-772-9476                                                                                                                     |
| • ACT Workkeys                             | <a href="https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-job-seekers.html">https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-job-seekers.html</a> 319-337-1147 |
| • The Master Teacher Para Educator PD Now! | <a href="http://www.masterteacher.com/ParaEducator-PD-Now">http://www.masterteacher.com/ParaEducator-PD-Now</a><br>1-800-669-9633                                                                        |

#### Praxis

Educational Testing Service (ETS) designs the ParaPro Exam. Unfortunately, they no longer offer registration for the ParaPro Exam. ETS authorizes various Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to administer the test. The results are sent to ETS for processing and scoring. **The Arizona Department of Education does not administer or schedule the ParaPro Exam. Please contact one of the LEAs listed below or your LEA for services.**

|                                               |                       |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Higley USD                                    | 480-279-7070/7059     |
| Queen Creek USD                               | 480-987-7488          |
| St. David (Cochise County Rural Schools only) | 520-720-4492 Ext. 151 |
| Friendly House                                | 602-416-7232          |

## **Arkansas:**

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

AR Department of Education     Memo Number COM-23-005

Memo Date 7/28/2022

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, requires that Local Education Agencies (LEAs) ensure that all Title I paraprofessionals who provide instructional support in a Title I Schoolwide building, without regard to how the position is funded or those who work in a Title I Targeted Assisted building and are paid in part or in full with Title I funds are required to meet the highly qualified guidelines required in Section 1111(g)(2)(m). All instructional paraprofessionals are required to work under the direct supervision of a licensed staff member. The highly qualified guidelines for Title I paraprofessionals should be attained before being hired by the LEA. These qualifications must include:

- Have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent AND
- Completed 60 semester credit hours at a regionally accredited institution of higher education

-or-

- Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree -or-
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness). In Arkansas, the formal test accepted is the Educational Testing Services (ETS) Parapro Assessment" and applicants must obtain a passing score of 457. Please notice that per recent guidance from the USED, DESE is not allowed to accept the Child Development Associates Credential (CDA) or any other credential as a substitute for the highly qualified requirements. As a result, all paraprofessionals in Title I schools currently working under Child Development Associates Credential (CDA) or Staff Qualification Plan Agreement (SQP) must meet any of the highly qualified guidelines described above before August 1, 2023

## California:



### State of California

### EDUCATION CODE

### Section 45330

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45330. (a) As used in this section, a paraprofessional means a person who assists classroom teachers and other certificated personnel in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics. A paraprofessional includes an instructional aide as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 45343 and a teacher aide as described in Section 45360.

(b) A paraprofessional shall perform only duties that, in the judgment of the certificated personnel to whom the instructional aide is assigned, may be performed by a person not licensed as a classroom teacher. These duties shall not include assignment of grades to pupils.

(c) Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), a local education agency that receives funding from Title I of that act shall ensure that every paraprofessional hired on or after January 8, 2002, who is supported by those Title I funds and who assists in instruction has demonstrated at least one of the following in addition to any other requirements under that act:

- (1) Completion of at least two years of study at an institution of higher education.
- (2) Possession of an associate's degree or higher.
- (3) Through a local or state assessment, that is appropriate to the responsibilities to be assigned to the paraprofessional, knowledge of, and ability to assist in, instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

(d) Except as provided in subdivision (h), a paraprofessional hired prior to January 8, 2002, who is supported by federal funds from Title I of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) shall meet the requirements of subdivision (c) no later than January 8, 2006.

(e) No person shall be initially assigned to assist in instruction as a paraprofessional in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics skills up to or exceeding that required by the employing district for high school seniors pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (f) of Section 51220 if the employing district educates high school pupils.

(f) If the employing district is an elementary school district, the paraprofessional shall demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics skills up to or exceeding that required for high school seniors pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (f) of Section 51220 in the high school district that includes all or the largest portion of the elementary district.

(g) In establishing the educational qualifications or in developing a proficiency exam, a school district shall align the qualifications and proficiency exams pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (c).

(h) A paraprofessional who is supported by federal funds from Title I of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110) and who meets either of the following conditions is exempt from the requirements described in paragraphs (1) to (3), inclusive, of subdivision (c):

(1) The paraprofessional is proficient in English and a language other than English and provides services primarily to enhance participation of pupils by acting as a translator.

(2) The paraprofessional's duties consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities.

(i) A paraprofessional who was hired on or before January 1, 2003, and who has previously demonstrated, through a local assessment, knowledge of, and an ability to assist in, instructing reading, writing, and mathematics, is deemed to have met the proficiency exam requirements of paragraph (3) of subdivision (c).

(j) A school district may use an existing proficiency assessment or may develop a new proficiency assessment to meet the requirements of paragraph (3) of subdivision (c).

(k) Pursuant to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-110), a local education agency may use a portion of the funds from that act for staff development for paraprofessionals, to the extent that those funds are appropriated in the annual Budget Act for this purpose.

(Amended by Stats. 2011, Ch. 296, Sec. 68. (AB 1023) Effective January 1, 2012.)

## Colorado:



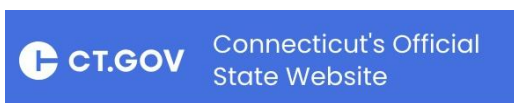
LEAs must ensure that each instructional paraprofessional who is hired by the LEA and who works in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds meets the following requirements. An instructional paraprofessional is an individual who provides instructional support for classroom teachers. Instructional paraprofessionals should be supervised directly by a licensed teacher.

- All instructional paraprofessionals, regardless of the paraprofessional's hiring date, must have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- An instructional paraprofessional who is hired after January 8, 2002 must have—
  - Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
  - Obtained an associate's or higher degree; or
  - Met a rigorous standard of quality, and can demonstrate—through a formal state or local academic assessment—knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate—
    - Reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics; or
    - Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness
- Each paraprofessional who was hired on or before January 8, 2002 must have met the requirements for new paraprofessionals no later than January 8, 2006.

Exceptions: A paraprofessional does not need to meet the above requirements if the paraprofessional—

- Is proficient in English and a language other than English and only acts as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children;
- Has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities; or
- Only has non-instructional duties (such as providing technical support for computers, providing personal care services, or performing clerical duties).

## Connecticut:



The following is the CT State Department of Education's definition of a paraeducator:

A paraeducator is an employee who assists teachers and/or other professional educators or therapists in the delivery of instructional and related services to students. The paraeducator works under the direct supervision of the teacher or other certified or licensed professional. The ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of instructional programs, including assessment of student progress, is a collaborative effort of certified and licensed staff.

#### Requirements for CT Paraeducators

- CT does not require a certificate, permit or authorization to be employed as Paraeducator.
- The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Implications for Paraeducators requires that States maintain "entry level" requirements from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for Paraeducators employed in a school or district that receives Title I funds:
  - Earned a secondary school diploma, or its equivalent.
  - Must have completed 2 years of study at an institution of higher education, OR Earned an Associate's Degree (or higher), OR Achieve at least a score of 457 on the ETS ParaPro Assessment to:
    - Reading, writing, and mathematics;
    - Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness
- Roles of Paraeducators can vary based on grade level, content area, and student needs. Schools and districts may require additional criteria for Paraeducators based on the varied role(s) that the Paraeducator would fill.

#### Delaware:

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LICENSURE & CERTIFICATION

<https://www.doe.k12.de.us/certification>



## Information on Delaware Public School Educator Credentials for Paraeducators

### Paraeducator Certification

Paraeducators or Paraprofessionals are individuals who work in the Public school system and provide services to students under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher. They perform a variety of tasks including, but not limited to, working with individual students, working with small student groups, assisting in computer labs, assisting with student behavior, or assisting with training support of personal care or assistive technology.

Permits are issued by the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) to verify an individual's qualifications and training to serve in specialized roles. "Permit" is defined as a document issued by the Department that verifies an individual's qualifications and training.

**Regulation 1517 Paraeducator Permit** (<http://regulations.delaware.gov/AdminCode/title14/1500/1517.pdf>) provides for two permits that a Paraeducator in Delaware may hold, effective as of January 11, 2024:

1. **Instructional Paraeducator:** A public school employee who provides one-on-one or small group instruction; assists with classroom management or individual student behavior; provides assistance in a computer laboratory; provides support in a library or media center; assists in training and support with functional skill activities, such as personal care or assistive technology; or provides instructional services to students under the direct supervision of a teacher. Instructional Paraeducators are those working with regular education students and students with disabilities in schools other than Title I schoolwide schools or with students not receiving Title I targeted

## **Florida:**

### § 1012.38 Definition:

(e) Education paraprofessionals.—Education paraprofessionals are individuals who are under the direct supervision of an instructional staff member, aiding the instructional process. Included in this classification are classroom paraprofessionals in regular instruction, exceptional education paraprofessionals, career education paraprofessionals, adult education paraprofessionals, library paraprofessionals, physical education and playground paraprofessionals, and other school-level paraprofessionals.

### 1012.38 Education paraprofessional career development.—

(1)(a) Each school district may adopt a program for the career development of education paraprofessionals. The purpose of the program is to provide to education paraprofessionals a system of career development which is based upon education and training advancement, and to furnish economic incentives to encourage excellence among education paraprofessionals.

(b) The adoption of each program is subject to chapter 447, and the implementation of a program is contingent upon the agreement and ratification of the program by both the employer and employees under s. 447.309.

(2) A district education paraprofessional career development program must include voluntary participation by paraprofessionals in five career development levels. The district school board shall adopt a procedure for verifying the competency levels of all persons who participate in the career development program and a procedure to determine the outcomes and results of the program and impact on student performance.

(3)(a) Level I.—To qualify for Level I, the person must meet:

1. 1. The health requirement established for certified personnel.
2. 2. The age requirements for certified personnel.
3. 3. The local school district requirements for employment.

(b) Level II.—To qualify for Level II, the person must:

1. 1. Have earned a high school diploma or the equivalent.
2. 2. Possess a clear understanding of state and district rules and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
3. 3. Possess knowledge of all state and district instructional practices and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
4. 4. Have maintained satisfactory job performance of appropriate skills and competencies for 1 year.

(c) Level III.—To qualify for Level III, the person must:

1. 1. Have completed 30 college semester hours or the equivalent inservice hours.

2. 2. Possess a clear understanding of state and district rules and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  3. 3. Possess knowledge of all state and district instructional practices and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  4. 4. Have maintained satisfactory job performance of appropriate skills and competencies for 2 years.
- (d) Level IV.—To qualify for Level IV, the person must:
1. 1. Have completed 60 college semester hours or the equivalent inservice hours.
  2. 2. Possess a clear understanding of state and district rules and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  3. 3. Possess knowledge of all state and district instructional practices and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  4. 4. Have maintained satisfactory job performance of appropriate skills and competencies for 2 years.
- (e) Level V.—To qualify for Level V, the person must:
1. 1. Have completed coursework to earn a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree from an accredited institution pursuant to s. 1012.56(2)(c).
  2. 2. Possess a clear understanding of state and district rules and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  3. 3. Possess knowledge of all state and district instructional practices and policies relevant to paraprofessionals.
  4. 4. Have maintained satisfactory job performance of appropriate skills and competencies for 2 years.
- (4) Paraprofessionals may not:
- (a) Establish instructional objectives;
  - (b) Make decisions regarding the relevancy of certain activities or procedures to the attainment of instructional objectives;
  - (c) Make decisions regarding the appropriateness of certain teaching materials for accomplishing instructional objectives; or
  - (d) Make judgments regarding the attainment of instructional objectives unless these judgments are based upon clear and objective criteria, such as specific achievement standards on a true-false test.

### **Georgia:**

GA Code § 20-2-204 (2024)

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) "Paraprofessional" is defined as a person who may have less than professional-level certification, who relates in role and function to a professional and does a portion of the professional's job

or tasks under the supervision of the professional, and whose decision-making authority is limited and regulated by the professional. Such a paraprofessional shall possess the minimum of a high school diploma or a state approved high school equivalency (HSE) diploma. If assigned to positions governed by federal regulations, the paraprofessional must meet specified federal hiring requirements.

(2) "Permitted personnel" is defined as persons who may not qualify for professional certificates, including retired teachers, but who function in the educational programs in the same manner as certificated personnel. Such personnel qualify for their positions on the basis of experience rather than formal education.

(b) The Professional Standards Commission shall provide for the classification of all certified and permitted personnel employed in the public schools of this state, and no such personnel shall be employed in the public schools of this state unless they meet such minimum criteria as developed by the commission; provided, however, that such classifications shall be based only upon academic, technical, and professional training and experience of such personnel. The commission is authorized to provide for revoking or denying a certificate or permit for good cause after an investigation is conducted and notice and hearing is provided the certificate or permit holder.

Effective July 1, 2020

#### 505-2-.18 PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSE

(1) Summary: On January 8, 2002, federal legislation known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) established mandatory federal guidelines for the hiring of paraprofessionals in specified school settings. These guidelines are found in Section 1119 of the federal legislation, with each local unit of administration (LUA) is responsible for ensuring that all applicable federal requirements are met. While the federal hiring requirements apply only to designated paraprofessional positions, all Georgia Paraprofessionals must hold a valid state license issued by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC).

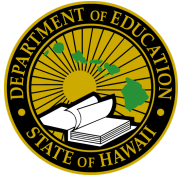
(2) Requirements.

(a) Meet one of the following requirements:

1. Hold an associate's degree or higher in any subject from a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution.
2. Have completed two (2) years of college coursework (sixty [60] semester hours) above the remedial level with a grade of "C" or better at a GaPSC-accepted accredited institution.
3. Have passed the GACE Paraprofessional Assessment and hold a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent.

(b) Meet Standards of Conduct.

(c) The issuance of the license must be requested by the employing Georgia local unit of administration following procedures outlined in GaPSC Rule 505-2-.27



## **Hawaii:**

### Hawai'i State Department of Education

#### Paraeducator (Educational Assistants)

A paraeducator works under the supervision of teachers or other professional practitioners. The position is instructional in nature and provides other direct services to children and youth and their families, including:

1. One-on-one tutoring.
2. Assisting with classroom management.
3. Providing instructional assistance in a computer laboratory.
4. Conducting parental involvement activities.
5. Providing instructional support in a library or media center.
6. Acting as a translator.
7. Providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher or professional practitioner.

#### Minimum requirements for paraeducators:

1. Forty-eight semester credits of baccalaureate-level courses from a regionally accredited institution of higher education recognized by the Department. The 48 credits may be from various program or academic subject areas. In addition, six of the 48 credits must have been for math and English courses at the baccalaureate level.
2. Or, an associate in arts (AA) or science (AS) degree from a regionally accredited institution recognized by the Department. The credits earned for the degree must have been for courses that are baccalaureate level.
3. Or, a certificate with a minimum score of 459 on the ParaPro Assessment provided by the Educational Testing Service.

For more information, contact Classified/Support Services Personnel Recruitment at 808-441-8411.

## **Idaho:**

IDAPA 08.02.02.007.10, paraprofessional is a noncertificated individual who is employed by a local education agency to support educational programming.

Paraprofessionals must work under the direct supervision of a properly certificated staff member for the areas they are providing support. Paraprofessionals cannot serve as the teacher of record and may not provide direct instruction to a student unless the paraprofessional is working under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Duties of a paraprofessional include, but are not limited to:

- one-on-one tutoring
- assisting in classroom management
- assisting in computer instruction
- conducting parent involvement activities
- providing instructional support in a library or media center
- acting as a translator in instructional matters
- providing instructional support services.

Non-instructional duties such as providing technical support for computers, personal care services, and clerical duties are generally performed by classroom or school aides, however, this does not preclude paraprofessionals from also assisting in these non-instructional areas.

To qualify as a paraprofessional, the individual must have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED) and:

- Demonstrate through a state board approved academic assessment knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing or preparing students to be instructed in the academic areas they are providing support in; or
- Have completed at least two (2) years of study at an accredited postsecondary educational institution; or
- Obtained an associate degree or higher-level degree; demonstrated through a state board approved academic assessment knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing or preparing students to be instructed in the academic areas they are providing support in.

Individuals who do not meet these requirements will be considered school or classroom aides.

## Illinois:



Paraprofessionals play an essential role within school districts. Under the supervision of a licensed teacher, a paraprofessional supports teachers and students in many ways. For instance, a paraprofessional can tutor students or assist the teacher with managing the classroom and organizing instructional materials. This page provides the licensure requirements to obtain a paraprofessional educator license or a short-term paraprofessional approval in Illinois.

### Requirements

- At least 19 years of age to serve students in grades PK-22.
- Beginning January 1, 2023, individuals who are 18 years of age may qualify for the ELS-Paraprofessional to serve students PK-8 by meeting the requirements outlined below.
- One of the following required:
  - Associate's degree or higher
  - 60 semester hours of coursework
  - High School Diploma or GED and a score of 460 or higher on the ETS Parapro
  - High School Diploma or GED and the following scores on the ACT Workkeys:
    - Applied Mathematics/Applied Math (with a score of 4)
    - Reading for information/Workplace Documents (with a score of 4)

Years Valid 5 fiscal years

### Limitations

- Must work under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher
- No limit on days worked

### Renewable?

May be renewed with payment of registration fees

### Notes:

- If you hold a Paraprofessional License and have a Bachelor's Degree on file, you are qualified to be a substitute teacher.
- If you hold an Illinois Substitute License and a bachelor's degree, you are qualified to serve as a Paraprofessional without holding a separate ELS-Paraprofessional credential.
- Coursework must be at the 100-level or higher from a regionally accredited college or university.

## Indiana:



### Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

## Paraprofessional Requirements

The U.S. Department of Education has approved the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) request to allow LEAs with an approved Ed-flex Waiver #2 application to utilize more flexible state defined paraprofessional requirements for highly qualified rather than the current federal requirements.

LEAs may choose one of the following options to serve as their paraprofessional requirements, or they may request approval from IDOE for an option that does not appear on the list below. *(Please note: LEAs may only use options that do not meet the federal requirements with an approved ed-flex waiver #2 from IDOE in the applicable school year.)*

The paraprofessional can be determined as highly qualified if they have one of the federal or Ed-flex requirements below.

