GRAND RAPIDS
— AREA SCHOOLS —
Resilience · Readiness · Excellence

EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

2026/2027 Handbook

— Table Of Contents —

Section One - District Procedures
Absences
School Calendar
Hours of Work
Pay Periods
Trainings
Building Rules, Emergency Procedures, and Orientation
Section Two - ESP Roles & Responsibilities
Confidentiality in Special Education
ESP Roles and Responsibilities
Team Member Roles at a Glance
Positive Behavior Interventions
Vulnerability and Mandated Reporting
Third Party Billing/MA Billing
Basic First Aid and OSHA Universal Precautions
Section Three - Special Services Information
FAPE and IDEA
Qualifying for Special Education Services
Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)
MN Disability Criteria
Related Services
Student Support Services
General Principles and Strategies for Interacting with Students
Classroom Modifications and Adaptations
Section 4: Student Observation and Data Collection
Observing and Keeping Good Data
Section 5: Professionalism and Ethical Practices
Professionalism and Ethical Practices
Section 6: ESP Specific Procedures
Feedback
Direction of Work and Supervision
Probationary Period
Realignment Procedure

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— Section 1 —
District Procedures

This handbook is an operational reference for Educational Support Professionals (ESPs). It does not replace the current collective bargaining agreement, Board policies, official job descriptions, student IEPs or health and safety plans, or applicable law. When sources differ, the controlling agreement, policy, plan, or law governs. Questions should be directed to the supervising teacher, building administrator, Human Resources, Director of Special Services, or licensed school nurse, as appropriate.

Absences:
ISD 318 staff access our automated substitute calling system referred to as Red Rover. You will be given a username and password to report your absences. Pre-approval must be given by your supervisor for personal leave requests. Please follow the instructions to ensure your position will be covered while you are absent. Pay particular attention to the process for last minute emergency absences.

School Calendar:
The ESP calendar will follow the Grand Rapids Area Schools Student Calendar – your days of work will be the days that students attend school. Changes may be made to your calendar based on need, which will be coordinated by the building administrators and Special Services. Refer to your contract under work year/day for more information.

Hours of Work:
Hours of work depend on an individual's assignment and the number of hours for which you have specifically been hired. Your duty hours will be set by your supervising teacher and/or building administrator.

Pay Periods:
Grand Rapids Area Schools pay periods are the 15th and 30th of every month. Questions regarding pay periods and pay checks can be directed to Payroll at 327-5710.

Timekeeping, Breaks, Overtime, and Work Injuries:
- Accurately record all time worked. Off-the-clock work is not permitted.
- Obtain approval before working beyond scheduled hours or changing an assignment, except when immediate action is necessary to protect safety. Report any emergency deviation promptly.
- Take assigned breaks and meal periods according to the schedule. Notify the supervising teacher or administrator if a required break cannot be taken.
- Immediately report student or employee injuries, accidents, exposures, and safety hazards to the building administrator and school nurse, as applicable, and complete required documentation.

Trainings:
Minnesota Statute 121A.642 describes the School District's Responsibilities for ESP training and development. Grand Rapids Area Schools will provide required training for all ESPs: These trainings include:
- Yearly annual notifications that cover several required content areas
- 3 Hours of District training to review topics required by MN statute during workshop week
- 3 Hours job specific training during workshop week
- 5 Hours job specific training throughout the school year
- READ Act training, as assigned: ESPs and other instructional support staff who assist with reading instruction or intervention complete district-approved, evidence-based literacy training applicable to their role under Minn. Stat. § 120B.123. The assigned course and duration may vary by role.

