

**GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**2025-2026**

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
**PARAEDUCATOR**



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## SPECIFIC OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities may include:

- Carry out instructional programs and lessons in various learning environments as designated in the instructional plan based on the IEP
- Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the professional
- Reinforce learning with individuals or in small groups
- Assist the professional in observing, recording, and charting behavior
- Assist the professional with crisis problems and ongoing approaches to behavior management
- Participate in building-level duties as assigned by building administrator or designee
- Score tests and papers and assist in ongoing data collection procedures
- Perform clerical tasks, i.e., typing, filing, and duplicating
- Assist in preparation, production, and maintenance of instructional materials
- Maintain and operate instructional and/or adaptive equipment
- Collaborate with the IEP team in an ongoing review of student programs
- Attend IEP or other staff meetings at the request of teacher, therapist, administrator, or parent
- Assist students with mobility and self-care needs

### STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

All staff members shall assume responsibility for assigned supervision duties in a timely manner and in accordance with established school rules and procedures. Such duties may include, but are not limited to, bus, lunchroom, or playground supervision, as well as any additional responsibilities assigned by the building principal or designee.

Staff members are required to fulfill the full scope of their assigned duties and schedules. This includes the instructional day, supervision assignments, co-curricular activities, study halls, and any additional responsibilities as directed by administration. Staff shall adhere as closely as possible to their assigned daily schedules and responsibilities.

Staff members shall seek clarification from the building principal or appropriate administrator regarding any questions related to assigned duties or responsibilities. Attendance at faculty meetings may be required at the discretion of the principal or supervisor.

#### Reporting Requirements

All staff members shall promptly report the following to the school office or an administrator:

- Personal injury involving students or staff
- Serious illness of any student
- Damage to school property
- Serious disciplinary issues or violations of school rules
- Suspected abuse and/or neglect of a student (refer to “Child Abuse and Mandatory Reporting” section)

## Prohibited Conduct

Staff members shall not:

- Use corporal punishment
- Access or disturb another staff member's desk, materials, or workspace without authorization
- Publicly criticize or undermine the professional practices of colleagues
- Leave students unsupervised at any time during the school day
- Contact an absent staff member unless specifically directed to do so by administration

## ABSENCES

### Notification of Absences

It is extremely important that you do the following for any unanticipated absence:

- Notify your supervising teacher. Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Call **268-6014** to notify the Substitute Clerk of your need for a substitute.
  - Leave your name, phone number, school site, scheduled hours and the name of your supervising teacher. Please speak succinctly and clearly. Please keep your message short.
- Notify the secretary at the school at which you are scheduled to work as notification that you will be out. Phone \_\_\_\_\_

For anticipated absences, contact your supervisor in advance to discuss the procedures he or she expects and to complete necessary paperwork.

It is expected that paraeducators attend each of their scheduled shifts on time and every day for the betterment of the students of Great Falls.

### Bereavement Leave

1. Employees shall be allowed up to three (3) days at full pay for absences from school for each occurrence of death in the employee's immediate family or for any other member of the employee's immediate household. This leave allowance is in addition to other leaves allowable in this contract. Immediate family shall be defined as employee's father, step-father, father's brother, father's sister, mother, step-mother, mother's brother, mother's sister, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, step-children, foster children, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent, great grandparent, grandchild, brother's wife, brother's child, sister's husband, sister's child, spouse's father, spouse's mother, spouse's sister, or spouse's brother, step child's spouse.
2. Bereavement leave as defined in Board Policy 5321, may be extended by the use of sick leave with prior approval. The Request for Administrative Approval should be entered in Time Clock Plus.
3. Sick leave may be used for the funeral, memorial service or other related activities of a person outside of the definition in Article XII, (above). Administration may require documentation. The Request for Administrative Approval should be entered in Time Clock Plus.
4. Bereavement leave allowance is not cumulative from year to year. This shall be an emergency leave applicable for the particular occasion only.

### Holidays

Paraeducators are paid for the hours normally worked on these holidays in accordance with

MCA 20-1-305: New Year's Day (January 1); Memorial Day (last Monday in May); Independence Day (July 4 and only if working immediately before and after July 4); Labor Day (first Monday in September); Thanksgiving Day (fourth Thursday in November); and Christmas Day (December 25).

