



West Orange Public Schools
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West Orange Public Schools & Edustaff Paraprofessional Parent FAQ

Hello West Orange Families! This FAQ document is designed to answer questions that have come from families regarding the district's transition to Edustaff regarding paraprofessional services. It will be updated as further questions are submitted to and addressed by the Department of Special Services. We thank you in advance for your patience and flexibility, and wish you and your families a wonderful summer!

Parent Questions Regarding Paraprofessional Outsourcing

Staffing & Qualifications

Question: How does the district ensure agency staff are properly trained BEFORE working with students?

Answer: Agency paraprofessionals will be trained before, during, and after their arrival in the District in order to be made aware of district procedures and protocols. Paraprofessionals will also receive training from District staff and how to work best with students with IEPs. This is no different than any new paraprofessional that would join the district prior.

Question: Will agency paras receive training specific to our district's programs, behaviors, communication systems, and student needs?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are they/will they be trained in de-escalation, toileting, feeding, medical support, or AAC devices, if needed?

Answer: Paraprofessionals will be trained before, during, or after their arrival in the district in the above areas if needed.

Question: Will agency staff have access to IEPs? Frontline or any district websites?

Answer: Yes.

Consistency & Student Support

Question: How will the district ensure consistency for students who rely on routine and familiar staff?

Answer: Agency paraprofessionals will be assigned to students and identified as the consistent and ongoing paraprofessional throughout the upcoming school year. Adjustments will be made based on data collected and assessment/evaluation completed by district administration. This is no different than in prior school years.

Question: What happens if an agency paraprofessional calls out or leaves suddenly?

Answer: Building administration would seek to provide coverage as they always do. The District will also work with the agency to provide a replacement as soon as possible, whether it is a short-term absence or a long-term absence. As it stands now, daily absences are covered to the best of our ability as a school and district and that will continue to be the case.

Question: Will students have the same para regularly, or will substitutes rotate frequently?

Answer: The expectation is that students who have a paraprofessional will have the same paraprofessional regularly.

Question: How does the district plan to minimize disruptions for students with IEPs and behavioral or sensory needs?

Answer: As in any school year, the district plans to have consistency of its paraprofessionals throughout buildings and programs, and we'll seek to provide coverage if necessary.

Special Education & IEP Compliance

Question: Will there be assigned long term paras?

Answer: Yes for the duration of the school year.

Question: When will the parents be notified of the assignment or if the assignment has changed?

Answer: As in any other school year, building and district administration staff paraprofessionals annually. We do not share the paraprofessional assignments/schedules with parents/guardians. Staffing is based on IEP needs, classroom needs, classroom sizes. When a student receives 1-1 paraprofessional support, the case manager may share the specific information on who the paraprofessional is with parents/guardians, depending on the specific student situation, once the school year begins, as he/she is supporting the student in his/her academic program and communicating/collaborating with the parent/guardian.

Supervision & Accountability

Question: Who directly supervises agency paraprofessionals — the agency or the district or both?

Answer: Building and district administration will directly supervise and evaluate agency paraprofessionals.

Question: How are performance concerns addressed?

Answer: Building and district administration address concerns with the staff member and if necessary involve the agency to address matters as well.

Question: What is the process for reporting concerns about an agency staff member?

Answer: Parents/families can contact the building principal with concerns about an agency staff member. Those concerns will be immediately investigated and followed through with the staff member.

Question: Can a teacher or parent request a replacement if a paraprofessional is not working well for a student?

Answer: Parents/families may request a replacement if a paraprofessional is not working well for a student, but the final decision rests with the district to make a change.

Parent-Focused Questions

Question: What measures are being taken to ensure students continue receiving stable, high-quality support?

Answer: The district is working very closely with the agency to ensure that students receive stable, high quality support. Paraprofessionals will be selected which meet the district's criteria and expectations based on the needs of the students and the expectations of the school programs.

Question: How will the district evaluate whether outsourcing is successful for students?

Answer: The district will evaluate through a collection of data through observation, evaluation, and collection of feedback from building/district administrators and teaching staff.

Question: Will the district contract with the agency be made public or will we have to formally request it?

Answer: The district currently has an existing contract with Edustaff for substitute staffing services through 2027. As part of that existing partnership, the district expanded the scope of services to include full-time paraprofessional staffing. Contracts approved by the Board of Education are public records and may be accessed through the district's standard public records process.

Question: What specific safeguards are being put in place to ensure students' educational, behavioral, and emotional needs are consistently met during this transition?

Answer: The District is working very carefully with the agency in the onboarding process of paraprofessionals. Also, the district has provided the agency with job descriptions and skills required so that paraprofessionals selected meet the standards and expectations held by the school district. Paraprofessionals will be carefully selected based upon their skill-set, experience, and disposition. Consultation will be done with staff and administration that already work with the students.