ESPs that are new to the district will also receive:
- 4 hour district orientation

Building Rules, Emergency Procedures, Orientation
The directing teacher and building administrator will provide building rules, schedules, communication procedures, and emergency information. Before independently supervising students, ESPs must know how to request assistance and locate evacuation, lockdown, severe-weather, medical-emergency, elopement/missing-student, and reunification procedures. Ask for clarification whenever expectations are unclear.
Questions to ask during the 3 hours with your directing teacher:

1. Where do I park?
2. Where do I put my coat, purse, lunch, etc?
3. Do I have a mail-box? How do I know what's going on?
4. Where is the copy machine? Do I make my own copies or does someone do it for me?
5. Where are supplies kept?
6. What is the lunch procedure? When do the kids go to lunch? When do I go to lunch?
7. When do I take breaks?
8. How do I acquire a substitute? Do I find one or does someone find one for me?
9. What is the school discipline policy? Where can I get a copy?
10. What are the procedures for evacuation, lockdown, severe weather, medical emergencies, elopement or a missing student, reunification, and mandated reporting?
11. Where can I get a list of staff members in the building?
12. Who am I responsible to? What is my channel of communication?
13. Do I need to make a substitute folder?
14. If joining a general education class, where do I sit? Should I be in the back or right next my student?
15. Which student records and plans am I authorized to access, where are they located, and how do I protect them?
16. What should I do when a parent asks about a student's performance, services, behavior, or program?

— Section 2 —
Roles and Responsibilities

Maintaining Confidentiality for Students
Confidentiality and data security are essential responsibilities of every ESP. Student education data may be accessed, used, and shared only for a legitimate educational purpose, through district-approved methods, and with personnel authorized to receive it. These responsibilities apply to spoken, written, electronic, photographed, and observed information including:

- The results of formal and informal tests;
- Behavior in classrooms and other education settings;
- Academic progress;
- Family circumstances and family relationships;

Students and families have privacy rights under federal and Minnesota law. Share only the minimum information necessary with school officials who have a legitimate educational interest or with another person when disclosure is authorized by law, district policy, or parent/guardian consent.

Always ask yourself .....

- What information would you want discussed with others regarding your child?
- What would you like said about yourself as a parent?
- What would you like said about your family, your values, your lifestyle?

<u>Confidentiality Pointers</u>

- Avoid using names if you are asked about your job.
- Refer parent, media, or community questions about a student to the special education teacher or building principal.

- Do **NOT** share other students' names or information regarding their programs with parents during IEP meetings, conferences or informal conversations.
- Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting.
- When conferencing or writing information regarding a student or family that contains confidential information, be aware of those around you who may be within hearing distance. Look for a more private place within the school building.
- If you are unsure whether information may be shared, do not disclose it. Politely refer the question to the special education teacher or building principal.
- For consistency of program as well as confidentiality, ESPs must support teacher techniques, materials and methods, especially in the presence of students, parents and other staff. Questions should be directed to the specific teacher privately.

Digital Privacy and Records Security

- Use only district-approved devices, accounts, applications, and storage for student information.
- Do not take student photos, videos, audio recordings, or screenshots on a personal device or for a personal account.
- Do not send student information through personal email, personal text messages, personal cloud storage, or social media.
- Access only the records needed for assigned duties; never access a record out of curiosity.
- Secure screens, passwords, printouts, data sheets, and billing records. Dispose of records through the district's approved confidential process.
- Immediately report a lost device, misdirected message, unauthorized disclosure, or suspected privacy/security incident to the building administrator and district technology or data-practices contact.

Team Member Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Special Education ESPs</u>
ESP responsibilities vary by assignment and may change based on student, program, or building needs. Changes must remain within the employee's job description, training, and authorized duties. ESPs implement directions and written plans developed or approved by licensed and appropriately qualified staff.

All of our special education classrooms and programs serve a variety of disability categories. Despite a categorical label, each child is an individual. *Disability focus areas are indicated after each heading, however, any of the action items could be seen in any special education assignment as the duties could be seen in any special education assignment. The disability areas of focus are a guide and are not exclusive.* Based on changing student needs and our goal of developing cohesive building special education teams which support not only the students but each other as well, it is possible to be assigned to support in any area of special education within the building when needed.