### **Sick Leave**

Paraeducators shall be granted sick leave benefits in accordance with § 2-18-618, MCA. For Paraeducators, "sick leave" means a leave of absence, with pay, for a sickness suffered by an employee or a member of his or her immediate family. The employees' immediate family shall be defined as father, mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son, daughter, step-son, step-daughter, spouse's father, spouse's mother, grandchildren, grandparents, brother's wife, sister's husband, spouse's sister, spouse's brother, child's spouse, step child's spouse.

Paraeducators are not entitled to be paid for sick leave until they have been continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

A Paraeducator who terminates employment with the District is entitled to a payment equal to one-fourth (1/4) of the accumulated sick leave at the Paraeducator's hourly rate. Paraeducators are only eligible for this payment after being continuously employed by the District for ninety (90) days.

Abuse of sick leave is cause for disciplinary action or dismissal.

### **Vacation**

Paraeducators shall accrue annual vacation leave benefits in accordance with §§ 2-18-611, 2-18-612, 2-18-614 through 2-18-617 and 2-18-621, MCA. Nothing in this policy guarantees approval of the granting of specific days as vacation leave in any instance. Each request will be judged by the District in accordance with staffing needs. Paraeducators who have worked for the District less than six (6) calendar months will accrue vacation benefits, but cannot use them until after six (6) calendar months.

Annual leave time accrued as per state law and that not used at the time of termination shall be paid to the Paraeducator at the Paraeducator's hourly rate if the Paraeducator has been employed by the District for six (6) calendar months.

Use of vacation must be requested in advance in Time Clock Plus.

### **BREAKS AND LUNCH**

Breaks and lunch must be arranged with the supervising teacher. The time will be dependent on the classroom and building circumstances. Lunch breaks must be clocked as a meal out and meal in on Time Clock Plus and are not included in work hours.

### **CLOCKING IN/CLOCKING OUT AND TIME CLOCK PLUS (TCP)**

Paraeducators are to follow building procedures for clocking in at the start of the shift and clocking out at the conclusion of the shift. Clocking in and out indicates the para's actual physical presence and therefore must be done exclusively by the employee. The TCP must coincide exactly with physical presence or with leave taken. Falsifying TCP will not be tolerated and will result in discipline or discharge.

### **COMPENSATION**

The Board shall determine the salary and wages for classified personnel. See Appendix D for the 25-26 wage schedule.

Employees will move from Step A to Step B on the salary schedule on hire effective date (July 1) after working during the previous school year as a Paraeducator. Employees will move from Step B to Step C on the salary schedule on hire effective date (July 1) after working during the previous five school years as a Paraeducator.

Payday for Paraeducators shall be the last working day of each month. If payday falls on a holiday or weekend, the last day worked prior to the holiday or weekend will be considered payday.

## **RETIREMENT PROGRAMS**

Paraeducators shall participate in retirement programs under the Federal Social Security Act and the Teachers' Retirement System in accordance with state retirement regulations.

## **EVALUATION**

Supervision and evaluation of Paraeducators is intended to be conducted in a positive and helpful manner, with the intent of improving performance. Paraeducators will be evaluated by the Paraeducator's building administrator or special education coordinator (with input from your supervising teacher). The evaluation process includes scheduled evaluations, on forms applicable to the job classification and description, and day-to-day appraisals.

The administrator/coordinator shall provide a copy of the completed evaluation to the Paraeducator and shall provide an opportunity to discuss the evaluation. The original should be signed by the Paraeducator and filed in the Personnel File at the Human Resource Office. If the staff member refuses to sign the evaluation, the administrator/coordinator should note the refusal and submit the evaluation.

## **HIGHLY QUALIFIED REQUIREMENTS**

All Paraeducators with instructional duties must be highly qualified in the areas of reading, writing and math. In order to be highly qualified, a Paraeducator must demonstrate one of the following:

- Completion of at least two (2) years of study (minimum of 48 semester credits) at an accredited institution of higher education with evidence of successful coursework in reading, writing and math (proof at time of hire required);
- Obtainment of any Associate's or higher degree (proof at time of hire required); or
- The knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, or mathematics or the instruction of the readiness of these subjects as demonstrated by a rigorous standard of quality through a formal local academic assessment. This will be accomplished by taking a proctored on-line assessment (to be passed within 30 days of hire).

For more information about highly qualified attainment, please contact Keith Davey with the Adult Education Program at 771-5107 or [keith\\_davey@gfps.k12.mt.us](mailto:keith_davey@gfps.k12.mt.us).