#### Federal Options:

- Two years of college experience
- A two-year college degree
- Passed the Para-Pro Assessment (within the first year of employment)<sup>†</sup>

#### Ed-Flex Options:

- One year or 1,000 hours of previous employment experience in a school or working with children
- Passed annual school-level evaluations
- Completed 48 credit hours of college level classes
- Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentials
- Completed LEA required professional development modules/training
- Completed Other Requirements – LEAs may request approval from IDOE

These requirements apply to Title-I funded paraprofessionals in Targeted Assistance Schools (TAS), or all instructional paraprofessionals no matter how they are funded in Schoolwide Programs (SWP).

<sup>†</sup> Passed the ParaPro Assessment prior to August 31, 2026, or passed the ParaPathways Assessment after September 1, 2025. As ETS transitions to the replacement test, there will be a year of overlap where both tests will be available. As of 9/1/26, only ParaPathways will be available.

Revised 06/05/2025

Indiana Government Center North, 9th Floor • 100 N Senate Ave • Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
317-232-6610 • [www.doe.in.gov](http://www.doe.in.gov)

Authority: IC 20-19-2-8; IC 0-19-2-16

Affected: IC 20-19-2; IC 20-35Sec. 69.

"Paraprofessional" means an individual who works under the supervision and direction of licensed teachers or related services personnel to assist in areas that relate to personal, social, and instructional needs. The term includes, but is not limited to, the following: (1) Instructional or program assistants.

(2) School bus monitors.

(3) Interpreters.

(4) Note takers.

(5) Job coaches.

## **Iowa**

### **TITLE VII**

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

#### **CHAPTER 41**

#### **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

[Prior to 9/7/88, see Public Instruction Department[670] Ch 12]

281—41.403(256B) Paraprofessionals.

41.403(1) Responsibilities. Special education personnel may be employed to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities and shall:

a. Complete appropriate preservice and ongoing staff development specific to the functions to be performed. The agency shall make provisions for or require such completion prior to the beginning of service wherever practicable and within a reasonable time of the beginning of service where the preentry completion is not practicable.

b. Work under the supervision of professional personnel who are appropriately authorized to provide direct services in the same area where the paraprofessional provides assistive services.

c. Not serve as a substitute for appropriately authorized professional personnel.

41.403(2) Authorized special education paraprofessionals.

Authorized special education paraprofessional roles include:

“Audiometrist” provides hearing screening and other specific hearing-related activities as assigned by the audiologist.

“Licensed practical nurse” shall be permitted to provide supportive and restorative care to an eligible individual in the school setting in accordance with the student’s health plan when under the supervision of and as delegated by the registered nurse employed by the school district.

“Occupational therapy assistant” is licensed to perform occupational therapy procedures and related tasks that have been selected and delegated by the supervising occupational therapist.

“Others” as approved by the department, such as educational assistants described in 281—subrule 12.4(9).

“Para-educator” is a licensed educational assistant as defined in Iowa Code section 256.157.

“Physical therapist assistant” is licensed to perform physical therapy procedures and related tasks that have been selected and delegated by the supervising physical therapist.

“Psychology assistant” collects screening data through records review, systematic behavior observations, standardized interviews, group and individual assessment techniques; implements psychological intervention plans; and maintains psychological records under supervision of the school psychologist.

“Speech-language pathology assistant” provides certain language, articulation, voice and fluency activities as assigned by the supervising speech-language pathologist.

“Vision assistant” provides materials in the appropriate medium for use by individuals who are blind or visually impaired and performs other duties as assigned by the supervising teacher of the visually impaired. [ARC 7792C, IAB 4/17/24, effective 5/22/24].....



**Department of Education**

Requirements - First Issuance

1. Completion of a an approved paraeducation certification program
2. Verification of high school completion or equivalence
3. Mandatory reporter training for child abuse

Term: 5 years

Authority: Student assistance - not leading any direct instruction

Renewals: 3 renewal credits and the mandatory reporter training for child abuse.

OR

Verification of a Master's degree or higher, at least 10 years of PK-12 licensed experience, and the mandatory reporter training for child abuse. Substitute experience may count as years of experience if an individual is able to verify at least 91 days of substitute experience per year of experience.

## Kansas:



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 102  
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212  
(785) 296-3201  
[www.ksde.gov](http://www.ksde.gov)

8/13/2025

To: Education Funding Task Force

From: Bert Moore, Director of Special Education and Title Services

Re: Special Education Questions

Below are responses to questions presented to the Kansas State Department of Education related to Special Education.

### Paraeducators

1. How are Paraeducators (paras) defined for Special Education and Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)?
  - Special Education (SPED) assigned paraeducators (paras) provide instructional or related services under the supervision of a licensed or certified special education professional in an accredited or approved special education program.
  - SPED paras have as a minimum requirement: to be a high school graduate (or GED certificate); and complete an orientation session addressing confidentiality, the services to be provided, and the policies and procedures of the local education agency concerning special education support.
  - SPED paras have required professional development that includes a minimum of 20 hours of paras employed through the first three consecutive years. Following the third consecutive year, SPED paras are required to have a minimum of 10 hours of professional development.
  - Allowable activities include instructional support under the supervision of a professional; participation in IEP meetings; attend parent-teacher conferences; student data collection and record-keeping; assisting the SPED professional with required paperwork; providing support to students with disabilities in general education classrooms; and supporting students with disabilities in general education environments as listed in student IEPs.
  - ESEA (Title) paras working in a Schoolwide Title I program must be highly qualified by passing an assessment, or hold an associate's degree, or acquire at least 48 college hours. SPED paras working in a Schoolwide Title I program must also hold one of these credentials to work in that building.
2. How do schools and KSDE ensure that special education paraprofessionals spend their time with special education students in mainstream classrooms?
  - SPED paras provide supports and services under the supervision of a licensed professional. Their work may include work in general education classrooms, support in

- a special education classroom, community settings, home settings, or any setting as outlined in individual student IEPs.
- SPED paras must complete “time and effort” logs. Only the time listed that serves IEP students is counted as special education eligible time to be reimbursed through Special Education Categorical State Aid.
  - KSDE Fiscal Auditors conduct annual audits of special education programs in Kansas. They work with the KSDE Special Education and Title Services team to remove paid hours of reimbursement.
3. How is paraprofessional time prorated so that special education funding is targeted to the intended purposes?
- SPED para time is audited annually and auditors check “letters of employment” to ensure that paraprofessionals are hired to provide “special education” supports and services under a licensed professional.
  - Each para must complete a “time and effort” log which is audited by the KSDE auditing team.
  - The Categorical Aid system called Personnel Categorical Aid (PCA) lists all professionals claimed for reimbursement and includes any paraprofessionals assigned to work under each licensed professional.

#### **Outcomes for Special Education students**

1. How are outcomes for Special Education students measured?
- The annual IEP is developed listing goals for all special education services. The goals must be measurable and monitored no less frequently than the progress of general education students is monitored.
  - Any student with a disability that the agency has evidence of regression over breaks in school days is entitled to Extended School Year (ESY) services. ESY services are designed to maintain the present level of performance of the child over breaks in school.
  - Students with disabilities are considered general education students first and must receive instruction to make progress in the curriculum. Students with disabilities receive the same measurement of outcomes as all other general education students with few exceptions. Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities receive instruction using the Essential Elements which are aligned with grade level standards.
2. Does it measure effectiveness?
- Effectiveness of outcomes is an annual process that includes progress made on grade level standards as well as progress made on IEP goals and objectives/benchmarks.
3. How do schools gauge what reasonable growth should be for varying exceptionalities?
- The exceptionality is not used to gauge reasonable growth. The IEP is designed on an individual basis to meet the needs of identified students with exceptionalities.
4. What should Kansas be doing differently?
- Establish a cohesive funding formula that considers all service models for special education services. For example, due to the change in how additional special education funding has been distributed to school districts since fiscal year 2024, Infant-Toddler

service providers working to provide Part C services have seen a reduction in reimbursement for staff providing services.

- Provide a more timely and predictable funding model based on staffing and student needs.
- Attract, retain, and support more professional education staff. This need is especially critical in special education and rural areas.

**Additional Resources:**

- *Kansas Special Education Process Handbook* (<https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/SES/PH/PH-complete.pdf>)
- *Kansas Special Education Categorical Aid Reimbursement Guide* (<https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/SES/funding/CatAid/ReimbursementguideFY26.pdf>)
- *Kansas Special Education Eligibility Indicators* (<https://www.ksde.gov/Portals/0/SES/misc/iep/EligibilityIndicators.pdf>)

**For more information, contact:**

**Bert Moore**

Director

Special Education and Title Services

[Bert.moore@ksde.gov](mailto:Bert.moore@ksde.gov)

(785) 296-4949

**Kentucky:**

704 KAR 3:550. Minimum qualifications for paraprofessionals.

RELATES TO: KRS 161.044, 161.011, 20 U.S.C. 6319(c)

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 161.044

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT:

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 161.044 requires the Kentucky Board of Education to promulgate administrative regulations governing the qualifications of teachers' aides in the common schools. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, 20 U.S.C. secs. 6319(c), outlines the minimum requirements for paraprofessionals in schools receiving Title I funds. This administrative regulation establishes the minimum qualifications for teachers' aides and paraprofessionals in the common schools.

#### Section 1. Definitions.

- (1) "Classified employee" is defined by KRS 161.011.
- (2) "Paraprofessional" means a classified employee, regardless of school district-assigned job title, who performs instructional support duties which may include:
  - (a) Providing one-on-one tutoring if tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
  - (b) Assisting with classroom management;
  - (c) Providing instructional assistance in a computer laboratory;
  - (d) Providing instructional support in a library or media center;
  - (e) Acting as a translator; or
  - (f) Providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

#### Section 2. Minimum Qualifications for a Paraprofessional.

- (1) To qualify for a position as a paraprofessional in the common schools, an individual shall possess knowledge of basic subjects taught in the common schools, including arithmetic, grammar, spelling, language, and reading.
- (2) Possession of the knowledge required in subsection(1) of this section shall be demonstrated by the successful completion of a high school diploma or a high school equivalency diploma.

#### Section 3. Minimum Qualifications for Paraprofessionals in Title I Schools.

- (1) To qualify for a position as a paraprofessional in a school that receives funding under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, or its successor, an individual shall meet the requirements of Section 2 of this administrative regulation, and shall possess:
  - (a) Two (2) years of study at an institution of higher education;
  - (b) An associate's degree; or
  - (c) A passing score on the state assessment required by Section 5 of this administrative regulation.
- (2) Paraprofessionals who only serve as translators or who only conduct parental involvement activities are exempt from the requirements of this section.

#### Section 4. Local Education Agency Flexibility.

- (1) Local education agencies may add required qualifications in addition to those set forth in this administrative regulation for paraprofessional roles.
- (2) Local education agencies shall adopt and implement policies to ensure that any classified employee who meets the definition of a paraprofessional in Section 1 of this administrative regulation meets the

minimum qualification requirements of this administrative regulation regardless of locally created job titles.

Section 5. Criteria for the Statewide Paraprofessional Assessment. The Kentucky Department of Education shall make available a standardized paraprofessional assessment that evaluates an individual's knowledge of:

- (1) Correct oral and written usage of English;
- (2) Child guidance principles and practices;
- (3) Classroom procedures and conduct;
- (4) Basic instructional techniques;
- (5) School and classroom rules, policies, and procedures;
- (6) Safe practices in classroom activities;
- (7) Reading and writing communication skills;
- (8) Interpersonal skills using tact, patience, and courtesy; and
- (9) Record-keeping techniques.

(50 Ky.R. 2332; 51 Ky.R. 275; eff. 8-20-2024.)

## **Louisiana**

La. Admin. Code tit. 28, § CXXXI-2103 - Paraprofessional Qualifications

### **A. Definition of Paraprofessional**

1. For the purposes of title I, part A, a paraprofessional is an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with title I, part A funds including paraprofessionals working in any of the following capacities:

- a. providing one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
- b. assisting with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials;
- c. providing instructional assistance in a computer laboratory;
- d. conducting parental involvement activities;
- e. providing support in a library or media center;
- f. Acting as a translator; or
- g. providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher [title I, section 1119(g)(2)].

2. Individuals functioning as interpreters or transliterators, who are providing communication assistance only and not instructional support, are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I if the individual possess one of the following educational interpreter certificates:

- a. ancillary provisional certificate; or
- b. Qualified ancillary certificate.

3. Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under title I.

**C. Requirements for Title I Paraprofessionals.** All Title I paraprofessionals hired on or before January 8, 2002, and working in a program supported with title I funds must have met the following requirements by January 8, 2006. All title I paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, must meet the following requirements to be hired:

- 1. possess a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent including paraprofessionals who serve as translators or who conduct parental involvement activities; and
- 2. satisfy one of the following:
  - a. pass a state approved assessment for paraprofessionals;
  - b. obtain an associate (or higher) degree at a higher education institution; or
  - c. complete two years of full-time study at an institution of higher education.

**D. Louisiana Pathways for Paraprofessionals to Meet Federal Requirements.** The U.S. Department of Education specifies that paraprofessionals should be able to demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to

assist in instruction in the areas of reading, writing, and math, or in school readiness. Paraprofessionals are expected to have a working knowledge of the academic areas. Louisiana offers all paraprofessionals three ways to meet federal requirements.

1. State Test. A paraprofessional who passes the Educational Testing Service (ETS) para-pro assessment will meet state and federal requirements to be classified as a highly qualified paraprofessional. A paraprofessional who is not new to the profession, passes the ACT work keys assessment, and has successful observations will meet state and federal requirements to be classified as a highly qualified paraprofessional.

2. Two Years of Full-Time Study (48 Semester Credit Hours). State, district, and post-secondary education personnel collaborated in identifying course requirements for paraprofessionals within a state approved institution of higher education that would assist paraprofessionals when instructing students in the areas of reading, writing, math, and school readiness.

3. Associate Degree. State, district, and postsecondary education personnel collaborated in identifying course requirements for paraprofessionals within a state-approved institution of higher education that would assist paraprofessionals when instructing students in the areas of reading, writing, math, and school readiness.

E. State-Approved Institutions of Higher Education. State-approved higher education institutions may offer coursework to paraprofessionals. To be approved by the state, institutions must be accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting entity or granted pre-accreditation status. Newly developed public institutions that are formally seeking accreditation may obtain pre-accreditation status from the state. A list of approved institutions is available from the LDE upon request.

#### F. Louisiana Definition: Highly Qualified Paraprofessional

1. New to the Profession. A paraprofessional must satisfy one of the following:

- a. passed the ETS para-pro assessment;

- b. has 2 years of full-time study (48 semester credit hours) from the recommended list of state-approved institutions of higher education or from an institution of higher education accredited in accordance with 34 CFR 602 . A total of 15 hours of general education course requirements include English composition (3), English/reading (6), and mathematics (6). For the remaining 33 hours of coursework, acceptance of credit for a course shown on a transcript from an approved higher education institution is at school district discretion in addressing the needs of the specific job; or

c. has associate of arts or associate of applied science degree from a state-approved institution of higher education or from an institution of higher education accredited in accordance with 34 CFR 602.

2. Not New to the Profession. A paraprofessional must satisfy one of the following:

a. passed the ETS para-pro assessment;

b. has 2 years of full-time study (48 semester credit hours) from the recommended list of state-approved institutions of higher education or from an institution of higher education accredited in accordance with 34 CFR 602 . A total of 15 hours of general education course requirements include English composition (3), English/reading (6), and mathematics (6). For the remaining 33 hours of coursework, acceptance of credit for a course shown on a transcript from an approved higher education institution is at school district discretion in addressing the needs of the specific job;

c. has associate of arts or associate of applied science degree from a state-approved institution of higher education or from an institution of higher education accredited in accordance with 34 CFR 602 ; or

d. has successfully completed the ACT, Inc., work keys skills assessments and on-the-job observation.

G. Curriculum-based Pathways for Paraprofessionals. General education and teacher preparation coursework must address the K-12 state content standards, Louisiana components of effective Teaching, National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) standards, and Praxis expectations. In addition to the ETS para-pro assessment, the state specified three curriculum-based pathways for paraprofessionals to meet federal requirements, as follows:

1. total of 48 credit hours:

a. general education courses}-15 semester hours:

- i. English composition}-3 hours;
- ii. English/reading}-6 hours; and
- iii. mathematics}-6 hours; and

b. paraprofessional courses-for the remaining 33 semester hours, acceptance of credit for a course shown on a transcript from an approved institution of higher education is at school district discretion in addressing needs of a specific job:

- i. guidelines for prescriptive plan requiring additional coursework-school districts should consider at least three hours of reading and at least 12 hours from a list of available paraprofessional courses, as follows:
    - (a). strategies for teaching and learning;
    - (b). assessment of learning;
    - (c). classroom and behavior management; and
    - (d). addressing the needs of exceptional children; and
  - ii. discipline-specific electives may include as many as 12 hours of developmental or remedial courses;
2. associate of applied science degree}-60+ credit hours:
- a. general education courses-15 semester hours:
    - i. English compositiona}-3 hours;
    - ii. humanitiesa}-3 hours;
    - iii. math: algebraa}-3 hours;
    - iv. natural sciencesa}-3 hours; and
    - v. social and behavioral sciencea}-3 hours;
  - b. teacher preparation courses-child/adolescent developmenta}-3 hr
  - c. paraprofessional courses-30 semester hours:
    - i. introduction to paraprofessional education}-3;
    - ii. applied literacy developmenta}-3;
    - iii. strategies for teaching and learninga}-3;
    - iv. applied assessment of learninga}-3;
    - v. applied classroom behavior managementa}-3;
    - vi. addressing the needs of exceptional childrena}-3;
    - vii. application of computer technology}-3;
    - viii. family, school, and community relations}-3;
    - ix. health and safety in schoolsa}-3; and
    - x. paraprofessional practicum-teaching, learning, and record keepinga}-3;
3. associate of arts degree}-60+ credit hours:
- a. general education courses-54 semester hours:
    - i. English composition}-6 hours;
    - ii. humanities: English literature}-6 hours;
    - iii. math: algebra, etc.}-12 hours;
    - iv. natural sciences}-15 hours;
    - v. social and behavioral sciencea}-12 hours;
    - vi. fine arts}-3 hours; and
  - b. teacher preparation courses-9 hours. Select three of the following:

- i. child/adolescent development}-3 hours;
- ii. educational psychology}-3 hours; and
- iii. multicultural/exceptional education}-3 hours:
  - (a). educational technology}-3 hours; or
  - (b). children's literature}-3 hours.