Supporting Functional Skills (DCD):

- Assist the student with daily living skills and needs, such as eating, toileting, grooming, dressing, etc.
- Assist in transferring, positioning and mobility needs as directed by physical therapist, occupational therapist, or other special education or related service providers
- Support students in ensuring they have access to all educational activities that are a part of the school day (recess, lunchroom, physical education, field trips, special activities, etc.)
- Serve as job coach
- Assist students in the practicing of functional routines and prompt students based on their independence level.
- Support the development of communication skills and assist student in practicing functional communication with their augmentative communication tool
- Support students in the use of assistive technology for learning or interacting with their environment.

Supporting Social/Emotional Needs (EBD) :

- Redirect behavior and implement behavior intervention plans
- Facilitate interaction between students with disabilities and classmate
- Model strategies to peers about how to interact with the student with a disability
- Support the development of communication skills
- Assist in student crisis management and de-escalation

Supporting Academic Development (LD and ALL):

- Follow the instructional programs and lessons as developed by a licensed supervising teacher in all learning environments
- Assist individual students or groups of students in performing activities initiated by the teacher
- Individually or in small groups, reinforce concepts and skills introduced by the teacher in all learning environments
- Keep students on task
- Implement accommodations indicated by the IEP (read tests aloud, take notes, enlarge materials, etc.) as directed by the special education teacher.

Serving as a Communication Link (ALL):

- Provide the special education teacher/staff with information about general education assignments, activities and student participation and behavior
- Inform general education staff about student programs and adaptations
- Observe, record and collect data as directed
- As directed, share information with other staff members
- Attend IEP meetings at the request of administrator, teacher or parent

General Support (ALL)

- Assist special education teacher with clerical tasks, correcting of student work, and material or room
- Preparations, and equipment maintenance
- Intervene with other students about inappropriate behavior, language or actions
- Provide supervision and assistance on playgrounds, in the lunchroom, at assemblies, in the swimming pool, on field trips or other locations as directed for special education students.

Supporting Medical Needs (ALL)

- ESPs may provide assigned health and personal-care tasks only under a current student-specific plan, after required training and competency verification, and under the delegation, assignment, direction, or supervision of the licensed school nurse or other appropriately licensed professional:
    - Administer tube feedings
    - Administer oral emergency seizure medication
    - Recognize and respond to critical symptoms of seizures, asthma, diabetes, food/bee allergies
    - Use PT, OT equipment needed for students to meet their goals under the supervision of the therapist. (i.e. bike, stander, walker, SMO's)
    - Provide assistance with student's Activities of Daily Living (ADLs).Assistance may range from verbal cues to total assistance. ADLs may include toileting, feeding, dressing, grooming, passive range of motion, and accompany and assist medically fragile students in all settings where the district is responsible.

<u>General Education ESPs</u>

The responsibilities of the ESP may vary based on specific assignment. Duties may also change at any time based on administration or teacher examination of student or building need. What follows is a list of responsibilities which may be part of an ESP's assignment. There may be responsibilities outside of the items listed below. Based on changing student needs and our goal of developing cohesive building teams which support not only the students but each other as well, it is possible to be assigned to support any area of general education within the building when needed.

Supporting Social/Emotional Needs:

- Redirect behavior and implement behavior intervention plans
- Facilitate interaction between students and another classmate
- Model peer to peer strategies
- Support the development of communication skills
- Assist in student crisis management and de-escalation

Supporting Academic Development:

- Follow the instructional programs and lessons as developed by a licensed teacher in all learning environments
- Assist individual students or groups of students in performing activities initiated by the teacher
- Individually or in small groups, reinforce concepts and skills introduced by the teacher in all learning environments
- Keep students on task
- Observe, record and collect data as directed

General Support (ALL)