A 12-month probationary period is applicable to Paraeducators. A Paraeducator may be discharged during the probationary period for any or no reason.

## **SUBSTITUTING**

At times, Paraeducators may be asked to substitute for the special education teachers within their building assignment. This is done through a pre-determined process that the special education teacher is responsible for. If a Paraeducator is assigned the substitute teaching duties, the Paraeducator must call the Sub Clerk at 268-6014 in order to secure a Paraeducator substitute for themselves.

## **DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE**

Paraeducators who fail to fulfill their job responsibilities or follow the reasonable directions of their supervisors or who conduct themselves on or off the job in ways that affect their effectiveness on the job or in other such

ways that the law determines to be good cause shall be subject to discipline. Behavior, conduct or action which may institute disciplinary action or dismissal may include, but is not limited to, reasonable job-related grounds based on a failure to satisfactorily perform job duties, disruption of the District's operation, or other legitimate business reason. (See Board Policy 5255 for more information.)

## **PARAEDUCATOR RESOURCE INFORMATION**

### **LEGAL AUTHORITY**

#### **Montana Administrative Statutes and Rules (2001):**

Recognize a school's employment of a teacher and aide (Paraeducator) or instructional assistants and set forth the responsibilities in Montana schools. It states that instructional assistants do not need to be certified, but supervision is required as follows:

- a) Instructional aides assigned, due to classroom size or diversity must be under direct supervision of a certified teacher. This means that the aide must be responsible to a certified teacher who has the legal authority for instruction and assessment of students. The supervising teacher must be available while the aide is fulfilling his/her responsibilities and must not be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time.
- b) Instructional aides assigned to assist students with special education needs must 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 aide and not to delegate any activity to the instructional aide that requires professional skill, knowledge, and judgment.
- c) Instructional aides hired to assist students in gaining specialized knowledge not generally available from a properly endorsed teacher shall be supervised by a teacher certified at the proper level. This certified teacher is responsible for instruction and assessment of students and must not be simultaneously assigned to another teaching duty or preparation time.

#### **Federal Statutes and Regulations of IDEA Related to Paraeducators and Assistants**

Paraeducators and assistants are allowed who are appropriately trained and supervised, and in accordance with state law, regulations, 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.

All states are required through their State Improvement Plan and Comprehensive System for Professional Development (CSPD) to indicate how the state will address the identified needs for in-service and preservice preparation to ensure that all personnel who work with children with disabilities will obtain the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

#### **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**

- 1) In general, each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall ensure that all Paraeducators hired after the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and working in a program supported with funds under this part shall have:
  - o Completion of at least two (2) years of study (minimum of 48 semester credits) at an accredited institution of higher education with evidence of successful coursework in reading, writing and math (proof at time of hire required);
  - o Obtainment of any Associate's or higher degree (proof at time of hire required); or

- The knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, or mathematics or the instruction of the readiness of these subjects as demonstrated by a rigorous standard of quality through a formal local academic assessment. This will be accomplished by taking a proctored on-line assessment (to be passed within 30 days of hire) after completing a preparation course.
    - For more information about highly qualified attainment, please contact Jan Lovec with the Adult Education Program at 771-5107 or jan\_lovec@gfps.k12.mt.us.
- 2) Exceptions for Translation and Parental Involvement Activities Shall not apply if the person who provides services primarily to enhance the participation of children under this part by acting as a translator or whose duties consist solely of parental involvement activities.
  - 3) General Requirements for All Paraeducators--Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall ensure that all Paraeducators working in a program supported with funds under this part, have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
  - 4) Duties of Paraeducators-- A Paraeducator may be assigned:
    - a) To provide one-on-one and small group tutoring for eligible students;
    - b) To assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional or other materials, reteaching, reminding, redirecting, and modeling appropriate student behaviors;
    - c) To provide assistance in all school settings such as a computer laboratory, library/media center, hallways, general education classrooms, special education classrooms, recess, etc.
    - d) To act as a translator;
    - e) To monitor and support medical and physical needs of students through monitoring, toileting, feeding, wheelchair transfers, etc.
    - e) To provide instructional services to students in accordance with the following additional limitations:
      - i) May not provide any instructional service to a student unless the Paraeducator is working under the direct supervision of a teacher consistent with Section 1119; and
      - ii) May assume limited duties that are assigned to similar personnel who are not working in a program supported with funds under this part, including duties beyond classroom instruction that do not benefit participating children, so long as the amount of time spent on such duties is the same proportion of total work time as prevails with respect to similar personnel at the same school.
  - 5) Use of Funds -A local educational agency receiving funds under this part may use such funds to support ongoing training and professional development to assist teachers and Paraeducators in satisfying these requirements.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION DISABILITY CATEGORIES**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) recognizes 13 disability categories. In order for children to be served by special education in school they must meet the criteria set out by the state for a specific disability category (or categories, if they meet the criteria for more than one) **AND** they must need special education services to allow them to progress academically. Some children may have a disability but not need special education.