## Maine

Universal Citation: 20-A ME Rev Stat § 13019-H (2017)

### §13019-H. Educational technician certificate

1. Requirement. An educational technician certificate is required for employment as an educational technician at a public school or a private school approved for attendance purposes pursuant to section 2901, subsection 2, paragraph B, if the employed individual will:

A. Introduce new learning plans developed in consultation with the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist; and

B. Supervise small groups of students in community-based programs.

2. Qualifications. The state board shall adopt rules establishing the qualifications and supervision for an educational technician certificate.

3. Certificate renewal. An educational technician certificate is issued for a 5-year period and may be renewed in accordance with state board rules, which must require, at a minimum, that the educational technician, whether employed or unemployed, complete at least 3 semester hours of professional or academic study or the equivalent or in-service training designed to improve the performance of the educational technician in the field.

### 05-071 C.M.R. ch. 115, § I-6 - Credentials Available and Eligibility Requirements

#### 5. Certificate for a Certified Educational Technician

A. Function: A certified educational technician provides supportive educational services. There are three levels of certification for the increasing levels of responsibility for planning and supervision of students. A superintendent, headmaster or a Child Development Services director who employs an individual as an educational technician in violation of this Section shall be subject to penalties in Section 4.3 of this rule. A certificate specifies the applicable levels: 6-12 for career and technical education, pre-K-12, or birth to school age 5. Tutors shall meet the requirements of educational technicians, with the level determined by the amount of responsibility and level of supervision that is provided for the position, as specified in this section.

#### (1) Educational Technician I

##### (A) Permitted Responsibilities

- i. Review and reinforce learning previously introduced by the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist, or assist in drill or practice activities;
- ii. Perform non-instructional, non-evaluative functions;
- iii. Assist in the preparation of instructional materials; and
- iv. Provide classroom management functions.

(B) Required Supervision

- i. Be assigned instructional duties that are directly supervised by the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist in the classroom; or
- ii. Serve under general administrative supervision when performing non-instructional student-related duties.

(2) Educational Technician II

(A) Permitted Responsibilities

- i. Perform all of the duties of an Educational Technician I; and
- ii. Introduce new learning preplanned in collaboration with the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist.

(B) Required Supervision

- i. Meet with the classroom/program teacher or appropriate content specialist and receive direction on a regular basis, whenever possible on a daily basis;
- ii. Perform short-term instruction in small groups under the direct supervision of the teacher or appropriate content specialist in the classroom; or
- iii. Conduct one-on-one or small group instruction with indirect supervision.

(3) Educational Technician III and Emergency Educational Technician

(A) Permitted Responsibilities

- i. Perform all of the duties of an Educational Technician I or II;

ii. Introduce new learning preplanned in consultation with the classroom teacher or appropriate content specialist; and

iii. Supervise small groups of students in community-based programs.

(B) Required Supervision

i. Meet with the classroom/program teacher or appropriate content area specialist and receive direction, whenever possible on a twice weekly basis; or

ii. Perform short-term instruction in small classes or in community-based programs with indirect supervision.

B. Eligibility: To be eligible an applicant must meet the following qualifications:

(1) Be of good moral character;

(2) Be at least 18 years of age;

(3) Submit an application in accordance with Section 5.1 of this rule; and

(4) Satisfactorily complete a CHRC in accordance with Section 5.2 of this rule.

(5) Specific Eligibility Requirements

(A) Educational Technician I: hold a high school diploma or GED.

(B) Educational Technician II: document a minimum of 60 credits of approved study in an educationally related field, or, for career and technical education certification, document a minimum of two years of paid applied employment within the field of assignment.

(C) Educational Technician III: document a minimum of 90 credits of approved study in an educationally related field, or, for career and technical education certification, document a minimum of three years of paid applied employment within the field of assignment.

(D) Emergency Educational Technician: successfully complete a Maine program approved for targeting essential skills and knowledge for performing permitted responsibilities.

C. Term: The educational technician certificate issued to an applicant shall be valid as of the date the application is determined by the Department to be complete and shall expire five (5) years from the date the complete application is received by the Department.

D. Renewal: A certified educational technician certificate is renewable for a five-year term.

(1) To renew the certificate, an applicant shall meet the requirements of Sections 5.1 of this rule, and either:

(A) Complete three (3) semester hours of approved study or in-service training designed to improve the performance of the certified educational technician in the field during the term of the certificate and obtain verification from the SAU that the certificate be renewed; or

(B) If not employed by a SAU, provide documentation of the successful completion of three (3) semester hours of approved study or in-service training designed to improve the performance of the certified educational technician during the term of the certificate.

(2) The required three (3) semester hours may not have been used previously to renew the same certificate and must be earned within the five years prior to the renewal.

(3) If a holder is employed by a SAU, the renewal must be processed through the SAU.

(4) An applicant for certification who does not receive positive verification from the SAU may appeal to the Commissioner, pursuant to Maine Department of Education Regulation 119.

# Maryland



200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201

## Technical Assistance Bulletin

MarylandPublicSchools.org



Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services | Bulletin # 19-01

☐ Birth – Age 4   ☐ Birth – K   ☐ Age 3 – K   ☐ Birth – 21   ☒ Age 3 – 21

Date: Revised November 2019

### Improving Outcomes for Students with Disabilities CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

What about paraprofessionals? Can they deliver SDI?

No, not as the sole provider of SDI. However, yes, if they are trained in the specific SDI and are supporting or reinforcing instruction that was delivered by a qualified educator. Paraprofessionals can assist in the delivery of SDI, however only under the direct supervision of a qualified teacher.

This supervision is reflected in schedules, lesson plans, notes, and other documentation.



Nancy S. Grasmick

State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201

TO:     Directors of Teacher Education at Community Colleges  
         Directors of Human Resources  
         Title I Coordinators

FROM:     Lawrence E. Leak, Assistant State Superintendent  
         Division of Certification and Accreditation

RE:     Instructional Paraprofessionals and ParaPro Assessment

DATE:     August 20, 2003

This memo is to provide clarification on several issues related to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and “highly qualified” requirements for instructional paraprofessionals in schools (see Attachment).

Specifically, each state receiving Title I funds under Part A of NCLB must develop a plan to ensure that all instructional paraprofessionals working in Title I supported programs hold a high school diploma or GED and have met one of the following requirements to be highly qualified:

Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or Met rigorous standards of quality demonstrated through a state or local assessment of the knowledge of and the ability to assist in the teaching of reading, writing, and mathematics.

Maryland has defined "two years of study at an institution of higher education" as a minimum of 48 credit hours, as recorded on a college or university transcript. At its June 24-25, 2003 meeting, the State Board of Education adopted the new Educational Testing Service's test for instructional paraprofessionals, ParaPro with the qualifying score of 455.

ParaPro is Maryland's official state assessment for meeting the instructional paraprofessional requirements of the NCLB. Instructional paraprofessionals who participated in Maryland's ParaPro pilot in September 2002 have met the federal requirement, if they met the qualifying score of 455 and hold a high school diploma or GED.

Several local school systems are working in partnership with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and are now offering the ParaPro online. With this partnership option, local school systems can schedule ParaPro on demand for their prospective and veteran instructional paraprofessionals. ETS will provide immediate feedback to test takers and local school systems clients. Any local school system interested in participating can contact Dr. Louise Tanney at ltanney@msde.state.md.us.

## **Massachusetts**

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-3 (revised)

Identifying the Need for Paraprofessional Support

To: Administrators of Special Education, Parents, and Other  
Interested Parties

From: Marcia Mittnacht, State Director of Special Education

Date: February 26, 2015

The purposes of this advisory are to:

1. Advise school districts and parents about concerns regarding inappropriate utilization of paraprofessionals.
2. Clarify when it may be appropriate to use a paraprofessional, as well as ensuring adequate training and supervision.

3. Provide recommended actions and sample tools to increase school district capacity to support students with disabilities.
4. Clarify the decision-making process for assigning paraprofessionals to individual students.

#### A. Introduction: Response to a Cry for Help

When school personnel or parents request a paraprofessional, they are asking for help. Something is amiss. Should a school district respond simply by assigning a paraprofessional to an individual student? Absolutely not.

"If schools respond exclusively to the request for a paraprofessional, without fully understanding the meaning behind the request, it increases the likelihood of masking the underlying issues and delaying attention to them."<sup>1</sup> Instead, "the task is to identify the underlying issues so that they can be addressed."<sup>2</sup>

The essential premise of this advisory is that the underlying learning needs of each particular student — that is, the root causes of the teacher's or parent's "cry for help" — must first be determined. Then there needs to be consideration of the full array of supports and services that may successfully address the student's unique needs. Districts must not restrict their consideration to use of a paraprofessional.

#### B. Concerns Regarding Inappropriate Use of Paraprofessionals

Data reflecting substantial increases in the number of special education paraprofessionals raises concerns about whether districts are effectively responding to the educational needs highlighted by requests for a paraprofessional.

The Department is particularly concerned by reports that, in some cases, paraprofessionals have been assigned simply on the basis of a student's educational profile or to provide a teacher with temporary relief from a demanding student. This may leave unaddressed key issues such as (a) improving teacher ability to educate a full range of students with disabilities; (b) building capacity in general education to design curriculum and instruction for mixed ability groups that include students with disabilities; and (c) changing or improving student behavior.

The Department is also concerned that paraprofessionals have been assigned responsibilities that require the skills of a licensed teacher - for example, making curriculum decisions, planning lessons or designing adaptations, as compared with implementing decisions made by the teacher. There have also been reports of inadequate training and supervision, making it impossible for a paraprofessional to be effective. And, paraprofessionals may continue to be assigned even though other services or supports could more appropriately address the student's learning needs. Inappropriate use of paraprofessionals may have detrimental consequences such as over-dependence, interference with peer interactions, insular

relationships, stigmatization, provocation of behavior problems, or diminished student-teacher interactions.

This is not to say that paraprofessional services should never be used.<sup>3</sup> As with any other special education service, paraprofessionals are inherently neither appropriate nor inappropriate for a particular student. Appropriate use of paraprofessionals depends, to a large extent, on whether the paraprofessional has the requisite skills to address effectively one or more aspects of a student's unique needs and whether the paraprofessional is adequately trained and supervised to be effective. Importantly, appropriate utilization of paraprofessionals also depends on consideration of whether there are other service or support options that would be a better choice because they would address effectively these same learning needs and offer additional advantages such as fostering greater independence. The process for weighing these considerations and making a decision as to whether a paraprofessional should be assigned to a particular student, will be discussed in section E of this Advisory.

### C. Over-Arching Goal of Promoting Students' Independence

It is the essential mission of elementary and secondary education to prepare all students for successful adult life, which may include independent living, competitive employment, further postsecondary education or training, and participation in the life of their community. State and federal special education laws recognize that independence is a key factor of adulthood and our public schools must always strive to build independence in our students, particularly as they begin to approach adult life.<sup>4</sup>

In order for these core educational principles to be realized, decisions regarding special education and related services (and, in particular, decisions regarding paraprofessional services) must be made in a way that allows the unique learning needs of each student to be met and that, at the same time, allows each student to become as independent as possible, particularly in preparation for the end of secondary education.

The following recommended actions are intended to respect and promote these essential principles.

### D. Recommended Actions: School District Level

Whole school approach. School districts can develop greater regular education capacity to effectively serve diverse learners. School district leaders should review the use of paraprofessionals within the context of the whole school environment and consider adopting a tiered model of supports such as Massachusetts' Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Data gathered in the analyses of students' needs can be compiled into a chart or matrix, and reviewed by school-based teams to make decisions regarding system-wide allocation of services and supports. Effective use of school-based student support teams (SSTs) may

reduce the number of retentions, suspensions/expulsions, and referrals to special education. SSTs may also assist in reducing the inappropriate use of paraprofessionals.

District culture. Some may unconsciously believe that a one-to-one paraprofessional is always needed for a student with a particular kind of educational profile. It is important for the district community to examine its own assumptions and to challenge those that perpetuate a status quo that can result in unintended negative consequences. District leaders may find it fruitful to share data on the use of paraprofessionals and to discuss with students, their families and special educators together how to achieve the best instructional services, and aim for the best academic and non-academic outcomes for students. Involving families in this discussion will assist in fully considering how the community as a whole, not just the school, can help to achieve successful adult life outcomes for all students.

#### E. Recommended Actions: Individual Students

The IEP decision-making process. State and federal special education law require an IEP Team to make all decisions regarding the assignment of a paraprofessional to a particular student. The Team makes this decision solely on the basis of whether paraprofessional services are appropriate to meet the unique learning needs of the particular student so that he or she will have the opportunity to receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment and at the same time prepare for "further education, employment, and independent living."<sup>5</sup>

Breaking down the IEP Team decision-making into a three-step process, that considers use of paraprofessionals within a broader context, may substantially increase the likelihood of using paraprofessionals appropriately and effectively. First, at least one member of the Team should be fully informed about the general education environment and the expectations that typical students are expected to meet in the coming year. In that context, the Team examines information available from evaluations and other information which may include concerns of the parent, and previous progress with earlier IEPs. The Team then identifies all of a student's *special education needs* arising from the disability and presenting barriers to the student's learning. The Team must differentiate among needs that can and should be met in the general education environment with accommodations or minor modifications and needs that must be met through the delivery of specially designed instruction so that the student receives FAPE.

Second, the IEP Team considers the goals that are most important for the student to accomplish during the upcoming year and considers these goals in the context of the general curriculum, it's available support services as well as the *entire range of specially designed instruction, related services and accommodations* that can meet the student's particular needs.

Finally, the Team then determines the extent to which needed services can be delivered in the general education classroom and which services may require removal from the classroom. Research supports that most students with disabilities have better outcomes when they are fully included in the general education classroom, and the Team is tasked with carefully considering the risks and benefits to the student when removal appears to be necessary. It is at the intersection of these two important priorities -- the least restrictive environment (the general education classroom) and the promotion of independence, that the Team may consider the use of a one to one paraprofessional. If a one to one paraprofessional can increase the student's access to the general education environment or assist in moving toward more independence, then generally the Team should identify use of the paraprofessional.

This decision-making process offers the following advantages: (1) it assists the Team to assign paraprofessionals when necessary to meet the individual student's unique special education needs, (2) precludes assignment of a paraprofessional based on limited information - for example, solely on the basis of a student's diagnosis or the needs of a teacher, and (3) seeks to ensure that service or support options (other than a paraprofessional) are also considered and utilized if they would address effectively a student's learning needs and offer additional advantages such as fostering greater independence.<sup>2</sup>

Training and supervision. School districts have an affirmative obligation to ensure that all paraprofessionals are trained and supervised so that they will be able to provide the services for which they are responsible, as reflected in federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) policy guidance. Therefore, once an IEP Team decides that a paraprofessional is needed for a student, the Team has a responsibility to determine the means by which a paraprofessional will have sufficient training and supervision. This may occasionally require additional services or consultation in the IEP.

Develop a plan for fading paraprofessional support. It is important that paraprofessional services continue in amount and duration only as needed. For many students, other services or supports can be substituted for some or all of a student's paraprofessional services. Therefore, whenever an assignment of paraprofessional services is initially made, the Team should discuss and develop a plan for reviewing the continued need for these services, including a process to review and monitor the student's progress and determine whether the student's need can be met with other services or supports. The Team may establish criteria which, if met by the student, will trigger initiation of the IEP amendment process to consider a change in services. The family is a critical partner in the planning process, with the family made well aware of any potential changes in the student's program and engaged throughout the process. There is no "standard" plan for fading paraprofessional services—each will be individually tailored for the particular student.

Anchor district policies and procedures with best-practices for student leadership. Depending on the age of the student involved, the student may be a "driver" but at all times will be a participant in whatever actions are taken. Keep the student's needs and desires at the center of discussions and to the extent

possible, involve the student in the planning and actions taken. If, after all, the purpose is to promote independence, then the student should be able to take pride in actively working toward his/her increased independence and full participation in the life of the school. With the student central to the process, educators and families alike must remember that each student is different and may need different approaches, and different amounts of time to respond to different actions. Anticipate that some students may need paraprofessional support in one or more areas for years, while others may move forward in leaps and bounds toward independence.

#### F. Conclusion

Paraprofessionals may be an essential service for some disabled students. Yet, their inappropriate use can waste resources, limit a student's potential for independence, and leave key issues unaddressed. To respond to these potential challenges, system-wide changes can substantially increase the capacity of a school district to respond appropriately to a wide range of learners, and consideration of paraprofessional services for an individual student must be integrated into the IEP decision-making process for determining all of the student's unique special education needs and how they should be met.

## Michigan:

To support the Whole Child, a local district may employ noncertified personnel to assist teachers and provide support to students. These employees include instructional personnel, clerical support personnel and paraprofessional personnel. The purpose of this document is to clarify conditions governing the assignment of noncertified personnel employed within specific education programs.

The term “noncertified personnel” as used in this document, refers to teacher aides/assistants, paraprofessionals and other support personnel for whom a valid Michigan teaching certificate is not required by law, rule or policy. These people are not delivering direct instruction and are not teaching students new content.

This guidance does not apply to occupational and physical therapists, school nurses, or other licensed, certified, approved professional support personnel, or to personnel assigned to non-educational activities, such as athletic events, leisure time, or community service programs which are operated as extracurricular activities.

### Legal Authority

Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 380.1231 and 388.1763 requires that all local boards of a school district ensure that they hire and/or contract with qualified teachers who hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate. These teachers are to be assigned the responsibility of providing instruction to students. (This is subject to sections MCL 380.1233b and MCL 380.1233c.)

School districts are prohibited from allowing noncertified personnel employed as teacher aides/assistants or instructional paraprofessionals to assume the responsibility of teachers in elementary or secondary schools within the state of Michigan, as indicated in the following quote from MCL 380.1233(1):

...the board of a school district or intermediate school board of an intermediate school district shall not permit a teacher who does not hold a valid teaching certificate to teach in a grade or department of the school.