- Assist general education teacher with clerical tasks and preparations of materials or room readiness
- Intervene with other students about inappropriate behavior, language, or actions
- Provide supervision and assistance on playgrounds, in the lunchroom, at assemblies, in the swimming pool, on field trips or other locations as directed

ADSIS ESPs

The purpose of this position is to provide supplementary assistance to eligible ADSIS students in reading, math and/or positive behavior support according to federal law, state guidelines, and local requirements. Establish effective communication with regular classroom teachers and ADSIS teachers about student services.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Provide direct intervention services to specific students enrolled in the *ADSIS* program (small group and/or push-in support).
- Assist in maintaining reports for the *ADSIS* Program.
- Assist, as directed by licensed staff, in organizing the schedule for students involved in the ADSIS program.
- Assist in communicating the purposes of the *ADSIS* program through various school communications including, but not limited to, the use of parent letters, the school newsletter, school website, staff meetings, and building team meetings.
- Participate in in-service and other trainings and activities related to *ADSIS* or other district requirements.
- Maintain records/portfolios of *ADSIS* student work to include ADSIS spreadsheets, math logs/samples, writing samples, reading logs, etc.
- Assist and implement interventions based on best practices and district identified curriculum.
- Assist in preparing a report based on student assessment data to review annually with teachers, *ADSIS* staff, classroom teachers, and parents including Fastbridge, CAPTI, STAR, MCA, and/or other data.
- Develop an understanding of screening, progress-monitoring and diagnostic assessments and interventions.
- Assist in coordinating assessments with interventionists and classroom teachers, as directed.
- Assist other job responsibilities as deemed necessary by administration.

Minimal expectations of all ESPs:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the curriculum content for classes in which s/he assists
- Participate in skill and competency trainings and in-services

- Be discreet and respectful of confidential information
- Meet the essential functions of the assigned position, with or without reasonable accommodation, as described in the official job description
    - Examples:
        - Independently lift 40 pounds
        - Request assistance whenever a transfer, positioning, medical, or safety task exceeds the employee's training, available equipment, or safe staffing
        - Support students with significant behavioral or medical needs within the employee's training and the student's authorized plans
- Work cooperatively with all school personnel
- Demonstrate a warm and receptive attitude toward all students
- Complies with school district employment policies
- Actively supervise and engage with the children you are assigned to

The ESP may perform these instructional duties:

- Assist in organizing field trips.
- Read aloud or listen to children read.
- Assist students in performing activities that have been initiated by the teacher.
- Hand out papers and collect paperwork.
- Assist with supplementary work for advanced pupils.
- Provide special help such as drilling with flash cards, spelling, and play activities.
- Assist in preparing instructional materials.
- Reinforce learning with small groups.
- Assist children in learning in the general education and/or special education setting.
- Supervise free play activities.
- Prepare flash cards and charts.
- Prepare art supplies and other materials.
- Hear requests for help, observe learning difficulties of pupils, and report such matters to teachers.
- Score objective tests and papers and keep appropriate records for teachers.

Instructional duties the ESP may **not** perform:

- Be responsible for a classroom or a professional service without teacher directive.
- Be responsible for the diagnostic functions of the classroom.
- Be responsible for lesson planning, independently initiating new instruction, or selecting curriculum.
- Be responsible for assigning grades to students.
- Be used as a substitute for certified teachers unless he or she possesses the appropriate substitute teacher certificate and is hired as a substitute.
- Assume full responsibility for supervising assemblies or field trips.

Non-Instructional duties the ESP may **not** perform:

- Shall not assume full responsibility for supervising and planning activities.
- Shall not take children to clinic, dental, or medical appointments unless permission is granted by authorized personnel.
- Shall not independently design, prescribe, or change educational activities, materials, accommodations, modifications, grading expectations, IEP services, or behavior plans.
- Shall not grade subjective or essay tests.
- Shall not use corporal punishment, humiliation, retaliation, an unauthorized restraint or seclusion procedure, or any response prohibited by law, district policy, or the student's plan.