### **Autism**

A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication, social interaction, generally evident before age 3, and adversely affects a student's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are:

- Engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements
- Resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines
- Unusual responses to sensory experiences

The term does not apply if a student's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has a serious emotional disturbance.

### **Child with a Disability**

Any child ages 3, 4, or 5 who has evidence of a lack in developmental progress.

### **Cognitive Delay**

Significant sub average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

### **Deaf-Blind**

Both deafness or hearing impairment and visual impairment and severe communication problems are present that significantly restrict the student's ability to communicate and participate in educational programs solely for students with deafness or visual impairments. Written documentation includes the existence of a hearing impairment, deafness and visual impairments, significant deficits in speech-language performance, and the impact impairments on other developmental and educational problems so severe that the multiple disabilities require special education and related services.

### **Deafness**

A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child's hearing is nonfunctional for the purpose of educational performance.

### **Developmental Delay**

A student who is at least three years old and not yet nine years old who meets criteria through assessment for deficits in at least one of the following areas...adaptive skills, communication, social emotional, cognitive, or physical.

### **Emotional Disturbance**

A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics to a marked degree and over a long period of time that adversely affects educational performance: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances and or a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The category of emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The category does not include social maladjustment, unless it is determined that the child also has an emotional disturbance.

### **Hearing Impairment**

An impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance, but that is not included within the definition of deafness.

### **Orthopedic Impairment**

A physical disability that negatively affects a child's educational performance such as impairments caused by congenital anomaly (absence of or malformed limb, member), impairments caused by disease (poliomyelitis or bone fractures), and impairments from other causes (amputations, cerebral palsy).

### **Other Health Impairment**

Limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems, such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle-cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

### **Specific Learning Disability**

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; cognitive delay; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages, which includes them not having the opportunity to learn.

### **Speech/Language Impaired**

A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, or a language or voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's interpersonal relationships or educational performance.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury**

This term refers to damage to the brain that produces impairment of cognitive abilities, speech, behavior or emotional control, or physical functioning, substantially limiting the student's functional or psychosocial ability or both and the student's ability to learn or participate in educational programs. Traumatic brain injury is not appropriate if the disability is primarily due to a visual or hearing impairment, cognitive delay, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural or economic factor or the injury to the brain is congenital, degenerative, or caused by birth trauma.

### **Visual Impairment**

An impairment, after correction, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes partial blindness and blindness.

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION TERMINOLOGY AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Assistive Technology**

Any item, piece of equipment or product system that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

### **Child Find**

A free service for early identification of preschool-age children (birth to five) suspected of having a developmental disability.

### **ESY (Extended School Year)**

A program available for a portion of the summer to students ages 3-21 who require continuous intervention or will experience unacceptable regression of skills over an extended period of time.

### **ET (Evaluation Team)**

A group of individuals that determines whether a student meets the state criteria for a disability and is eligible for special education and related services provided in the public schools.

### **FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)**

Provided at public expense under public supervision and direction an educational program designed to meet the needs of a student with a disability.

### **Homebound Program**

Provides instruction to students K-12 who are unable to attend school due to illness, disability or emotional crisis. A certified teacher provides instruction.

### **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

A law to protect students and parents involved in the special education process. Requires public schools to have a practical method to locate, evaluate and identify children who have a disability and need special education services and provide services necessary for a student with a disability to make academic progress.

### **IEP (Individualized Education Plan)**

A specific plan including goals and objectives written/reviewed annually that reflect a particular child's education while in special education.

### **IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan)**

A specific plan for a young child (birth to 3) and his/her family to meet the needs they have as a family and child with a disability. This document helps to ensure a smooth transition from early intervention services into the public school system.

### **LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)**

The environment(s) that allows a student with a disability to participate and demonstrate knowledge in the most typical manner.