Instructional support personnel may be employed and assigned to assist teachers or other approved professional personnel without certification or licensure as authorized in Michigan Administrative Code 390.1105.

For additional information on placement and assignment of teachers can be found in the Appropriate Placement of Educators guidance.

### Authorized Activities for Noncertified Personnel

School districts may employ noncertified personnel to assist and support:

1. non-instructional activities, including:
  1. maintaining safety and monitoring in the lunchrooms, on the playground, or in other school settings;
  2. functioning as health care aides, library assistants, or other responsibilities of non-instructional support for the students; and
  3. supervising before and after school programs and non-instructional periods (e.g., study hall periods not counted as part of the required minimum number of hours of pupil instruction as required by section 101 of the State School Aid Act, MCL 388.1701.)
2. instructional and related activities, including:
  1. assisting in the development of instructional and related materials, performance or clerical tasks;
  2. complementing instructional activities, such as assisting the teacher during the lesson by helping students who may need additional support with instruction;
  3. supplementing instruction by assisting the teacher with individuals or small groups of pupils on follow-up activities as specified; and
  4. reinforcing instruction by assisting the teacher in administering drill activities for individuals or small groups.

#### Supervision of Noncertified Personnel Providing Instructional Support

Non-certified, non-instructional personnel may supervise students during library periods, study halls, lunch hours, and other times not counted as part of the student's instructional day as defined in R 340.10 of the Michigan Administrative Code.

Each educational agency must ensure that certified teachers are responsible for students during instructional periods every day; however, certified teachers may temporarily be absent during part of an instructional period to handle emergencies, discipline problems, or other unforeseen problems of a temporary nature.

Noncertified personnel engaged in complementing, supplementing, or reinforcing instruction that is counted as part of the instructional day under Rule 340.10 of the Michigan Administrative Code shall be under the meaningful direction and supervision of a certified classroom teacher.

“Meaningful direction” means that the teacher is responsible for:

1. planning and coordinating all lessons;
2. presenting the initial lesson;

3. assessing the learning objectives;
4. determining mastery of content;
5. identifying the type of complementing, supplementing, or reinforcing instruction or intervention to be provided; and
6. specifying the methods, materials, and techniques to be used by noncertified personnel.

“Supervision” means the certified teacher periodically:

1. evaluates the performance of noncertified personnel providing instructional support;
2. reviews the work duties and assignments of the non-certified staff; and
3. evaluates the progress of students receiving support.

Noncertified personnel may not be given full responsibility for instruction or assessment of students. They may provide complementing, supplementing, or reinforcing instruction or intervention to individuals or small groups of students without the teacher physically being present for a limited period of time as long as the teacher knows the whereabouts of the aide and students at all times, the noncertified personnel are never given full responsibility for instruction, and the activities of the noncertified personnel are always under the meaningful direction and supervision of the teacher.

#### Role and Responsibility of Noncertified Personnel by Program Area

Districts are authorized to employ teacher aides/assistants and other paraprofessionals to support teachers in the day-to-day operation of school programs. However, noncertified personnel in the following programs have special responsibilities or functions as established in administrative rule or as a condition for receipt of state or federal funds and must meet specific requirements established by the program area.

#### Section 41

Under the Section 41, Michigan Bilingual Education Grant, the bilingual/ESL instruction for English Learners in speaking, reading, writing, or comprehension, must be conducted by a teacher with a Michigan bilingual education or ESL endorsement. When a teacher with a Michigan bilingual or ESL endorsement is not available to support bilingual/ESL instruction, districts must seek substitute permits for qualified individuals to serve in this role. Permits should not be considered permanent solutions for staffing, and districts are strongly encouraged to support personnel in pursuing a bilingual or ESL endorsement on a Michigan teaching certificate.

Teacher aides, assistants, paraprofessionals, or tutors who assist with instruction must be under the direct supervision of a certified and endorsed (or properly permitted) teacher. These non-certified staff should

speak the home language of the students to provide bilingual support to add in developing English language proficiency.

For more information on this program area contact the Office of Educational Supports.

## Title I

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) requires that instructional support paraprofessionals meet specific requirements.

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is defined as an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds, either in a school-wide program or directly under a target-assisted program. This includes paraprofessionals who do the following:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher.
- Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials.
- Conduct parental involvement activities.
- Provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory.
- Provide support in a library or media center.
- Act as a translator.
- Provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

As partners in the instructional process, paraprofessionals who work in programs supported with Title I funds must meet the requirements as specified in the Paraprofessionals Requirements document. For more information on this program area contact the Office of Educational Supports.

## Special Education

Paraprofessional personnel employed in special education programs are qualified under requirements established by their respective intermediate school district plan. Special education paraprofessional personnel include, but are not limited to, teacher aides, health care aides, bilingual aides, instructional aides, and program assistants in programs for students with cognitive impairments or severe multiple impairments. The Michigan Administrative Rule for Special Education (MARSE) will provide additional clarity in Rule 340.1793. For more information on this program area contact the Office of Special Education.

## **Minnesota:**

Minnesota Statutes 125A.08 (c)

2015 Minnesota Session Laws changed the training requirements for paraprofessionals to work with to provide direct support to students with disabilities. The following change will appear in Minnesota Statute 125A.08 and is effective immediately:

(c) For all paraprofessionals employed to work in programs for whose role in part is to provide direct support to students with disabilities, the school board in each district shall ensure that:

- (1) before or beginning at the time of employment, each paraprofessional must develop sufficient knowledge and skills in emergency procedures, building orientation, roles and responsibilities, confidentiality, vulnerability, and reportability, among other things, to begin meeting the needs, especially disability-specific and behavioral needs, of the students with whom the paraprofessional works;
- (2) annual training opportunities are required to enable the paraprofessional to continue to further develop the knowledge and skills that are specific to the students with whom the paraprofessional works, including understanding disabilities, the unique and individual needs of each student according to the student's disability and how the disability affects the student's education and behavior, following lesson plans, and implementing follow-up instructional procedures and activities; and
- (3) a districtwide process obligates each paraprofessional to work under the ongoing direction of a licensed teacher and, where appropriate and possible, the supervision of a school nurse.

MVED Special Education Paraprofessional Handbook

Roles of a Paraprofessional:

Paraprofessionals are often assigned specific roles in a school. They may have more than one assignment during the school day, often to assist with one person not becoming overwhelmed or 'burned out' with a difficult student or group of students, and/or to keep a child from becoming too dependent upon one individual. Special Education assignments generally are one or more of the following:

- One to one paraprofessional
- One paraprofessional to 2, 3 or more students
- Resource room assistant
- General education classroom assistant

- “Other Duties As Assigned” (These are not part of Special Education responsibilities)

- o Bus supervision
- o Lunch supervision
- o Playground supervision

Depending upon your individual contract when you were hired and your school district’s policies, you may be reassigned throughout the year to serve in different capacities and with different disability needs..... Just because you were hired to work with SLD students, doesn’t mean you may never be asked to feed a Physically Impaired student in the future.

#### Special Education Program Assistants:

Program Assistants support the programming for students in mainstream classes and the resource room as outlined in each student’s Individual Education Program (IEP). It is important to remember that what is appropriate for the para to do with one student in a class, may not be a part of another student’s IEP.

- o Example: If a student has a learning disability and no behavioral concerns listed in the IEP, you should not be expected to remove that student for behavioral disruptions, then they should be treated like other regular education students.

Special Education Paraprofessionals can support all students if they have time, but priority must be given to students who have paraprofessional support in their IEP.

## Mississippi:



### ASSISTANT TEACHER/PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

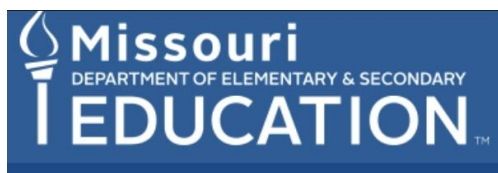
On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. It redefines federal and state roles in K-12 education and is aimed at closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. As part of this legislation, the qualifications for teachers and paraprofessionals were redefined.

These federal requirements apply to paraprofessionals with instructional duties in any program supported by Title I funds. For a schoolwide Title I school, this information refers to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties without regard to the source of funding of the positions.

Applicants must have:

- A. Completed at least 2 years of study (48 semester hours) at an institution of higher education;  
*or*
  - B. Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; *or*
  - C. Met a rigorous standard of quality as determined by a formal assessment. Mississippi uses ACT WorkKeys® assessment scores to measure this standard.
    - a. *Reading for Information*      Passing score = 4
    - b. *Applied Mathematics*      Passing score = 4
    - c. *Writing or Business Writing*      Passing score = 3
- The above requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and non-instructional computer assistants are not considered to be paraprofessional for Title I purposes.
  - Just as with the formal Title I law, an assistant teacher/paraprofessional may not provide instructional service unless he/she is working under the direct supervision of a certified teacher.
  - Districts may set qualifications above the federal or state regulation.
  - For additional information on federal funding or special education paraprofessionals, please contact the Office of Federal Programs at 601-359-3499 or the Office of Special Education at 601-359-3498.
  - Additional information and a list of WorkKeys® test sites can be found at [www.act.org/workkeys](http://www.act.org/workkeys).

## Missouri:



Paraeducators are identified as those who possess, at a minimum, 60 college hours or have passed the ParaPro Assessment and who work under the direct supervision of an appropriately certified teacher to provide instructional assistance. The ParaPro Registration is for individuals seeking to be employed as teaching assistants residing in Title I schools.

### Paraprofessional Qualifications

In order to work under the direct supervision of an appropriately certified teacher to provide instructional assistance, paraprofessionals are required to:

- Obtain 60 college credit hours, or
- Have passed the ParaPro Assessment (before September 23, 2013) or
- Have passed the Paraprofessional Assessment through Pearson (September 23, 2013 through June 20, 2024) or
- Have passed the ParaPro Assessment through ETS (July 1, 2024 forward) or
- Completed the 20HR Substitute Certificate Course

Note: Paraprofessionals cannot have a caseload.

For more information about paraprofessionals, please see the Consolidated Federal Programs Administrative Manual or contact the Office of Quality Schools at 573-526-3232 or [webreplyfedpro@dese.mo.gov](mailto:webreplyfedpro@dese.mo.gov)

Regulation VIII – Personnel Standards

### USE OF PARAPROFESSIONALS

Missouri allows paraprofessionals who are appropriately trained and supervised to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to students with disabilities. Supervision is provided by a properly certificated teacher appropriate for the setting. Public agencies must provide each paraprofessional, including those who hold a teaching certificate, with the orientation and initial training

necessary for the individual to perform the duties associated with the work assignment prior to working with the student. At a minimum, such training shall include information and experiences related to:(1)The type of disabilities displayed by the students with whom they will work;(2)Basic principles of behavior modification;(3)Basic instructional techniques expected to be used (demonstration, modeling, cueing, reinforcement, correction, etc.); and,(4)Other areas as necessary (positioning, lifting and transferring techniques, feeding procedures, etc.).Paraprofessionals, including those who hold a teaching certificate, shall receive a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of training within six (6) months of hire and a minimum of ten (10) hours of training yearly in subsequent school years.

## Montana:

### Paraprofessionals in Montana A Resource Guide For Administrators, Educators, and Paraprofessionals

“Paraeducators” constitute the largest number of “paraprofessionals.” These persons work alongside of and under the direction of educational professionals and/or related service providers responsible for the conduct and management of the classroom or program, including design, implementation, and evaluation of instructional programs and student progress. Paraeducators fulfill a complementary role in special education, regular education, and in other federal programs.

“Paraprofessional”: The more inclusive term “paraprofessional” refers to all of those “paras” working in the school setting, including the related services such as speech, occupational, and physical therapy and school health nurse aides.

#### V. Legal Authority for Paraprofessionals in Montana’s Schools

Montana Administrative Statutes and Rules (2017) recognize a school’s employment of a teacher and aide or instructional assistants (paraprofessional) in Section 10.55.715. It sets forth the responsibilities of instructional assistants employed in Montana schools. Although instructional assistants need not be certified, the following supervision is required:

- a) Instructional paraprofessionals shall be under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher who is responsible for instruction and assessment of students. The supervising teacher shall be available while the instructional paraprofessional is fulfilling his or her responsibilities and shall not be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time.
- (b) Instructional paraprofessionals assigned to assist students with special education needs shall be under the supervision of the teacher or other professional designated as primarily responsible for instructional planning for the student. The designated professional has the responsibility to provide regularly scheduled communication and direction to the instructional paraprofessional and not to delegate any activity to the instructional paraprofessional that requires professional skill, knowledge, and judgment.
- (c) Instructional paraprofessionals assigned to assist students in gaining specialized knowledge not generally available from a properly endorsed teacher shall be supervised by a teacher licensed at the proper level. The supervising teacher is responsible for instruction and assessment of students and shall not be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time.

**Paraprofessional Role:** Paraprofessionals assist in the provision of services related to instruction and supervision of students. Delivery of instruction to the student may be carried out by the paraprofessional under the supervision of the certified person. Individual special education certified staff might choose to

vary the responsibilities of the paraprofessional depending upon the individual skills and interest of the paraprofessional and the needs of the students.

## **Nebraska:**

### **010.03 Related Services Personnel and Paraprofessionals**

010.03 A Related services personnel and paraprofessionals shall hold any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services.

010.03B Related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession shall not have had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis.

010.03C Paraprofessionals shall be appropriately trained and supervised by qualified special education personnel to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this Chapter.

010.03D A paraprofessional shall not teach, as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-101.12.

010.04 Personnel providing special education services who do not hold Department of Education certification and endorsement, shall be licensed by the appropriate State of Nebraska Board of Examiners.

010.05 Personnel employed by approved service agencies shall be certified by the Department of Education or shall hold the credential or training required by the licensing standard under which the service providers operate.

### **Nebraska Revised Statute 79-802**

Nebraska certificate or permit; prerequisite to teaching; employment of teacher aides; requirements.

(1) Except as provided in subsection (2) of this section, no person shall be employed to teach in any public, private, denominational, or parochial school in this state who does not hold a valid Nebraska certificate or permit issued by the Commissioner of Education legalizing him or her to teach the grade or subjects to which elected.

(2) Any person who holds a valid certificate or permit to teach issued by another state may be employed as a substitute teacher in any public, private, denominational, or parochial school in this state for not more than ten working days if he or she begins the application process, on the first employment day, for a Nebraska substitute teacher's certificate and the issuance of such certificate is pending.

(3) Public, private, denominational, or parochial schools in the state may employ persons who do not hold a valid Nebraska teaching certificate or permit issued by the Commissioner of Education to serve as aides to a teacher or teachers. Such teacher aides may not assume any teaching responsibilities. A teacher aide may be assigned duties which are nonteaching in nature if the employing school has assured itself that the aide has been specifically prepared for such duties, including the handling of emergency situations which might arise in the course of his or her work.



#### Paraeducator Guidance Document

A paraeducator is a school employee who works under the supervision of a licensed staff member to assist in providing instruction and other services to children, youth, and their families (Adapted from A.L. Pickett, Director for the National Resource Center for Paraeducators, City University of New York, 1997). The prefix “para” means “alongside of.” Therefore, it is correct to assume that a paraeducator works alongside an educator (teachers, related service providers, etc.). In the early 1960’s, there were

approximately 10,000 paraeducators working in schools, primarily in noninstructional areas. Currently, due to the increase in student population and diversity, the estimated number of paraeducators is between 500,000 and 700,000 nationwide, performing a variety of instructional and non-instructional roles, from helping students in classrooms, supervising playgrounds, to performing as health assistants. These paraeducators work in several learning environments from infant care and family respite to adult vocational sites. The provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA), which required schools to serve students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment, also contributed to the rising use of paraeducators in schools today. Paraeducators are often utilized in educational settings to provide direct and indirect services to students with disabilities. The increasing use of instructional support staff and other paraeducators and the corresponding expansion of their duties and responsibilities have created the need for increased professional development of these critically important members of the school community. Recognizing that the majority of paraeducators possess intimate knowledge of school and community but often lack formal training, state and federal legislation, such as IDEA (2004) and the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), have affirmed the need for high-quality professional development and training.

Additionally, these federal laws emphasize the need for adequate supervision of paraeducators, which in the past has been a gray area for school personnel many of whom are unsure of who supervises the

paraeducator - the special educator, the related service provider, the general education teacher, or the building principal.

## **Nevada**

NV Rev Stat § 391.008 (2024)

1. "Paraprofessional" means a person who is employed by and assigned by a school district or charter school to:

- (a) Provide one-on-one tutoring for a pupil;
- (b) Assist with the management of a classroom, including, without limitation, organizing instructional materials;
- (c) Provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
- (d) Conduct parental involvement activities in conjunction with one or more duties set forth in this subsection;
- (e) Provide support in a library or media center;
- (f) Except as otherwise provided in subsection 2, provide services as a translator; or
- (g) Provide instructional services to pupils under the direct supervision of a licensed teacher.

2. The term "paraprofessional" does not include a person who:

- (a) Is proficient in the English language and a language other than English and who provides services as a translator primarily to enhance the participation of children in programs that are financially supported pursuant to the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, 20 U.S.C. §§ 6301 et seq.
- (b) Solely conducts parental involvement activities.