Team Member Roles - At a Glance

	General Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher	ESP

Instruction	Design and Deliver Core Instruction to all students in the class and differentiate as needed to meet the needs of all students	Provide specialized education based on student's individual needs as identified in the student IEP	Reinforce and review previously taught skills/concepts
	Make necessary accommodations when necessary to meet students' individual needs	Design and adapt instructional activities and materials, as identified in accommodations/ modifications in student IEP	Assist with preparation of adapted materials and implement only accommodations or modifications approved by the licensed teacher or IEP team
Scheduling	Create classroom schedule and activities	Create student schedule and share changes as they occur	Follow provided schedule in a timely manner
	Collaborate with service providers to ensure students get their needed services at the appropriate times	Create ESP schedule and share changes as they occur	Follow provided schedule in a timely manner and inform supervising teacher of any needed changes
Assessment	Administer short, mid and long range assessments to students in the class.	Administer formal and informal assessments to identify student progress and educational needs.	Administer informal classroom tasks only when trained and directed; observe and collect data. Do not independently administer a formal special education evaluation
	Provide training, information and materials for charting and reporting	Provide training, information, and materials for charting and reporting (data collection)	Complete daily charting and log information (data collection) as requested
Behavior Management	Responsible for designing and executing classroom management procedures and routines and implementing school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	Responsible for designing, writing, and supporting behavior intervention plans	Monitor and reinforce the teacher- or team-approved behavior plan, collect data, and implement only the responses and supports identified in the IEP plan
Working with Parents	Communicate with students parents' about activities happening in class, general education progress, and strengths/concerns.	Communicate the delivery of special education services including student progress, strengths/concerns, and the Individual Education Plan	Communicate observations to the case manager or directing teacher. Communicate with parent(s) only when specifically directed and only about approved daily activities, not student performance or services Communicate with parent(s), if requested, on student activities (NOT PERFORMANCE) throughout the day
Student Discipline	Responsible for following the school-wide procedures for	Responsible for designing, writing and supporting	Model and reinforce expected behavior and implement the

	Behavior Response when a student is exhibiting unexpected behaviors.	behavior plans. Collects data.	student's approved behavior intervention plan under licensed
	Responsible for explicitly teaching and modeling expected behavior across school settings.	Responsible for teaching and modeling student behavior intervention plan with general education teacher and ESP.	

Positive Behavior Interventions

Students may communicate distress, frustration, unmet needs, or dysregulation through behavior. An adult's calm, respectful, and predictable response can reduce escalation, protect dignity, and support learning. Follow the student's plan and seek assistance as needed.

The following characteristics are important to embody when interacting with students with behavioral challenges:

- Honesty
- Confidence
- Openness, care, and empathy
- Humor

The following strategies support prevention and de-escalation. They do not replace an IEP, behavior intervention plan, crisis plan, or district training.

Strategy	Examples
Actively Listen	• Giving the student total and complete focus • Giving eye contact and having a friendly and open expression on your face • Listening closely • Withholding judgment • Give student wait time to process and respond
Set Clear Limits	• Guide to Setting Limits: • **Clearly state** the specific boundary with a corresponding consequence. • The corresponding consequence should be a **logical or natural consequence** that results from not following the limit. • It should be **enforceable and consistent with the student's plan.**
Offer Choices	• Provide two positive options. • Be clear and specific. (First/Then) • Make sure that both choices are acceptable and feasible.
Build Relationships	• The more you can genuinely engage with your students in an authentic way, the more they feel respected and valued. Connectedness to staff leads to student willingness.
Side-Step Power Struggles	• Establish an agenda for the day. • Find a win-win. Compromise. • Brainstorm solutions. • Ignore the challenge, not the person.
Meet Physical and	• **H - Hungry.** Hunger can be a physical or an emotional need. If the hunger is