### **OPI**

Office of Public Instruction, located in Helena, Montana.

### **Related Service**

Supportive services as are required for a child with a disability to benefit educationally, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, as well as orientation and mobility training.

### **Resource Program**

Provides special education services to students who benefit from general education with modifications and/or require additional instruction in a specific academic area. Resource programs are provided at all elementary, middle and high schools in Great Falls.

### **Self Contained Program**

Provides services for students needing more intensive support than a resource program can provide. Programs exist for students with moderate needs and for students with more severe/profound needs. Focus of the program may include language development, academics, life and social skills. Self contained programs are available at the elementary, middle and high school levels in Great Falls.

### **Special Education**

Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

Paraeducators are members of an educational team. As such, they maintain ongoing relationships with their teaching colleagues, therapist supervisors, parents, and many other persons residing in the community. What binds those relationships is an expectation of trust that each person will perform his/her duties to the best of his/her ability following professional and ethical standards.

The philosophy and goals of the school must be understood and reflected in the everyday working experiences of the Paraeducator. By virtue of employment in the school, they become representatives of the school and its educational program. Their interaction with the community, both on-and off-school hours, requires an extreme degree of professional sensitivity. This not only extends to the confidentiality of school records, but to student testing results and family information. This is particularly true for Paraeducators because they maintain daily contact with students and their access to extremely personal academic and social behavior information is greatly enhanced, which necessitates their sharing confidential information only with their supervising teacher(s) or therapy supervisor and those school personnel directly involved with a student's educational program.

Further, the Paraeducator must refrain from airing school problems between and among staff, discussing personalities of administrators, teachers, and staff outside of the school environment, discussing administrative, interdepartmental, and interschool problems in the presence of students, and discussing problems with persons who are not part of the educational team.

Under the direction of the supervising teacher or therapy supervisor, the management of student behavior should be fair to all the students and consistent with needs of the individual students as well as appropriate behavior, applicable rules and principles as determined by the school's responsible authorities.

Just as Paraeducators should refrain from expressing differences of opinion or dissatisfaction of school policy or procedures with the community or parents, the same rule applies of refraining to engage in similar discussions with or in the presence of students and their families.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is a very important issue when delivering special education services. The special education Paraeducator, by virtue of the position, has access to a wealth of sensitive information pertaining to individual students. All such information is privileged and confidential, and correspondingly must be managed with extreme care. Confidentiality means that you will not speak about students to **anyone** who does not have a need to know about that student. This includes the fact that the child is served in special education, as well as any other information specific to that student or his/her family situation. To encourage accountability to confidentiality, all team members may be required to sign off on an agreement to maintain confidentiality. The specific areas of confidentiality within the special education programs are:

### **IEP (Individualized Education Plan/Program)**

The IEP becomes a part of the student's special education records and is placed in a locking filing cabinet. Only persons with a legitimate educational interest can review these records. When these records are removed from the file, the document must be signed and dated, and the reason for reviewing the records must be documented. Some special education departments encourage Paraeducators and speech assistants to read the file, but only if there is a legitimate need to know pertinent information that may affect their working relationship with the student. Having access to this IEP information goes with the understanding the information is to be treated as privileged and a matter of confidentiality.

### **Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings**

The Paraeducator may be asked to attend IEP meetings for students with whom they work. At these meetings, the Paraeducator may be asked to share information regarding the student in the classroom environment. At times, parents may share personal information that assists with programming, but is not documented in the IEP. This information parents share during an IEP meeting is also confidential even though it may not become a part of the official IEP minutes or records.

## **The School Special Education Program**

The school special education program is usually very busy as so many people are involved in determining an appropriate education for a student with a disability. Conversations and consultations frequently take place between team members. Members may include school social workers, school psychologists, school health nurses, and outside consultants. Many school buildings do not have private conference rooms, so conversations and meetings are held in various school areas. These comments and conversations, if overheard, are confidential and should not be discussed with others or in the presence of students.

## **General Education Classroom**

In the past, general education professionals were accustomed to working alone in the classroom setting for the majority of the day. Not all teachers are comfortable with another adult in the classroom assigned by the IEP team. It takes time to build a trust relationship and a confidence base with the classroom teacher. The Paraeducator's role may be to support the special education students in the classroom. The Paraeducator must not discuss specific classroom or student situations with other people not having a legitimate educational need to know.