## **New Hampshire**

Ed 501.03 Definitions I - Z. Except where the context makes another meaning manifest, the following words shall have the meanings indicated when used in this chapter:

(h) “Paraeducator” means a person who works under the supervision of a teacher or other appropriate licensed education professional to provide specialized or concentrated non-initial instructional support to students at the pre-, elementary, or secondary level and may be licensed by the board;

Ed 504.06 Certification as a Paraeducator II. The following shall apply to the certification of a Paraeducator II:

(a) To be certified as a Paraeducator II, an individual shall meet the following entry level requirements relative to education and experience:

(1) Possess a high school degree or HiSET equivalent; and

(2) Meet one of the following requirements:

a. Hold an associates’ degree or a minimum of 48 college credit hours;

b. Demonstrate a passing score on a nationally recognized assessment such as the ParaPro offered by ETS; or

c. Demonstrate a knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics as evidenced by a formal assessment of a portfolio submitted by the individual, that demonstrates knowledge and skills in each of the following areas:

1. Professionalism;

2. Literacy;

3. Mathematics;

4. Child development; and

5. Individualized instructional strategies; and

(b) The portfolio assessment may be managed by the department and administered by the department, the department’s agents(s), or the local district; and

(c) Qualifications for a Paraeducator II shall include the following skills, competencies, and knowledge to be demonstrated by evidence such as, but not limited to, college course work, documented professional

experience, letters of recommendation, professional development hours or CEU's, and artifacts of professional practice:

(1) As relating to professionalism, the individual shall demonstrate the knowledge of and ability to work under the direct supervision of a certified educator by:

- a. Interacting professionally in various and social group settings;
- b. Participating in ongoing professional development and self-evaluation;
- c. Applying constructive feedback to improve performance;
- d. Maintaining confidentiality of information regarding students, staff, and families, and the legal rights and responsibilities of school staff and students;
- e. Reflecting on the effects of one's choices and actions on students, parents and others in the community;
- f. Understanding the applicable laws, rules, regulations, and procedural safeguards that must be observed in educational environments;
- g. Assisting in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures;
- h. Functioning in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences;
- i. Communicating, following instructions and using problem-solving skills that will enable the individual to work as an effective member of the instructional team;
- j. Assisting with maintaining student records including using any technology employed by the district;
- k. Seeking help from appropriate sources as necessary; and
- l. Supporting the instructional choices made for students;

(2) As relating to knowledge of literacy, the individual shall demonstrate competency at a level equivalent to the second year of college by:

- a. Reading and comprehending passages written in English;
  - b. Identifying key elements in a written passage;
  - c. Using standard spoken English correctly;
  - d. Clearly communicating thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in both spoken and written language;
  - e. Using language, style, organization, and format appropriate to the subject matter, purpose, and audience;
  - f. Proof reading, editing and revising written works to ensure correct information, appropriate emphasis, form, grammar, spelling usage, and punctuation; and
  - g. Retrieving information from print and electronic resources;
- (3) As relating to instructional skills associated with literacy, the individual shall demonstrate the ability to:
- a. Assist students to use study skill strategies;
  - b. Read aloud to students using appropriate phrasing and inflection;
  - c. Help students explore literature as a source for understanding their own experience and those of others;
  - d. Reinforce reading skills in small group or one-on-one settings;
  - e. Use a variety of technologies, including assistive technologies, to help students develop reading, writing, and learning skills; and
  - f. Use a variety of strategies to reinforce literacy skills including the essential components of reading and writing;

(4) As relating to knowledge of mathematics, the individual shall demonstrate competency at a level equivalent to the second year of college by:

- a. Performing the 4 basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers, positive and negative integers, rational and irrational numbers;
- b. Demonstrating the ability to estimate mathematical results;
- c. Using tables, graphs, diagrams, and charts to obtain or convey quantitative information;
- d. Choosing appropriate techniques to approach mathematical problems;
- e. Using quantitative data to construct logical explanations for real-world situations;
- f. Expressing mathematical ideas and concepts orally and in writing;
- g. Understanding the role of chance in the occurrence and prediction of events;
- h. Extracting key elements from a word problem and translate the information into accurate mathematical expressions; and
- i. Applying mathematical concepts to real life situations;

(5) As relating to instructional skills associated with mathematics, the individual shall demonstrate the ability to:

- a. Reinforce mathematical skills presented by the teacher;
- b. Assist in the review and evaluation of student work in mathematics;
- c. Use technologies to help students create charts, graphs, and projects that express mathematical ideas;
- d. Use a variety of technologies, including assistive technologies, to help students learn mathematical concepts and skills;
- e. Demonstrate how manipulatives can be used to represent and solve mathematical problems; and

f. Use a variety of instructional strategies to reinforce mathematical skills;

(6) As relating to human development, the individual shall demonstrate understanding of:

a. Developmental stages through which children progress from birth to age 21;

b. Various risk factors that might prohibit or impede typical development;

c. Different learning styles;

d. The influence families have on childhood learning and development;

e. Multiple intelligences;

f. Various personality types; and

g. The existence of a variety of developmental disorders and delays; and

(7) As relating to individualized instructional strategies, the individual shall demonstrate the ability, under the supervision of a professional, to:

a. Implement various approaches to reading, writing, and mathematics;

b. Use strategies and techniques for facilitating the inclusion of individuals with exceptional learning needs into various settings;

c. Prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning;

d. Implement strategies that promote student independence;

e. Use and adapt a variety of developmentally and age appropriate materials and equipment, including assistive technology, to support student learning;

f. Use a variety of instructional strategies appropriate to unique needs of the student;

g. Respect diversity in cultural heritages, lifestyle, and value systems among children, youth and families when delivering instruction or support;

- h. Support and implement a variety of behavior management strategies to create a climate conducive to learning;
- i. Monitor and record student learning in a variety of ways, such as but not limited to, observation, conversation, and testing;
- j. Use approaches such as but not limited to, modifying the learning environment, implementing district or building behavior programs and implementing individual behavior plans in order to manage individual student behavior;
- k. Use strategies that support strengthening appropriate social skills of students;
- l. Carry out activities to collect and document objective information about student strengths and needs; and
- m. Support and work within a tiered system of instructional services.

Ed 504.07 Certification as a Paraeducator I.

To be certified as a Paraeducator I, an individual shall possess a high school degree or HiSET equivalent.

## **New Jersey**

Title 18A. Education 18A § 27-10.4

- a. As used in this section, “paraprofessional” means an individual who is employed in a school district as a school aide or classroom aide who assists a teaching staff member with the supervision of pupil activities.
- b. Prior to the beginning of the first full academic year following the enactment of P.L.2009, c. 227 (C.18A:27-10.1 et seq.), a regionally-accredited institution of higher education offering coursework for a New Jersey instructional certificate shall adopt policies and procedures to allow a student who is enrolled in a teacher preparation program offered by the institution and who is a paraprofessional employed in a school district that receives funding under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. s.6301 et seq.) to perform his student teaching experience in the district in which he is employed. The institution shall enter into an agreement with the district in which the paraprofessional is employed to authorize the student teaching.

c. Prior to the beginning of the first full school year following the enactment of P.L.2009, c. 227 (C.18A:27-10.1 et seq.), a school district that receives funding under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. s.6301 et seq.) shall adopt policies and procedures to allow a paraprofessional who is employed by the district and who is enrolled in a teacher preparation program at a regionally-accredited institution of higher education to perform his student teaching experience in the district. The district shall enter into an agreement with the institution of higher education in which the paraprofessional is enrolled to authorize the student teaching experience in the district.

d. A school district that receives funding under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. s.6301 et seq.) shall provide, if feasible, a paraprofessional who is student teaching in the district pursuant to this section with a modified work schedule that enables the paraprofessional to complete the student teaching experience while employed as a paraprofessional.

#### N.J. Admin. Code § 6A:32-4.2 - Approval of paraprofessional staff

The district board of education shall submit a statement of assurance (SOA) affirming that all paraprofessional staff hired were employed as instructional or health and safety personnel or in accordance with the requirements of individualized education programs. The district board of education shall submit the SOA to the executive county superintendent no later than September 30 and January 31 each school year.

#### N.J. Admin. Code § 8:17-15.4 - Paraprofessionals and assistants

(a) Minimum qualifications of various paraprofessionals and assistants are as follows:

1. A child development associate shall have a high school diploma or GED and documented experience working with persons with disabilities from birth to five years of age;
2. An occupational therapy assistant shall meet the licensure requirements at N.J.S.A. 45:937.62;
3. A physical therapy assistant shall meet the licensure requirements at N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.11 through N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.34f; and
4. A service coordinator associate shall have a high school diploma or GED.

i. With Department approval, immediate family members, that is, parents or siblings, of a child with special needs or community members of an underserved population, who do not meet the education requirement at (a)4 above may be hired in accordance with a written plan for the education requirement to be met within a specified time.

ii. The service coordinator associate's roles, responsibilities, and level of supervision shall be commensurate with his or her experience.

(b) Under the supervision of a qualified and responsible practitioner or provider agency, paraprofessional staff members may perform the following functions:

1. Assist in provision of services to a child and/or his or her family in natural environments;
2. Provide supplementary services addressing goals described in the IFSP of the child and/or his or her family;
3. Serve as liaisons with organizations addressing issues of concern to the community; and
4. Provide translation and/or interpreting services, if other certified and/or trained translators or interpreters are not available despite reasonable efforts to secure their services.

## New Mexico

### New Mexico State Personnel Office

2600 Cerrillos Road  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505-0127



### Classification Description

#### TEACHERS ASSISTANTS

| <u>Class Title</u>    | <u>Class Code</u> | <u>Pay Band</u> | <u>Alt Pay Band*</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Teachers Assistants-B | I9041B            | 30              |                      |
| Teachers Assistants-O | I9041O            | 35              |                      |
| Teachers Assistants-A | I9041A            | 40              |                      |

*\*In accordance with SPB Rule 1.7.4.10 NMAC, the assignment to alternative pay bands shall be reviewed annually to determine their appropriateness.*

#### Occupation Description

Perform duties that are instructional in nature or deliver direct services to students or parents. Serve in a position for which a teacher or another professional has ultimate responsibility for the design and implementation of educational programs and services.

#### Nature of Work

Teacher assistants provide instructional and clerical support for classroom teachers, allowing teachers more time for lesson planning and teaching. They support and assist children in learning class material using the teacher's lesson plans, providing students with individualized attention. Teacher assistants also supervise students in the cafeteria, schoolyard, and hallways, or on field trips; they record grades, set up equipment, and help prepare materials for instruction. They generally provide instructional reinforcement to children, under the direction and guidance of teachers. They work with students individually or in small groups listening while students read, reviewing or reinforcing class lessons, or helping them find information for reports. At the secondary school level, teacher assistants often specialize in a certain subject, such as math or science. Teacher assistants often take charge of special projects and prepare equipment or exhibits, such as for a science demonstration. Some assistants work in computer laboratories, helping students to use computers and educational software programs.

## TEACHERS ASSISTANTS

### Minimum Qualifications

Eighth grade education.

### Operational

- Employees in this Role assist in the preparation of subject matter compatible to the learning abilities of students; assist certified teachers in the instruction of classes, providing individual attention where needed; promote an orderly atmosphere conducive to learning; help detect illness or behavioral reactions.
- Employees may take charge of a special project and prepare equipment or exhibits.

### Recommended Education and Experience for Full Performance\*

High School Diploma or GED and one (1) year assisting in the educational and social development of pupils under the direction and guidance of the head teacher.

### Minimum Qualifications

High School Diploma or GED.

### Advanced

- Employees in this Role provide services for the most complex teaching assistant assignments.
- Employees specialize in a certain subject, such as math or science or may have expertise in a variety of subjects.
- Employees serve a specialized population.

### Recommended Education and Experience for Full Performance

High School Diploma or GED and one and a half (1.5) years assisting in the educational and social development of pupils under the direction and guidance of the head teacher.

### Minimum Qualifications

High School Diploma or GED and three (3) months assisting in the educational and social development of pupils under the direction and guidance of the head teacher.

### Knowledge and Skills

*Note: This information has been produced by compiling information and documentation provided by O\*NET. O\*NET™ is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.*

### Knowledge

**English Language** — Knowledge of the structure and content of the English language including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.

**Psychology** — Knowledge of human behavior and performance; individual differences in ability, personality, and interests; learning and motivation; psychological research methods; and the assessment and treatment of behavioral and affective disorders.

**Education and Training** — Knowledge of principles and methods for curriculum and training design, teaching and instruction for individuals and groups, and the measurement of training effects.

**Mathematics** — Knowledge of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, calculus, statistics, and their applications.

## New York



### 63. What roles can a teaching assistant fulfill?

A teaching assistant, under the general supervision of the special education teacher, can assist in the delivery of special education services but cannot serve in place of a special education teacher. The

following description of duties is provided as guidance in determining the appropriate role for teaching assistants:

- working with individual students or groups of students on special instructional projects;
- providing the teacher with information about students which will assist the teacher in the development of appropriate learning and behavioral experiences;
- assisting students in the use of available instructional resources and development of instructional materials;
- assisting in the development of instructional materials;
- assisting in providing testing accommodations;
- utilizing their own special skills, and abilities by assisting in instructional programs in such areas as: foreign languages, arts, crafts, music and similar subjects;
- assisting in related instructional work as required; and
- assisting students with specific health related activities as appropriate.

### 64. What roles can a teacher aide fulfill?

Teacher aides perform non-instructional duties under supervision determined by the local school district in accordance with Civil Service Law. The following description of duties is provided as guidance in determining the appropriate role for teacher aides:

- preparing scripts for recording purposes;
- assisting in physical care tasks and health-related activities as appropriate;
- assisting students with behavioral/management needs;
- assisting in the set up of laboratory equipment, conduct experiments, and performing limited reviews of student laboratory reports;
- assisting in the technical preparation and production of media programs;
- reading to and playing audio-visual materials for children in lower grades;
- assisting in proctoring and other tasks related to the administration of examinations;
- assisting in the correction of test papers, recording of grades, maintaining of files and preparing statistical reports;
- managing records, materials and equipment; and
- supervising students (e.g., watching students during recess, hall transitions, etc.).

65. Can a teacher aide or teaching assistant be the only service provided to a student with a disability?

No. A teaching assistant or teacher aide can assist in the delivery of special education, but cannot be provided as the only special education service the student receives nor can they be the only provider of special education services to a student with a disability. A student who requires only this level of service (e.g., a health aide to assist with mobility and/or toileting) could be eligible for such service pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

## North Carolina

### NC 1501-12.2 Personnel Qualifications

(b) Related services personnel and paraprofessionals. The qualifications under paragraph (a) of this section include qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals that -

(1) Are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services; and

(2) Ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession -

(i) Meet the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) of this section; and

(ii) Have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and

(iii) Allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under these Policies to children with disabilities.

## North Dakota



Paraprofessional certification in North Dakota is the responsibility of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. The NDDPI reviews and issues several types of paraprofessional certificates.

The NDDPI has transitioned the paraprofessional application to [NDTeach](#) for the following paraprofessional certificate applications:

- Title I
- Special Education
- Special Education Technician
- Speech-Language Pathology

Step-by-step instructions: [Paraprofessional Application in NDTeach](#)

Paraprofessionals providing instructional support to individuals with disabilities must demonstrate completion of twenty contact hours of inservice training conducted within one calendar year of employment in which the paraeducator assumes assigned duties.

Paraprofessional Certificate of Completion (Administrative Rule 67-11-14)

If you want a copy of the Paraeducator Training Modules, please contact our office at (701) 328-2277.

Students taking courses through the Educator Pathway Program can combine specific courses to earn a Special Education Paraprofessional certification. This opportunity provides a solid foundation in educational pedagogy and enables students to contribute actively to their communities. It signifies students' early dedication to the field of education and prepares them for a fulfilling career focused on teaching and nurturing students' development.

Students can choose from three universities and take the listed courses to earn the special education certificate:

Valley City

EDUC 250 Introduction to Education (with embedded field experience) AND EDUC 240 Educating Exceptional Students

OR

EDUC 251 Introduction to the Teaching Profession AND EDUC 252 Introductory Field Experience AND EDUC 240 Educating Exceptional Students

Minot State University

SPED 110 Introduction to Exceptional Children AND SPED 299 Special Education Field Experience

Mayville State University

SPED 289 Foundations of Special Education AND SPED 289A Foundations of Special Education Practicum

This opportunity differs from the requirements needed to receive Title I Paraprofessional Certification. For more information, please visit the [Title I Paraprofessional Certificate of Completion](#) or contact Lauri Nord at [lnord@nd.gov](mailto:lnord@nd.gov).

Individuals providing special education technician services in school settings from early childhood through grade twelve must hold the North Dakota certificate of completion for special education.

- [Special Education Technician Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Special Education Technician Requirements](#) (Administrative Rule 67-11-23)

Individuals providing speech-language pathology paraprofessional services in school settings from early childhood through grade twelve must hold the North Dakota certificate of completion for speech-language pathology.

- [Best Practices - Speech-Language Pathology Paraprofessional](#)
- [Certificate of Completion for Speech-Language Pathology Paraprofessionals](#) (Administrative Rule 67-11-20)

Visit [Title I Paraprofessional Certificate of Completion](#) for additional information.

An aide/paraprofessional is one who assists teachers and students under the direction of a professional teacher to provide instructional support by reinforcing a teacher's instruction in the classroom.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires Title I paraprofessionals to have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and meet one of the following three requirements to be employed in a Title I program:

1. Obtained a working knowledge in reading, mathematics, and writing by completing two years of study (48 semester hours) at an accredited institution of higher education; or
2. Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or
3. Met a rigorous and objective standard of quality, which includes a North Dakota-approved assessment of skills in reading, mathematics, and writing.

Individuals holding a North Dakota educator's professional license meet the requirements under ESSA and the teaching license number could be used in lieu of the paraprofessional certificate of completion number.

## **Ohio**

Section 3319.088 | Educational aide permits - educational paraprofessional licenses for educational assistants.

As used in this section, "educational assistant" means any nonteaching employee in a school district who directly assists a teacher as defined in section [3319.09](#) of the Revised Code, by performing duties for which a license issued pursuant to sections [3319.22](#) to [3319.30](#) of the Revised Code is not required.

(A) Except as provided in division (G) of this section, the state board of education shall issue educational aide permits and educational paraprofessional licenses for educational assistants and shall adopt rules for the issuance and renewal of such permits and licenses which shall be consistent with the provisions of this section. Educational aide permits and educational paraprofessional licenses may be of several types and the rules shall prescribe the minimum qualifications of education and health for the service to be authorized under each type. The prescribed minimum qualifications may require special training or educational courses designed to qualify a person to perform effectively the duties authorized under an educational aide permit or educational paraprofessional license.

(B)(1) Except as provided in division (G) of this section, any application for a permit or license, or a renewal or duplicate of a permit or license, under this section shall be accompanied by the payment of a fee in the amount established under division (B) of section 3319.51 of the Revised Code. Any fees received under this division shall be paid into the state treasury to the credit of the occupational licensing and regulatory fund established in section 4743.05 of the Revised Code.