Emotional Needs	physical, offer nutritious snacks. • **Angry:** It's important to name the emotion and to explore what's causing it. • **L-Lonely:** If you notice your student is withdrawn, engage them in conversation. Reach out and engage in active listening. Help the student connect with a peer. • **T- Tired:** If your student feels tired, encourage them to rest or to take a short nap. If that's not possible, go for a walk or encourage them to take a couple of deep breaths.
Catch Them Being Good	• 5 positives for every redirection (5:1 ratio). • The goal here is to praise the positive behaviors and neutralize or ignore the negative behaviors. • By acknowledging when a student uses expected behavior, we can increase the likelihood of them using that behavior again.
Model Prosocial Skills	• Prosocial skills are those behaviors that we engage in that benefit others. These behaviors include cooperation, sharing work, sharing toys, and emotionally supporting others who are in distress. • Students who have behavior disorders often have not developed strong prosocial skills. • Students need to see prosocial skills modeled and need several opportunities to practice the skills after they are taught.
Alter Volume/Cadence of Your Voice	• Lower the volume of your voice and speak more quietly. As you speak more quietly, your student will have to become quieter to hear you. • Alter the cadence of your voice and speak more slowly. • Modulate your tone of voice and be calm and supportive. • Simplify your vocabulary. *** Remember that as your student starts to escalate, they're starting to lose rationality. Speaking loudly and quickly will increase their agitation.**

Monitor Nonverbals	• Use Non-Threatening Nonverbals
	  ○ The more a person loses control, the less they hear your words - and the more they react to your nonverbal communication. Be mindful of your gestures, facial expressions, movements, and tone of voice.
	• Respect Personal Space
	  ○ Allowing personal space tends to decrease a person's anxiety and can help you prevent acting-out behaviors.

Choose Wisely What you Insist Upon	• It's important to be thoughtful in deciding which rules are negotiable and which are not. • If you can offer a person options and flexibility, you may be able to avoid unnecessary altercations.
Avoid Overreacting	• Remain calm, rational, and professional. • While you can't control the person's behavior, how you respond to their behavior will have a direct effect on whether the situation escalates or defuses. • Your response to the situation or behavior should match that of the student.
Monitor Triggers and Adjust	Often times, we spend precious minutes and hours of the school day de-escalating students. To address repeated escalating behaviors: 1. Track what events are causing escalated behaviors (triggers) 2. Remove the triggers if possible 3. Teach the desired behavior

Reasonable Force and Restrictive Procedures

Positive supports, environmental adjustments, relationship-based practices, and de-escalation are the expected first responses. Physical intervention is not a routine behavior-management tool.

- Restrictive procedures may be used only by staff who have completed required training, only in an emergency when immediate intervention is needed to protect a person from physical injury, and only as permitted by Minn. Stat. § 125A.0942, district policy, and the student's plan.
- Reasonable force may be used only as permitted by law to restrain a student when necessary to prevent bodily harm or death. It may not be used as punishment, for noncompliance, for staff convenience, or to force participation.
- Use the least restrictive effective response, summon trained assistance, monitor breathing and signs of medical or psychological distress, and stop immediately when the emergency ends.
- Never use prone restraint; a hold that restricts breathing or communication; pressure or weight on the head, neck, throat, chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back, or abdomen; or denial of food, water, a bathroom, medication, or an assistive device.
- Do not improvise a physical hold or use a procedure for which you are not currently trained. Follow district crisis-response/CPI procedures and the student-specific plan.
- After any physical intervention or significant safety event, immediately notify the building administrator and school nurse as appropriate, check the student's health, preserve relevant information, and complete all required documentation before leaving the assignment unless directed otherwise.

Vulnerability and Mandated Reporting (Minn. Stat. Chapter 260E)

If you work with children and/or families, you are legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect. All states impose a civil or criminal penalty on those who don't report incidents. The law requires that the person who believes a child is or has been maltreated make the report to law enforcement or child protection. As a mandated reporter it is important to understand some basic laws.