## **Parents**

Paraeducators will have frequent contact with parents in the school setting and in the community. It is important to remember that confidentiality applies in the community at large, as well as the schools. In the past, lawsuits have been initiated by parents on behalf of students due to this breach of confidentiality. Conversations pertaining to specific students have been overheard in public areas. The best way to avoid any such confrontation is to respect the confidentiality of each student. Conversations regarding specific students must be confined to the school setting and occur only with adults directly and legitimately involved with the student. You will want to discuss with your supervising teacher/therapist what their expectations of your role in referring parents back to them for specific information regarding their child's progress in school.

This is not merely to act in accordance with school policy or state special education regulations, but it is a legal mandate pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. This law prohibits information disclosure to anyone, other than parents and school persons who have a legitimate educational interest without parent consent. The law is intended to assist in safeguarding the legal rights of both students with disabilities and their parents. Being aware of the restrictions and protection provided by the law will enable Paraeducators to be more responsible in carrying out their prescribed duties.

## **What Confidentially Stands For:**

**C**ontrol information about the students

**O**nly share information with those who have a need to know and who have proper authorization

**N**ever discuss school information regarding students while attending social events

**F**orward inquiries regarding students to teachers and supervisory personnel if you are approached for confidential information

**I**nteract with those who inquire in a manner in keeping with your responsibilities

**D**on't discuss situations in the staff lounge with staff that have a need to know while others are present

**E**xplanations for not discussing a student are easier than explanations for inappropriately divulging confidential information

**N**ot sharing is caring

Think about privacy

It's important that things that happen at school stay at school

Appropriate information exchange carries with it responsibility

Learn how to handle inquiries in positive, courteous, and confidential ways

Identify acceptable ways that the necessary people can be informed

Treat confidential information as if your job depends on it-it does!

You are part of positive public relations for schools.

Confidentiality is a cornerstone. Protect it! (OPI Paraeducator Handbook, 2002)

## **DO'S AND DON'TS**

The Paraeducator may:

- Be left alone in the classroom for short periods of time when the supervising teacher/therapist is away. The supervisor remains responsible for the classroom at all times and must remain accessible.
- Work without direct supervision with individuals or groups of students.
- Have specific instructional and management responsibilities for students.
- Be involved in student planning.
- Support the integration of students with disabilities into general education programs.

The Paraeducator may not:

- Substitute for a certified teacher, unless district criteria are met.
- Independently teach new concepts and skills.
- Assume primary responsibility for working with individual students.
- Be assigned to attend student ET or IEP meetings in lieu of the supervising teacher.
- Be given primary responsibility for teaching general education curriculum to students with disabilities.

## **SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO ASK**

Here are some suggested questions to ask when first on the job or at the beginning of each school year:

- What are my regular and special duties?
- What records am I responsible for keeping?
- What special services are available to the classroom and the school in which I work?
- What schedules am I responsible for following?
- What emergency provisions apply to my situations?
- When do students arrive? When do they leave?
- Where and when will students in your classroom play?
- What are the most significant playground regulations?
- For what lunchtime activities will I be responsible?
- Where are the supplies kept and how are they obtained?
- What equipment is available and how is it obtained?
- What is the line of communication and authority I am to follow?
- If I am responsible for working with more than one teacher, how is my time divided?

- What pupil records are available to me?
- To whom should I direct questions concerning school policy?
- With whom should I discuss a problem concerning relationships?
- What should my response be when parents raise questions concerning their child's functioning in the classroom?
- What is expected of me in terms of student management?
- What course should I follow if I feel I do not have enough to do?
- How does the teacher or therapist I work with view the teacher or therapist/Paraeducator relationship?

### **Appendix A— 2025-2026 Wage Schedule**

	Paraprofessional	Paraprofessional +.10	Paraprofessional +.20	Paraprofessional + .30
A-1	\$16.78	\$16.88	\$16.98	\$17.08
B-2	\$17.18	\$17.28	\$17.38	\$17.48
B-3	\$17.18	\$17.28	\$17.38	\$17.48
B-4	\$17.18	\$17.28	\$17.38	\$17.48
B-5	\$17.18	\$17.28	\$17.38	\$17.48
C-6	\$17.64	\$17.74	\$17.84	\$17.94

Employees will move from Step A to Step B on the salary schedule effective date (July 1) after working during the previous school year in the same position.

Employees will move from Step B to Step C on the salary schedule effective date (July 1) after working during the previous 5 school years in the same position.