(2) Any person applying for or holding a permit or license pursuant to this section is subject to sections 3123.41 to 3123.50 of the Revised Code and any applicable rules adopted under section 3123.63 of the Revised Code and sections 3319.31 and 3319.311 of the Revised Code.

(C) Educational assistants shall at all times while in the performance of their duties be under the supervision and direction of a teacher as defined in section 3319.09 of the Revised Code. Educational assistants may assist a teacher to whom assigned in the supervision of pupils, in assisting with instructional tasks, and in the performance of duties which, in the judgment of the teacher to whom the assistant is assigned, may be performed by a person not licensed pursuant to sections 3319.22 to 3319.30 of the Revised Code and for which a teaching license, issued pursuant to sections 3319.22 to 3319.30 of the Revised Code is not required. The duties of an educational assistant shall not include the assignment of grades to pupils. The duties of an educational assistant need not be performed in the physical presence of the teacher to whom assigned, but the activity of an educational assistant shall at all times be under the direction of the teacher to whom assigned. The assignment of an educational assistant need not be limited to assisting a single teacher. In the event an educational assistant is assigned to assist more than one teacher the assignments shall be clearly delineated and so arranged that the educational assistant shall never be subject to simultaneous supervision or direction by more than one teacher.

Educational assistants assigned to supervise children shall, when the teacher to whom assigned is not physically present, maintain the degree of control and discipline that would be maintained by the teacher.

Educational assistants may not be used in place of classroom teachers or other employees and any payment of compensation by boards of education to educational assistants for such services is prohibited. The ratio between the number of licensed teachers and the pupils in a school district may not be

decreased by utilization of educational assistants and no grouping, or other organization of pupils, for utilization of educational assistants shall be established which is inconsistent with sound educational practices and procedures. A school district may employ up to one full time equivalent educational assistant for each six full time equivalent licensed employees of the district. Educational assistants shall not be counted as licensed employees for purposes of state support in the school foundation program and no grouping or regrouping of pupils with educational assistants may be counted as a class or unit for school foundation program purposes. Neither special courses required by the regulations of the state board of education, prescribing minimum qualifications of education for an educational assistant, nor years of service as an educational assistant shall be counted in any way toward qualifying for a teacher license, for a teacher contract of any type, or for determining placement on a salary schedule in a school district as a teacher.

(D) Educational assistants employed by a board of education shall have all rights, benefits, and legal protection available to other nonteaching employees in the school district, except that provisions of Chapter 124. of the Revised Code shall not apply to any person employed as an educational assistant, and shall be members of the school employees retirement system. Educational assistants shall be compensated according to a salary plan adopted annually by the board.

Except as provided in this section nonteaching employees shall not serve as educational assistants without first obtaining an appropriate educational aide permit or educational paraprofessional license from the state board of education. A nonteaching employee who is the holder of a valid educational aide permit or educational paraprofessional license shall neither render nor be required to render services inconsistent with the type of services authorized by the permit or license held. No person shall receive compensation from a board of education for services rendered as an educational assistant in violation of this provision.

Nonteaching employees whose functions are solely secretarial-clerical and who do not perform any other duties as educational assistants, even though they assist a teacher and work under the direction of a teacher shall not be required to hold a permit or license issued pursuant to this section.

Following the determination of the assignment and general job description of an educational assistant and subject to supervision by the teacher's immediate administrative officer, a teacher to whom an educational assistant is assigned shall make all final determinations of the duties to be assigned to such assistant. Teachers shall not be required to hold a license designated for being a supervisor or administrator in order to perform the necessary supervision of educational assistants.

(E) No person who is, or who has been employed as an educational assistant shall divulge, except to the teacher to whom assigned, or the administrator of the school in the absence of the teacher to whom assigned, or when required to testify in a court or proceedings, any personal information concerning any

pupil in the school district which was obtained or obtainable by the educational assistant while so employed. Violation of this provision is grounds for disciplinary action or dismissal, or both.

(F) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, the superintendent of a school district may allow an employee who does not hold a permit or license issued under this section to work as a substitute for an educational assistant who is absent on account of illness or on a leave of absence, or to fill a temporary position created by an emergency, provided that the superintendent believes the employee's application materials indicate that the employee is qualified to obtain a permit or license under this section.

An employee shall begin work as a substitute under this division not earlier than on the date on which the employee files an application with the state board for a permit or license under this section. An employee shall cease working as a substitute under this division on the earliest of the following:

- (1) The date on which the employee files a valid permit or license issued under this section with the superintendent;
- (2) The date on which the employee is denied a permit or license under this section;
- (3) Sixty days following the date on which the employee began work as a substitute under this division.

The superintendent shall ensure that an employee assigned to work as a substitute under division (F) of this section has undergone a criminal records check in accordance with section ~~3319.391~~ of the Revised Code.

## **Oklahoma**

### **Special Education Paraprofessional Requirements**

Paraprofessionals provide instructional support, including:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not
- otherwise receive instruction from a teacher,
- Assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials,
- Providing instructional support in a computer laboratory,
- Conduct parental involvement activities,
- Provide instructional support in a library or media center, Act as a translator, or
- Providing instructional support services under the direct supervision of a fully certified teacher.

### **Special Education Paraprofessional Requirements**

### Tier I (Federal Programs - Title I Paraprofessional)

Meet one of the following criteria:

- Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education (no less than 48 hours of college coursework), OR
- Earned an Associates Degree (or higher), OR
- Take and pass the ACT WorkKeys Assessment scoring a Bronze or higher

WorkKeys: An examinee who takes the three assessments receives a score report for each assessment providing both a scaled score and a level score. The score report provides descriptions of the skills that the examinee has demonstrated. For all three assessments, examinees achieve a level score of <3, 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7. An examinee must score a minimum of Level 3 on all three assessments (Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents).

### Tier II (Special Education)

In addition to Tier I, special education paraprofessionals must also meet the following requirements and maintain current certification.

#### Initial Requirements

- Option 1: Enroll and complete paraprofessional courses in OKConnect by emailing the Office of Special Education Services the following information:
  - Approval from Administrator/HR Director to participate in the course.
  - Name of paraprofessional.
  - District created email address.
- Option 2: OSDE-approved Paraprofessional training through career technology centers or other state-approved training providers

#### Additional Requirements

- Cardiovascular Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and
- First Aid Training

#### Yearly Requirements

- Bloodborne Pathogens AND
- Six (6) hours of professional development

### Paraprofessionals for the 2025-2026 SY

Opportunities for Paraprofessionals to receive Professional Development credits:

- Attending Professional Development sessions at the district level
- Attend the Regional Support Conference within the state
- Enroll in Direct-Step, Direct Specialized Training for Education Paraprofessionals through LRP.

#### Paraprofessional Credentials

##### Candidates Needing Tier II Certification

A member of the district's administration team or designee will send an email to the Office of Special Education Services stating the candidate's name and the candidate's district-created email address. The candidate will receive an email with the next steps and instructions in their district email.

District Superintendent and District Human Resources roles in OECS will now be able to recommend paraprofessional candidates for Tier 1 and/or Tier 2. Districts can start the recommendation process by clicking on "Manage Your Paraprofessional Recommendations". Once the educator is recommended, the educator will be able to apply online using their recommendation tile.

- Paraprofessional Recommendation Process - 2023
- Contact the Office of Teacher Certification for additional questions regarding the paraprofessional recommendation process.
- Contact the Office of Federal Programs for additional questions regarding Tier I.
- Contact the Office of Special Education Services for questions related to Tier II.

#### Special Education Paraprofessional Instructor Training

LEAs may apply to provide the required paraprofessional training at the district level. Instructor candidates wishing to provide training must meet the following requirements.

- Hold a current Oklahoma Teacher Certificate in Special Education
- Have a minimum of two (2) years of experience teaching in a special education classroom
- Receive a recommendation from a school district administrator
- Complete and obtain a transcript showing eight (8) paraprofessional training modules
- Submit the application and all required documents to OSDE-SES

## Oregon

The definitions below apply to OAR 581-037-0005 (Definitions) to 581-037-0025 (Training of Educational Assistants):

(1)“Educational assistant” means an educational assistant as defined in ORS 342.120 (Definitions for chapter). The terms “paraprofessional” and “instructional aide” have the same meaning as “educational assistant”.

(2)“Early Childhood Specialist” means a person as defined in OAR 581-015-2905 (Authorization of Early Childhood Specialist).

(3)“Early Childhood Supervisor” means a person as defined in OAR 581-015-2910 (Authorization of Early Childhood Supervisor).

(4)“Related service provider” means a person registered, certified or licensed by the State of Oregon as qualified to provide a particular related service, as defined in ORS 343.035 (Definitions for chapter), that requires State registration, certification or licensing.

(5)“Title I, Part A (I-A)” means a supplemental federally funded program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

(6)“Title I-A educational assistant” means an educational assistant employed or contracted in:

(a)A Title I-A targeted assisted school and is paid in whole or in part with Title I, Part A funds; or

(b)A Title I-A school-wide program school; or

(c)A school district expending Title I, Part A funds to provide instructional support to a public school teacher who provides equitable services to eligible private school children.

(7) “Teacher” means a teacher as defined in ORS 342.120 (Definitions for chapter).

#### OAR 581-037-0006 Qualifications of Educational Assistants

(1)All educational assistants or others employed or contracted in that capacity must:

(a)Have a high school diploma or the equivalent;

(b)Be at least 18 years of age; and

(c)Have standards of moral character as required of teachers (OAR 584-005-0005 (Definitions)).

(2)In addition to the qualifications listed in section (1) of this rule, educational assistants providing translation services must have demonstrated proficiency and fluency, knowledge of and the ability to provide accurate translations from a language other than English into English and from English into a language other than English.

(3) In addition to the qualifications listed in section (1) of this rule, Title I-A educational assistants must have:

- (a) Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- (b) Obtained an Associate's (or higher) degree; or
- (c) Met a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate through a formal state, or local academic assessment or para-educator certificate program, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing:
  - (A) Reading, writing, and mathematics; or
  - (B) Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

OAR 581-037-0015

#### Assignment and Direction and Supervision of Educational Assistants

(1) The educational assistant shall assist a teacher or Early Childhood Specialist or Supervisor or related service provider only in a supportive capacity. The role of the educational assistant is adaptable to many support tasks, and nothing in these rules should be interpreted as limiting assistants only to the performance of classroom duties. Educational assistant tasks may include but are not limited to:

- (a) Instructional support — Tasks performed by assistants to supplement students' basic instruction by offering students opportunities to practice and apply what they have learned, including social skills, life skills, and transition skills;
- (b) Clerical support — Tasks such as preparing materials, duplicating and operating audiovisual equipment, which are primarily concerned with the physical arrangement of the learning environment; and
- (c) Student control — Duties such as supervision of students in school buildings, buses, and grounds including but not limited to lunch rooms, and playground areas, assisting with fire drills, monitoring students in hallways, etc.
- (d) Personal care;
- (e) Translation or Parent/Family Involvement activities; and
- (f) Media center or computer laboratory support.

(2)Any educational assistant assigned to instruction-related activities shall work under the supervision of an appropriately licensed teacher (or administrator, Early Childhood Specialist or Supervisor; or related service provider). Supervision means:

(a)The assigned teacher (or administrator, Early Childhood Specialist or Supervisor; or related service provider) plans the instructional activities that the educational assistant carries out;

(b)The assigned teacher (or administrator, Early Childhood Specialist or Supervisor; or related service provider) evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the educational assistant is working; and

(c)The assigned teacher (or administrator, Early Childhood Specialist or Supervisor; or related service provider) provides a supervision plan that includes regular monitoring of the educational assistant’s effectiveness and access to assistance and consultation.

(3)In addition to the supervision requirements under section (2) of this rule, Title I educational assistants must work in close and frequent proximity to the appropriately licensed teacher identified as “highly qualified” as defined by the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

(4)A plan of supervision for the educational assistant shall provide for:

(a)Access to assistance and consultation; and

(b)Regular monitoring of the educational assistant’s performance to determine effectiveness of the assigned tasks and the effect on students and their families

## Pennsylvania



CSPG 101 - Paraprofessional Staff

March 21, 2025

The paraprofessional provides support related to instruction and services for children, youth, and families.

### Assignment

- A paraprofessional provides instructional support under the direction of a properly certified teacher.
- Paraprofessionals may perform non-instructional duties (e.g., monitor study hall, recess, or cafeteria) under the direction of a certified teacher or supervisor and must have access to the appropriate certified teacher or supervisor.

## Special Considerations

- Instructional paraprofessionals employed in a Title I school-wide building or working in a program supported with Title I funds must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Additionally, they must meet ONE of the requirements listed below:
  - An associate degree or higher; or
  - Completed at least two years of postsecondary study (48 credits); or
  - The successful completion of a state or locally developed assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Note: Title I paraprofessionals who serve as translators or who only conduct parental involvement activities must have a secondary diploma or its equivalent, but do not have to meet the additional requirements.
- Special education paraprofessionals must meet one of the following qualifications:
  - An associate degree or higher; or
  - Completed at least two years of postsecondary study; or
  - The successful completion of a state or locally developed assessment

Note: Special Education paraprofessionals must also complete at least 20 hours of staff development activities related to their assignment each school year.

## Additional Clarifications

- Personal care assistants (special education) provide one-to-one support and assistance to a student, including support and assistance in the use of medical equipment (for example, augmentative communication devices; activities of daily living; and monitoring health and behavior). A personal care assistant may provide support to more than one student, but not at the same time. Personal care assistants shall provide evidence of 20 hours of staff development activities related to their assignment each school year. The 20 hours of training may include training required by the school-based access program.
- Educational interpreters (special education) provide students who are deaf or hard of hearing with interpreting or transliterating services in an educational setting. To serve as an educational interpreter, an individual must meet one of the following qualifications:
  - Achieve and provide evidence of a score of 3.5 on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) for the appropriate grade level to which the person has been assigned; or

- Be a qualified sign language interpreter or qualified transliterator under the Sign Language Interpreter and Transliterator Registration Act and its implementing regulations.
- Educational interpreters must also provide evidence of a minimum of 20 hours of staff development activities relating to interpreting or transliterating services annually.
- For further information, please contact [ODHH Home \(pa.gov\)](http://odhh.pa.gov)

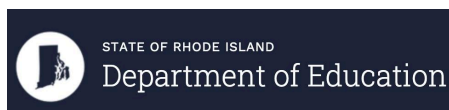
## Restrictions

- Paraprofessional service does not qualify for:
  - Service as a substitute;
  - Purposes of tenure;
  - Professional status; or
  - Permanent certification.
- Paraprofessionals serving as health room aides cannot be directed to engage in health-related activities reserved exclusively for certified school nurse. For additional information on the duties of School Nurse (PK-12), go to [28 Pa. Code Subchapter B. School Nurse Services](#)

## References:

- Section 1111(g)(2)(M) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Section 1111(g)(2)(M) of the ESEA
- 22 Pa. Code §14.105
- 63 P.S. §1725.1—1725.12
- 28 PA Code: Chapter 23 Subchapter B. School Nurse Services

## Rhode Island



### Teacher Assistants

Teacher assistants play an integral role in the schools of Rhode Island.

Teacher assistants, or paraprofessionals, provide instructional and other direct services to students under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher or other certified professional staff. Teacher assistants are required to be trained before they are employed and to engage in ongoing professional development during employment so they can support school improvement and student achievement goals.

### Pre-Employment Training:

This training class is required for most people interested in working as a Teacher Assistant in RI. Please contact individual organizations for their schedule and fees.

Information about some upcoming classes may be posted here but check with specific organizations for their training schedule and fees.

Rhode Island law (RIGL 16-11.2) establishes requirements related to the employment, training and use of teacher assistants. As required by this law, the RI Department of Education (RIDE) has established state standards that identify pre-employment requirements related to preparation required for all entry-level teacher assistants. In addition to state legal requirements, in January 2002, federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act, was signed into law. This law established requirements for the qualifications of teacher assistants, which were extended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015.

A Teacher Assistant is someone (no matter the job title) who provides instructional or other direct services related to the school's curriculum to students (and/or their parents/legal guardian) under the supervision and direction of the classroom teacher or other appropriately certified professional staff. This includes those who:

- Provide one-on-one instructional reinforcement (referred to as tutoring in Title I programs) if such is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher,
- Assist with classroom management, such as by organizing instructional materials,
- Provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory,
- Provide instructional support in a library or media center,
- Provide instructional assistance along with acting as a translator, or
- Provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a highly qualified teacher.

*NOTE:* The RI Department of Education does not certify individual teacher assistants, but sets minimum qualifications that school districts must follow in hiring TAs. Applicants should always check with the district(s) where they want to apply to learn about their specific employment requirements. These are minimum requirements, and districts have the right to make their requirements more stringent.

1. Be of good character;
2. Have a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma;
3. Completion of a Teacher Assistant Pre-Employment Training Program approved by the RI Department of Education (RIDE). Three (3) exceptions to this particular qualification:
  1. Those hired before January 1, 1999
  2. Those with certification as a TA in another state,

3. Those with an associates degree or bachelors degree AND who have completed coursework or other training consistent with the teacher assistant program standards. *It is a district's decision whether coursework or other training is consistent with the teacher assistant program standards.*
4. Meet one (1) of the following requirements:
  1. Successfully pass the ParaPro Assessment. OR
  2. Complete at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education OR
  3. Obtain an associates or higher degree.

## South Carolina



### Requirements for Paraprofessionals

According to Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), all instructional paraprofessionals in Title I schools or targeted assistance programs must complete at least one of the following three requirements:

1. At least two years of study (60 semester hours) at an accredited institution of higher education; or
2. An associate's degree (or higher); or
3. An approved state or local academic assessment that measures the paraprofessional's knowledge of and ability to assist in instruction at the appropriate level. Paraprofessionals may meet the assessment requirement by passing the ParaPro Assessment (ETS.org). The minimum passing score on this test is 456.