Maltreatment of Minors Act. (MN Statute, 625.556)

- Neglect of children is defined in Minnesota state law • Under legal mandate, professionals and ESPs are required to report a suspect incidence of child abuse or neglect
- Anyone who reports child abuse or neglect in good faith is generally protected from any civil or criminal liability.

Reporter identity is protected as provided by law, but confidentiality is not absolute in every legal proceeding.

Maltreatment of Vulnerable Adults Act (MN Statute, 626.557)

- This MN law states that all persons employed by or providing services in a facility required to be regulated by either the MN Dept. of Health or Human Services are mandated reporters.
- Vulnerable adults are those 18 years and older who receive services at or from a facility required by the MN Dept. of Health or Human Services.
- A vulnerable adult is dependent upon others for care and protection because of a disability.

What Qualifies as Maltreatment

- Maltreatment may include physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, threatened injury, egregious harm, and prohibited corporal punishment or unreasonable force. The following summaries are examples only; use current law and the receiving agency's guidance.
- **Physical abuse:** a report should be made in any case involving physical injury or threatened injury that is not inflicted by accidental means. Egregious and documented mental injury is also included in the definition of physical abuse.
- **Sexual abuse:** Make a mandated report when the facts create reasonable suspicion of sexual abuse or exploitation. Sexual harassment that may not meet the maltreatment definition must still be reported promptly under district harassment/Title IX procedures.
- **Neglect:** A report should be made in any case involving failure to provide required care for a child, failure to protect a child from endangerment, or failure to provide appropriate supervision.

- **Corporal punishment:** Hitting or spanking a student with or without an object or the use of unreasonable physical force that causes bodily harm or substantial emotional harm are also maltreatment.

The following points taken from What Can I Do to Prevent Harm to Children prepared by the Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Protective Services, may be helpful in identifying children in need of protection, and are based on materials developed by school personnel. While no one indicator is proof that a child is being neglected or abused, these are some signs to be aware of. Possible indicators must be considered in context. No single sign proves maltreatment, and the employee's role is to report reasonable suspicion. It is not the employee's role to diagnose, interrogate the child, confront the alleged offender, or independently investigate.

Abused or neglected children may:

- seem unduly afraid of their parents;
- often have welts, bruises, untreated sores, or other injuries;
- show evidence of poor overall care;
- be given inappropriate food, drink, or medication;
- exhibit behavioral extreme. For example: crying often or crying very little and showing no real expectation of being comforted; being excessively fearful, or seeming fearless of adult authority; being unusually aggressive and destructive, or extremely passive and withdrawn.
- be wary of physical contact, especially when an adult initiates it, or become apprehensive when an adult approaches another child, particularly one who is crying. Others are inappropriately hungry for affection, yet may have difficulty relating to children and adults. Based on their past experiences, these children cannot risk getting too close to others.
- exhibit a sudden change in behavior. For example: displaying regressive behavior-pants wetting, thumb sucking, frequent whining, becoming disruptive or becoming uncommonly shy and passive.
- take over the role of parent, being protective or otherwise attempting to take care of the parent's or younger sibling's needs.
- having learning problems that cannot be diagnosed. If a child's IQ and medical tests indicate no abnormalities, but the child still cannot meet normal expectations, the answer may well be problems in the home; one of which might be abuse or neglect. Particular attention should be given to the child whose attention wanders and who easily becomes self-absorbed.
- be habitually truant or late to school. Frequent or prolonged absences sometimes result when a parent keeps an injured child at home until the evidence of abuse disappears, or when an older child is kept home to care
- for younger siblings. In other cases truancy may indicate a lack of parental concern or ability to regulate the child's schedule.
- arrive at school too early and remain after classes rather than going home.
- be tired frequently and sleep often in class.
- be inappropriately dressed for the weather. Children who never have coats or shoes in cold weather are receiving less than minimal care. On the other hand, those who regularly wear long sleeves or high necklines on (Consider family resources, culture, disability, and other context without making assumptions);
- hot days may be dressed to hide bruises, burns or other marks of abuse.