S.C. Code Regs. § 43-209 - Support Personnel/Paraprofessional Personnel Positions, Qualifications and Duties

#### B. Paraprofessional personnel positions

1. Each teacher of trainable, orthopedically, emotionally, or visually disabled pupils in a self-contained classroom model shall have a paraprofessional full time, provided that the class has a minimum membership of four pupils.
2. Each teacher of a kindergarten unit shall have a paraprofessional full time.

#### C. Paraprofessional Personnel Qualifications and Duties

1. Paraprofessionals helping with classroom instruction or programs shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. All instructional paraprofessionals must be at least 18 years of age.
  - b. All instructional paraprofessionals must have at least a high school diploma or state equivalency certificate.
  - c. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in a Title I school or a Title I targeted assistance program and who were hired after January 8, 2002, must either
    - (1) hold a two-year associate's degree from an accredited institution, or
    - (2) have completed two years (60 semester hours) of college coursework from an accredited institution, or
    - (3) have passed a state-approved examination of content knowledge and pedagogy.
  - d. Instructional paraprofessionals who work in a Title I school or a Title I targeted assistance program and who were hired before January 8, 2002, must meet the requirements listed in C.1.c. by January 8, 2006.
  - e. All instructional paraprofessionals must work under the direct supervision of a certified teacher.
  - f. All instructional paraprofessionals must participate in preservice and inservice training programs for instructional paraprofessionals.
2. The State Department of Education will maintain an electronic registry of instructional paraprofessionals that indicates whether the instructional paraprofessional has met the requirements listed in C.1.c.

## **South Dakota**



Paraprofessional refers to an individual who works alongside a licensed or certificated educator to assist in providing support to students related to behavior and safety, medical, instruction, and disability specific needs. These services might be class wide, or a paraprofessional might be assigned to an individual child to support their needs in various school settings. A recommendation for a paraprofessional is a significant programmatic decision and one that should only be made after a comprehensive discussion of other options considered and clear documentation of why those options are not appropriate. While some students may temporarily need the support of a one-to-one

paraprofessional to receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), for other students, the assignment of a paraprofessional may be unnecessary and inappropriately restrictive.

### Paraprofessional Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of a paraprofessional can vary widely within each district/Local Education Agency (LEA) due to the needs of the student population at each school site. As such, the IEP teams will have intentionally discussed and documented the role and function of the paraprofessional, which will increase awareness of the roles and responsibilities of those involved with the student. Such documentation also explicitly shows the extent to which paraprofessional support is necessary for each student. The following non-exhaustive list details some examples of behavior/safety/medical/academic responsibilities that a paraprofessional may be assigned under the direction of the supervising teacher:

- Provide pre-teaching instruction,
- Assist during teacher-directed lessons,
- Monitor student during independent work or group activities,
- Prepare curriculum materials as directed by a certified staff member,
- Monitor safety in a variety of settings such as the cafeteria, bus loading area, playground, hallway, or auditorium,
- Implement and reinforce classroom programs,
- Implement and reinforce behavioral management strategies,
- Collect data as directed by a certified staff member,
- Support students with personal care/health needs such as toileting/feeding,
- Support inclusion with non-disabled peers,
- Provide re-teaching to individuals or small groups of students after teacher-directed instruction,
- Monitor student progress in instruction programs and relate findings to supervising teacher.

A paraprofessional may assist in the providing instructional support and the implementation of a behavioral intervention plan. While a paraprofessional may assist in related instructional work, primary instruction must be provided to the student by a certified teacher(s). A paraprofessional should not be used as a substitute for an appropriately developed and implemented behavioral intervention plan or as the primary staff member responsible for implementation of a behavioral intervention plan.

## **Tennessee**

Title 49 - EDUCATION (§§ 49-1-101 — 49-50-1703)

Chapter 5 - PERSONNEL (§§ 49-5-101 — 49-5-5704)

Part 1 - QUALIFICATIONS GENERALLY (§§ 49-5-101 — 49-5-115)

Section 49-5-111 - Educational assistants

- (a) Educational assistants shall have, at a minimum, a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential approved by the state board of education, and shall show demonstrable proficiency in reading and writing skills.
- (b) If a licensed teacher to whom an educational assistant has been assigned is required to be absent from the classroom, the educational assistant may assume responsibility for the classroom in lieu of a substitute teacher. However, no educational assistant shall assume responsibility for the classroom for more than three (3) consecutive school days.
- (c) This section shall not apply to educational assistants hired on or before July 1, 2006.

Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 0520-02-06-.04 - EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT PERSONNEL

(1) Educational Assistants. Educational assistants shall, at a minimum, have a high school diploma, or a high school equivalency credential approved by the State Board, and shall show demonstrable proficiency in reading and writing skills.

(a) Educational assistants who have completed one (1) or more years of college shall be given preference in employment.

(b) Educational assistants shall only be employed in non-teaching positions and shall be subject to direct supervision of licensed teachers when directly involved in the instructional program.

(c) If a licensed teacher to whom an educational assistant has been assigned is required to be absent from the classroom, the educational assistant may assume responsibility for the classroom in lieu of a substitute teacher. However, no educational assistant shall assume responsibility for the classroom for more than three (3) consecutive school days.

(2) Educational Interpreters. All individuals employed by LEAs or charter schools to provide educational interpreting for students who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing must hold a valid Tennessee School Services Personnel license with the appropriate endorsement or must meet the following employment standards:

(a) All non-licensed educational interpreters employed by an LEA or charter school prior to January 1, 2021, shall satisfy the following requirements by January 1, 2021:

1. Obtain a passing score on the written portion of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA); and

2. Obtain a minimum score of 3.0 on the performance assessment portion of the EIPA.

(b) All non-licensed educational interpreters employed by an LEA or charter school on January 1, 2021 or after, shall satisfy the following requirements:

1. Hold at a minimum an associate's degree;

2. Obtain a passing score on the written portion of the EIPA; and

3. Obtain a minimum score of 3.0 on the performance assessment portion of the EIPA.

(c) Compensation of non-licensed individuals providing educational interpreting shall be determined by the LEA or charter school and shall take into consideration the level of preparation, training, and work requirements.

## **Texas**



### **Educational Aide I Requirements**

- must be a high school graduate or hold a General Educational Development (GED) certificate
- have experience working with students or parents as approved by the employing superintendent
  - Experience may be work in church related schools, day camps, youth groups, private schools, licensed day-care centers, or similar experience;
  - or
- be a high school student 18 years of age or older; and
- have a final grade of 70 or better in two or more education and training courses specified in Chapter 127, Subchapter G, Education and Training, for three or more credits verified in writing by the superintendent of the district where the credits were earned. The education and training courses must include:
  - Human Growth and Development, as described in §127.311; or
  - Child Development, as described in §127.317; or
  - Child Guidance, as described in §127.318; or
  - Practicum in Early Learning, as described in §127.320; or
  - Human Growth and Development, as described in §127.323; or
  - Communication and Technology in Education, as described in §127.324; or
  - Instructional Practices, as described in §127.325; or
  - Practicum in Education and Training, as described in §127.326

## Educational Aide I Certification for High School Students

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-issued Educational Aide I certificate is utilized for purposes of awarding industry-based certification (IBC) to qualifying high school students. The rules specific to issuance of the Educational Aide Certificate can be found in Chapter 230. Professional Educator Preparation and Certification, Subchapter E. Educational Aide Certificate. Applicants for an educational aide certificate are subject to the provisions in §230.11(b)(1)-(4) of this title (relating to General Requirements). The completion of the criminal history review, which includes the fingerprinting process is a general certification requirement for all SBEC-issued certificates (e.g., educational aide, intern, probationary, one-year certificate, standard certificate, and emergency permit).

While the current Educational Aide application was not designed to meet the needs of the Educational Aide I certificate for high school students, school districts may utilize the application for such purpose. Students will select the appropriate district in the drop-down list for the employing school district when completing the application. While the district may not actually be employing the students, they must still make the selection for the application to process. TEA understands the dual use of the educational aide application.

## Educational Aide II Requirements

- must be a high school graduate or hold a General Educational Development (GED) certificate
- have satisfied one of the following requirements
  - have two creditable years of experience as an Educational Aide I; or
  - have a minimum of 15 semester hours of college credit with some emphasis on child growth and development or related subject areas; or
  - have demonstrated proficiency in a specialized skill area as determined by the local school district; and
- have experience working with students or parents as approved by the employing superintendent

## Educational Aide III Requirements

- must be a high school graduate or hold a General Educational Development (GED) certificate;
- have satisfied one of the following requirements:
  - have three creditable years of experience as either an Educational Aide I or II; or
  - have 30 semester hours of college credit with some emphasis on child growth and development or related subject areas; and
- have experience working with students or parents as approved by the employing superintendent

## Utah



The term paraprofessional is used for an individual who performs a non-instructional or instructional supporting role in various educational settings. A paraprofessional may give support in a non-instructional role, such as providing parental or guardian involvement activities or in a setting such as a playground or a lunchroom (see Fig. 1 below).

A paraeducator is a paraprofessional who provides instructional support under the direct supervision of a licensed educator or other licensed/certified professional

(Utah Code Ann. § 53F-2-411).

Special education, Title I, and Title III include specific paraeducator requirements and funding. Qualifications, roles, and responsibilities of the paraeducator must meet these requirements.

A paraprofessional or a paraeducator may be referred to as a teaching assistant, aide, instructor, or other similar titles in school districts and charter schools (local education agencies [LEAs]). The term paraeducator is used throughout this manual to guide individuals who provide instructional support in educational settings under the direct supervision of a licensed educator or another licensed/certified professional.

### PARAEDUCATOR AND THE SUPERVISING EDUCATOR ROLES

A paraeducator may serve students on all grade levels from preschool to post-high school. According to Board Rule R277-3241, a paraeducator may be expected to do the following:

- “(a) upon completion of explicit training from appropriately licensed teachers or related service providers, provide individual or small group instructional assistance or tutoring to students as designed by an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider during times when students would not otherwise receive instruction from an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;
- (b) assist with classroom organization and management, such as organizing instructional or other materials;
- (c) provide assistance with supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and support, such as assistive technology devices and services;
- (d) conduct parental involvement activities;
- (e) provide support in library or media centers; or

(f) provide supervision for students in non-instructional settings.” And, according to Board Rule R277-324, a paraeducator may not:

“(a) be responsible for selecting or administering formal diagnostic or psychological instruments or for interpreting the results of those instruments if the paraprofessional's training, licensure, or other forms of certification do not align with the administration and interpretation requirements stated in an instrument's technical manual;

(b) be responsible for selecting programming or prescribing educational activities or materials for the students without the supervision and guidance of an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;

(c) be solely responsible for designing lesson plans;

(d) be assigned to implement elements of an [Individualized Education Program (IEP)] IEP for a student with disabilities without direct training, supervision, and involvement from an appropriately licensed teacher or related service provider;

(e) employed to fulfill the responsibilities that may only be provided by an appropriately licensed and otherwise qualified teacher or related service provider; or USBE Paraeducator Manual (2023)

(f) perform nursing procedures or administer medications without appropriate supervision and training from an appropriately licensed health care professional.”

LEAs are responsible for assigning a licensed educator or another licensed/certified professional to supervise the paraeducator. The supervising educator prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities the paraeducator will implement. The supervising educator also evaluates the students' achievement with whom the paraeducator works. The paraeducator and supervising educator work together in close proximity. To supervise a paraeducator, the supervising educator should have specialized training in providing students with quality educational experiences linked to the Utah Core Standards, Essential Elements, and Early Childhood Standards. These standards provide a framework for quality instruction. They outline for the supervising educator.

## **Vermont**

### **2360.2.13 Personnel Qualifications**

(a) The Vermont Agency of Education has established and maintains qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

(b) Related services personnel and paraprofessionals: The qualifications under subsection (a) include qualifications for related services personnel and paraprofessionals that:

(1) Are consistent with any State-approved or State-recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services;

(2) Ensure that related services personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession meet the requirements of subsection(1) and have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and

(3) Allow paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities.

(c) Policy: In implementing this section, the Vermont Agency of Education has a policy that includes a requirement that responsible LEAs in the State take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.

## **Virginia**

### **8VAC20-671-330. Support staff.**

A. School support personnel, including contractual service providers, shall meet the Board of Education's Licensure Regulations for School Personnel (8VAC20-22) or the requirements of another state or national accrediting agency.

B. Paraprofessionals and other ancillary staff shall be at least 18 years of age (21 years of age preferred), at a minimum hold a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) certificate, have two years of work experience with children or completed two years of coursework in a related field, or upon employment complete within 60 calendar days of hire training specific to the assigned student population

and job duties as they relate to the academic and behavioral progress of students. Such training shall include individualized instruction and student behavior management, including principles and strategies to reduce interfering behavior, build positive skills, and enhance communication of students with autism spectrum disorders.

C. No support staff shall be used as replacement for teachers or related service staff unless they meet the qualifications of the position. D. Support staff who do not meet licensure or certification requirements shall not be given misleading work titles or titles that infer they meet required credentials.

E. Paraprofessionals shall work under the supervision of qualified professional staff.

## Washington



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Updated: September 2023

Paraeducator Certificates

Professional Certification

### Fundamental Course of Study (FCS)

The FCS consists of 12 units equaling 28 clock hours. These 28 clock hours will be offered by the paraeducator's employing school district. This is the base training and is required for applying for all the paraeducator certificates.

### Paraeducator Certificates

#### General Paraeducator Certificate

This certificate is earned by completing 70 clock hours in addition to the FCS. Once earned, this is a lifetime certificate.

#### Subject Matter Certificates-English Language Learner (ELL) and Special Education

Each certificate is earned by completing 20 clock hours in that subject area in addition to the FCS. The 20 clock hours earned toward each Subject Matter Certificate may be used towards the General Paraeducator Certificate. These certificates have a 5-year validity and may be renewed.

#### Advanced Paraeducator Certificate

Clock hours for this certificate can be earned starting on the date the paraeducator is issued their General Paraeducator Certificate, not prior. This certificate requires 75 clock hours related to the duties of an Advanced Paraeducator. This certificate has a 5-year validity and may be renewed.

WAC 392-172A-02090 Personnel qualifications.

(h) Paraeducator staff and aides shall present evidence of skills and knowledge established under the rules of the professional educator standards board, necessary to meet the needs of students eligible for special education services, and shall be under the supervision of a certificated teacher with a special education endorsement, or a certificated educational staff associate or a licensed staff, as provided in (i) of this subsection. Paraeducator staff assigned to Title 1 schoolwide programs shall also meet ESEA standards for paraeducators.

(i) Special education and related services must be provided by appropriately qualified staff. Other staff including general education teachers and paraeducators may assist in the provision of special education and related services, provided that the instruction is designed and supervised by special education certificated staff (or early childhood special education certificated staff, deaf education certificated staff, deaf education with American sign language proficiency certificated staff, teacher of the visually impaired certificated staff), or for related services by a certificated educational staff associate. Student progress must be monitored and evaluated by special education certificated staff or for related services, a certificated educational staff associate.

## West Virginia

Paraprofessional/Intervener

Code Reference §18§-4-8 and WVDE Board Policy 2419

A Paraprofessional is a school staff member who is not a teacher but who assists, supports and works closely with teachers in instructing students.

### JOB DESCRIPTION SUMMARY:

Assumes responsibility for supervising students and providing individual student instruction using basic methods and procedures prescribed for the instructional setting in which he/she works.

#### 12.4. Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate.

12.4.a. General Criteria. A Paraprofessional Certificate may be issued to a candidate who meets the general requirements in accordance with section 9 and the general conditions for issuance established in section 12.4.b. The Paraprofessional Certificate entitles the license holder to be employed in a support position including, but not limited to, facilitating the instruction and direct or indirect supervision of students under the supervision of a professional educator. The Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate remains valid unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked.

12.4.b. Conditions for Issuance. A candidate for a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate is required to submit documentation that they have completed 36 semester hours of postsecondary education reflected on an official seal-bearing transcript or its equivalent in certificates of completion from WVDE's WVLearns courses in the following areas: a minimum of three semester hours each of college/university credit or its equivalent in reading, writing, and mathematical computations; or passing the respective WVBE-required basic skills exam in reading, writing, and mathematics; or meeting an exemption established in section 10. A valid Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) certificate issued by the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) for a candidate who entered the program during or after Fall 2002 is sufficient to satisfy the reading and math if the coursework is approved by the designated official at the WVDE; and, meet the following requirements:

12.4.b.1. General Studies. A candidate must have successfully completed a minimum of six semester hours of college/university credit or its equivalent from the humanities, fine arts, and/or physical, biological, or social sciences. A valid Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist (ACDS) certificate issued by the (USDOL) for a candidate who entered the program during or after Fall 2002 is sufficient to satisfy the general studies course requirements;

12.4.b.2. Special Education. A candidate must have successfully completed a minimum of three semester hours of college/university credit or its equivalent in special education. Documentation of a minimum of

two years of successful experience which included special needs children and a minimum of 10 clock hours of in-service training directly related to special education may be substituted for the college/university credit experience was acquired in a public education classroom setting while the candidate was under direct supervision of a licensed public educator; or has successfully completed the WVLeads Early Childhood Special Needs Inclusion course offered through the WVDE; or holds a valid CDA certificate issued by the Council for Professional Recognition or completion of the CTE ECCAT program; or holds a valid ACDS certificate issued after 2002 by the USDOL;

12.4.b.3. Classroom Management. A candidate must have successfully completed a minimum of three semester hours of college/university credit or its equivalent in classroom management acquired in a public classroom setting or a non-public school accredited through a WVBE-approved accreditation agency in accordance with W. Va. 126CSR13C, Policy 2330, Non-public School Accreditation (Policy 2330). Documentation of a minimum of two years of experience in the successful use of classroom management skills may be substituted for college/university credit if the experience was acquired in the public education classroom setting or a non-public school accredited through a WVBE-approved accreditation agency in accordance with Policy 2330 while the candidate was under direct supervision of a licensed public educator; or hold a valid Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist certificate issued by the USDOL for a candidate who entered the program during or after Fall 2002; or hold a valid CDA certificate issued by the Council for Professional Recognition;

12.4.b.4. Human Growth and Development. A candidate must have successfully completed a minimum of three semester hours of college/university credit or its equivalent in human growth and development or psychology, or hold a valid Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist Certificate issued by the USDOL for a candidate who entered the program during or after Fall 2002; or successful completion of the WVLeads Early Childhood Child Development course offered through the WVDE; or documented completion of the CTE ECCAT program of study; or hold a valid CDA Certificate issued by the Council for Professional Recognition;

12.4.b.5. Electives. A candidate must have successfully completed twelve semester hours of electives related to public instruction or its equivalent. One elective requirement may be met if the candidate holds a valid Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist certificate issued by the USDOL for those who entered the program during/after Fall 2002; or may include completion of WVLeads coursework in early childhood literacy science of reading, and early childhood numeracy equivalent to six semester hours; or holds a valid CDA certificate issued by the Council for Professional Recognition; and,

12.4.b.6. Academic Assessment. A candidate must have met a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate, through a formal state-approved academic assessment that includes, but is not limited to, a measurement of the candidate's subject matter knowledge and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; as well as reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as

appropriate. Paraprofessionals must meet WVBE requirements for the Paraprofessional Certificate. Paraprofessionals who have passed the current state competency exam for aides, administered by a county board of education, and developed (W.Va. Code § 18A-4-8e), is sufficient to meet this requirement; or,

12.4.b.7. Hold a valid out-of-state Professional Teaching Certificate or a valid or expired Professional Teaching Certificate that has been expired for five years or less or its equivalent; fulfills all coursework and, assessment criteria; and be recommended for a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate by the employing county superintendent.

12.4.c. Certification for Grades PK through 3. Candidates who hold a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate endorsed for PK-Adult are eligible to apply for a PK-3 endorsement to their Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate by completing the required WVDE-approved coursework that shall include early childhood literacy science of reading, and early childhood numeracy or WVDE-approved post-secondary coursework equivalent to three semester hours. A person holding a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate without a PK-3 certification is prohibited from being employed in grade 1-3 classrooms.

12.5. Certificate for Paraprofessional Educators. Educational Sign Language Interpreter I and II.

12.5.a. Initial Paraprofessional Certificate Educational Sign Language Interpreter I.

12.5.a.1. General Criteria. An initial Paraprofessional Certificate Educational Sign Language Interpreter I may be issued to a candidate meeting the requirements in section 12.4.a and section 12.4.b; or, section 12.4.b.8 or its equivalent. A passing score on the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment-Written Test (EIPA-WT) satisfies the general conditions for issuance if the candidate submits documentation that they meet the following criteria: completed three semester hours of reading; three semester hours each of special education, human growth and development or psychology, and social studies; and, nine semester hours of electives related to public instruction or its equivalent.

12.5.a.2. Conditions of Issuance. A candidate for an Initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter I is required to submit documentation that they meet one of the following criteria: had a minimum score of 3.00 on the Educational Interpreter Proficiency Assessment (EIPA); holds a valid National Association of the Deaf (NAD) Certification-Level III or higher; a valid Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) Certification; a valid National Interpreter Certification (NIC), or a valid state Quality Assurance Screening (QAS) Level II.

12.5.a.3. Validity Period. An Initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Interpreter that is effective on or after January 1 may be issued as an Initial Paraprofessional Certificate Educational Interpreter valid until June 30 of the following school year. An Initial Paraprofessional Certificate Educational Interpreter may only be renewed twice.

12.5.a.4. Renewal of an Initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter I. A candidate for an initial Paraprofessional Certificate is required to provide documentation that they meet the following criteria: completion of a minimum of 15 clock hours of WVDE-approved professional learning activities; beginning July 1, 2021, completion of trauma-informed best practices; completion of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters requirements; and, be recommended for an initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter I by the employing county superintendent; or, verification of assignment by the county superintendent if the candidate is performing contractual services.

12.5.a.5. Specific Conditions for Issuance. A candidate for a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Interpreter I is required to submit documentation that they meet one of the following criteria: had a minimum score of 3.5 on the EIPA; has a valid NAD Certification-Level IV or higher; a valid RID Certification; a valid NIC; or a valid state QAS Level III; achieved a passing score on the EIPA-Written Test for Content Knowledge; completion of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters requirements; and, be recommended by the employing county superintendent; or verification of assignment by the county superintendent if the candidate is performing contractual services.

12.5.b. Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter II.

12.5.b.1. General Criteria. A Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter II may be issued to a candidate meeting the requirements in section 12.5.a.1 and section

12.5.b.2. A Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate-Educational SignLanguage Interpreter II remains valid unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked.

12.5.b.2. Specific Conditions for Issuance. A candidate for the Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Interpreter II is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: had a minimum score of 3.5 on the EIPA; has a valid NAD Certification-Level IV or higher; a valid RID Certification; a valid NIC; or a valid state QAS Level III; and achieved a passing score on the EIPA-Written Test for Content Knowledge; completion of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters requirements; and, be recommended for a Permanent Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Interpreter II by the employing county superintendent.

12.5.c. Restricted Initial ParaprofessionalEducational Sign Language Interpreter.

12.5.c.1. General Criteria. A candidate for a Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Educational Interpreter must meet all issuance requirements in sections 12.5.a.1 and 12.5.b.2 except for the minimum required assessment scores or certificate levels.

12.5.c.2. Conditions of Issuance. A candidate for a Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Educational Sign Language Interpreter is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: has taken one of the required assessments a minimum of once; submitted a completed Professional Development Plan; agreed to attend all WVDE-approved trainings as required by WVDE; and, be recommended for a Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Educational Sign Language Interpreter Certificate by the employing county superintendent.

12.5.c.3. Validity Period. A Restricted Initial Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter is valid for one school year and may be renewed twice.

12.5.c.4. Renewal of the Restricted Paraprofessional Certificate for Educational Sign Language Interpreter. A candidate for renewal is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: completed a minimum of 15 clock hours of WVDE-approved professional learning activities; beginning July 1, 2021, completion of trauma-informed best practices; submitted a completed Professional Development Plan; completion of the West Virginia Registry of Interpreters requirements; provided assessment scores annually demonstrating progress toward meeting the required scores established in section 12.5.b.2; or if pending receipt of assessment results, the recommendation of the designated WVDE official from the Office of Special Education may be used to demonstrate progress; and, be recommended for renewal of the Restricted Paraprofessional Certificate by the employing county superintendent.

#### 12.6. Aide V. Special Education Assistant Teacher.

12.6.a. General Criteria. A Temporary Authorization for Special Education Assistant Teacher may be issued to a candidate who is currently employed as a special education assistant teacher that has a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE. A Special Education Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization is valid for one school year and, may be renewed twice.

12.6.b. General Conditions for Issuance. A candidate for a Special Education Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: has a minimum of a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE; and the candidate's commitment agreement to complete WVDE-approved coursework.

12.6.c. Renewal of Special Education Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization. A candidate for renewal is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: completion of a minimum of one course of the required WVDE-approved coursework; and be recommended for renewal of the Special Education Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization by the employing county superintendent.

12.7. Aide V. Special Education Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization.

12.7.a. General Criteria. The Special Education Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization remains valid unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked. A Special Education Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization may be issued to a candidate that has a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE; and has completed the required WVDE-approved coursework.

12.8. Aide VI. Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher.

12.8.a. General Criteria. A Temporary Authorization for Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher may be issued to a candidate who is currently employed as a special education assistant teacher that has a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE. A Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization is valid for one school year and may be renewed once.

12.8.b. General Conditions for Issuance. A candidate for a Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization is required to submit documentation that they meet the following criteria: has a minimum of a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE; and, the candidate's commitment agreement to complete WVDE-approved coursework.

12.8.c. Renewal of Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization. A candidate applying for renewal is required to submit documentation that they meet the following requirements: completion of the required WVDE-approved coursework; and be recommended for renewal of the Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Temporary Authorization by the employing county superintendent.

12.9. Aide VI. Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization.

12.9.a. General Criteria. The Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization remain valid unless surrendered, suspended, or revoked. A Behavioral Support Assistant Teacher Permanent Authorization may be issued to a candidate that has a high school diploma, a WVBE-approved high school equivalent, or a degree, if applicable, through an accredited IHE; and, has completed six semester hours of college credit at an institution of higher; or is employed as an aide in a special education program and

has a minimum of a year's experience in special education; and the required WVDE-approved coursework.

## Wisconsin



### Wisconsin Special Education Paraprofessionals

Any person employed by a Wisconsin public school as a special education program aide must hold a Special Education Program Aide License issued by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) or another valid and current DPI license or permit. Special Education Program Aide licenses are valid for five years.

Note that the DPI does not license regular education classroom aides or paraprofessionals. Educators who hold a valid and current DPI license or permit may work as a special education program aide under their DPI license. The valid DPI license or permit is acceptable for state categorical aide reimbursement for districts.

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## Wyoming

Wyoming Department of Education  
Special Programs Unit Reference Guide:

Highly Qualified Providers of Special Education

Paraprofessionals

Under the Federal Regulations, paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised may be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services. 34 C.F.R. Highly Qualified Reference Guide

§300.156(b)(iii). The use of paraprofessionals to assist licensed or certified staff must be closely monitored. The Comments to the Federal Regulations offer the following cautionary guidance:

“However, this provision should not be construed to permit or encourage the use of paraprofessionals as a replacement for teachers or related service providers who meet state qualification standards. To the contrary, using paraprofessionals and assistants as teachers or related service providers would be inconsistent with the State’s duty to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of Part B of the Act are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained. Paraprofessionals in public schools are not directly responsible for the provision of special education and related services to children with disabilities; rather, these aides provide special education and related services to children with disabilities only under the supervision of special education and related services personnel.” 71 Federal Register 46612.

## **District of Columbia**



### **Educational Aides**

The Educational Aide is located in all public schools within the DCPS system. Situated at the center of national government, the goal of DPCS is to provide students with a quality education that prepares them to become future leaders, productive citizens, and individuals who are engaged in the life of the community. The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) has students with disabilities that require the services and supports of a variety of Educational Aides pursuant to their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

1. General Educational Aides provides a variety of duties that involve working with students individually and in small groups, reinforcing daily lessons, motivating learning, assessing progress, assisting with classroom management. The General Educational Aide will receive assignments from the Recruitment and Selection Team in the Office of Talent and Culture (OTC) – Division of Talent Acquisition and Retention.
2. Special Education Aides assists teachers in the development and administration of the instructional plan for students with disabilities, support student’s individual needs such as toileting, feeding, dressing (if necessary), and collect student data when requested.
3. Dedicated Aides provides 1:1 support to their assigned students; and will receive assignments from the Academic Programs Team in the Office of Teaching and Learning (OTL) - Division of Specialized Instruction. There are two types of dedicated aides:
  - Dedicated Instructional Aides provides physical prompting, assistance with daily living skills (including toileting and feeding), assistance with orientation and mobility, applied behavior analysis (ABA), and reinforcement of skills and concepts introduced by a teacher. These aides ensure that their assigned student have maximum engagement with academic instruction and support with self-care.

- Dedicated Behavioral Aides provides crisis prevention, passive physical management, data collection for functional behavioral analysis (FBA) and/or implementation of a behavior interventional plan (BIP), and data collection on the results of positive behavioral supports. These aides help ensure that their assigned students do not engage in dangerous elopement, major property destruction, and/or serious imminent danger to self and/or others.
- 4. English Language Learners (ELL) Aides provides support to students to help monitor their progress in their English language acquisition and the continued development of their home language. ELL Aide assists teaching staff in implementing research-based practices including data collection, how to support each stage of language acquisition, the classroom set-up of culturally and linguistically responsive environments, and language modeling and bridging. The English Language Learners (ELL) Aide will receive assignments from the Academic Programs Team in the OTL - Language Acquisition Division and the Division of Early Childhood Education.
- 5. Early Childhood Education Aides provides hands-on help to children and helps to monitor their progress. The ECE Aide ensures the physical environment is safe and healthy; assists children with daily living skills (including toileting and dressing); helps the teacher observe the skills of individual children, assesses their strengths and the areas that need improvement; organizes and prepares instructional materials; co-supervises the class at all times and when teacher is not present. The Early Childhood Education Aide will receive assignments from the Academic Programs Team in the OTL- Division of Early Childhood Education.
- 6. Speech-Language Pathology Aides support the student's ability to derive full benefits from the district's educational program. The scope of work has impact through the Office of Teaching and Learning in the Public Schools of the District of Columbia. The Speech and Language Pathology Aide works alongside the licensed Speech-Language Pathologist to eliminate, reduce, and/or provide compensatory strategies in the area of speech and language development.

This position is a safety-sensitive position. As a result, throughout employment this position will be subject to the Employee Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy.

The Educational Aide will report to the Principal.

#### Essential Duties and Responsibilities

*The below statements are intended to describe the general nature and scope of work being performed by this position. This is not a complete listing of all responsibilities, duties, and/or skills required. Other duties may be assigned.*

General Educational Aides:

- Collaborates in the implementation of the daily lesson plans by performing tasks that reinforce learning.
- Assists the teacher in regularly observing students and taking anecdotal notes to inform planning, arrangement of small groups, the set-up of the classroom and interest areas, and assessments.
- Helps maintain accurate student records.
- Works closely with students who may require individual or close attention.
- Assists the teacher with the development of individualized programs.
- Reads to students, listens to and writes down their dictations, and models language by conversing with students throughout the day, while also encouraging students' conversations between each other when appropriate.
- Works with groups of students engaged in drawing, writing, centers, or similar work while the teacher is otherwise occupied.
- Assists in the administration of the instructional plan for students with disabilities.
- Addresses multiple intelligences of each student through lesson plans and materials.
- Infuses culturally relevant, anti-bias materials and pedagogical strategies.
- Maintains on-going communication with families.
- Implements a variety of instructional groupings of students (small group and cooperative learning).

#### Special Education Aides:

In addition to the essential duties and responsibilities of the General Educational Aide, the Special Education Aide will:

- Supports student's individual needs such as toileting, feeding, dressing, if necessary.
- Collects student data when requested.

#### Dedicated Instructional Aides:

- Assists in the implementation of the IEPs and/or behavior intervention plans of their assigned students, and remains with their assigned students for the duration of the school day.
- Assists their assigned students with the performance of daily living skills to include but not limited to eating, dressing, toileting, and maintaining personal hygiene.
- Assists their assigned students with safe transitions from one activity to another and one setting to another.
- Assists their assigned students in the effective and efficient use of technology.
- Builds and maintains positive, professional relationships with all educational stakeholders to include students, school staff, and Central Office staff, families, and community partners.

- Maintains required data and anecdotal notes relevant to assigned students, using the data collection instruments provided by DCPS.
- Transfers, along with their assigned students, to other locations within DCPS.
- Requests access to review a copy of their assigned students' IEPs, behavior intervention plans, safety plans and/or any documents necessary to provide appropriate support and demonstrate thorough familiarity with these documents.

#### Dedicated Behavioral Aides:

- Implements crisis prevention and maintains Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence (ABC) data on each incident of maladaptive behavior.
- Implements approved passive physical management only when the student demonstrates serious, imminent danger to self, and/or others or in instances of major property destruction.
- Attends professional development as outlined by the DCPS paraprofessional scope and sequence.

#### English Language Learners (ELL) Aides:

- Assists lead ESL teachers in devising ESL programs according to each students' individual learning capability.
- Gathers teaching materials appropriate to the level and type of lesson in question and distribute them amongst students.
- Assist students in grasping concepts of the English language and help them with their assignments.
- Observes each child to assess skills, interests and needs and use this information to facilitate individual learning and growth.

#### Early Childhood Education Aides:

- Assists the lead teacher in imparting classroom instruction based on predefined curriculum.
- Maintains a safe and organized classroom environment for children.
- Assists the lead teacher in ensuring the physical, social, cognitive and educational excellence of children.
- Provides support to the lead teacher in planning lessons and daily activities based on the principles of child development.
- Ensures development of positive relationships with children with a view to promote self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Observes each child to assess skills, interests and needs and use this information to facilitate individual learning and growth.

### Speech-Language Pathology:

- Conducts speech-language interventions for students as directed by the supervising speech-language pathologist, available both in-person and online.
- Adheres to therapy plans crafted by the speech-language pathologist. .
- Organizes and readies therapy materials and equipment, as well as prepares for review sessions.
- Monitors and records student advancements in achieving goals and communicates these updates to the speech-language pathologist.
- Provides support with documentation tasks.
- Facilitates the transition of students from their classroom to the speech-language therapy environment.
- Applies behavior management strategies that align with holistic educational and engagement principles.
- Undertakes additional responsibilities as needed.

### Qualifications

- Previous exposure to or experience in the education sector a plus.
- Associate's Degree or 48 college credit hours or have successfully passed the ParaProfessional Assessment administered by ETS (with a high school diploma or equivalent) .
- Experienced Speech-Language Pathology Aide must meet the following Education and Experience Requirements: Associate's degree required; bachelor's degree preferred DC Department of Health (DOH) licensure in speech-language pathology assistance (SLP-A) School-based speech therapy experience preferred

## Additional References

- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Pub. L. 114–95.
- 34 CFR §200.59 – Paraprofessionals (Title I, Part A).
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.; 34 CFR §300.156 –Personnel qualifications.
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). (Oct. 4, 2022). Guidance on paraprofessionals and assistants.
- Texas Education Agency (TEA). Working with Paraprofessionals: Meaningful Access Guidance (2023) <https://spedsupport.tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2023-08/working-with-paraprofessionals.pdf>
- Texas Education Agency & Inclusion in Texas Network. Working With Paraprofessionals: A Resource for Educators of Students with Disabilities.
- Texas Education Agency. Working with Paraprofessionals: Field User Guide (Updated April 30,2025).
- Giangreco, M. F., & colleagues. Paraprofessional utilization and inclusion research.
- Texas Education Agency. (n.d.). *Title I, Part A requirements for paraprofessionals*. Texas Education Agency. Retrieved January 31, 2026, from <https://tea.texas.gov/finance-and-grants/grants/essa-program/title-i-part-a-requirements-for-paraprofessionals>
- ERIC Digest EJ890564 – Paraprofessional training, supervision, and role clarity research.
- IRIS Center. (n.d.). *What supports can school leaders provide to develop effective and committed special education teachers?* Vanderbilt University. <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/iris-archived-resources/>