Reporting Procedures

You can complete a mandated report online at the following link:
https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/770/Online-Mandated-Report-Form

If anyone is in immediate danger or needs urgent medical assistance, call 911 or law enforcement and follow the building emergency procedure.

When you complete a Mandated Report, you may be called for follow up information which will assist child protection to identify the child and family, evaluate the problem, and respond quickly and appropriately. You will be asked:

- your name and phone number;
- what happened to the child and when;
- where the child is now;
- the names and addresses of the parents/caretakers; and
- firsthand knowledge you have about the child or family.

As a mandated reporter, you must file a written report within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, of your verbal report. Child protection must respond immediately to a report of infant medical neglect or a child in imminent danger. If a child is not in imminent danger, child protection must initiate an assessment within one working day with the following exception: initiating an assessment can be delayed up to 72 hours if more serious reports prevent the agency from responding within one working day and if the child will not be in imminent danger during that time.

Because of confidentiality and privacy laws, child protection is limited in what they can discus with you, even when you are working with the family, unless the family consents to an exchange of information. Any mandated reporter can, upon request to the local social service agency, receive a summary of the disposition of the report, unless such release would be detrimental to the best interests of the child.

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, and Staff Misconduct

An ESP who witnesses or receives reliable information about bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment or violence, retaliation, or staff misconduct must take reasonable action to address immediate safety and promptly report the concern through the appropriate district route.

- Report student bullying or harassment to the building principal or designated building reporter under district policy.
- Report sex-based harassment or sexual violence to the building principal and Human Resources.
- Report discrimination or retaliation to the building principal or Human Resources.
- Report suspected staff misconduct, boundary violations, or unsafe conduct to an administrator who is not involved in the concern. Use Human Resources or the director of special services when an alternative route is needed.
- Do not conduct an independent investigation, promise confidentiality, or delay a mandated maltreatment report while using an internal district process.

Third Party Billing/MA Billing

Some special education services are covered by public health insurance programs such as Medical Assistance (MA). That's what "Third Party Billing" (TPB) is—insurance billing for certain health-related services we provide to eligible students. Minnesota law requires school districts to seek this reimbursement to help pay for the cost of providing special education. Many of our ESPs support this effort by documenting service for Personal Care Assistance (PCA) and Special Transportation.

Like all student data, information related to TPB is confidential. It's also subject to the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), which requires health care providers to ensure the privacy of patient records and health information. The services we provide and our students' insurance status should only be discussed with staff members who have a need to know, and with discretion. Please also keep all billing documents stored out-of-sight in a secure location.

If you'll be assisting a student who qualifies for TPB, you'll be notified by the TPB coordinator and receive all the forms, instructions and training you need to complete these tasks easily and with confidence.

Our monthly PCA Activities Checklists and Special Transportation logs are quite simple and can be completed in just a few seconds each day. You may also be involved in conducting an annual PCA time study, before which you'll receive detailed instructions that should answer most of the questions that may arise during this 10-day period. And throughout the school year, all PCAs will be trained and supervised by qualified professionals in accordance with policies established by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. You'll also have access to each student's care plan and receive additional support from the TPB coordinator whenever needed.

Working together, we'll ensure that your services meet the needs of our students while generating special education revenue in a way that follows all applicable state laws and policies.

Since assisting students is your number one priority during the workday, you'll receive most TPB information either in-person, or by e-mail or school mail. So please be sure to check your school email regularly for important updates. Please direct any and all questions about Third Party Billing to the ISD 318 Third Party Billing Clerk at (218) 327-5825 (ext. 45825). The office is located in the district Administration Building (DESC) in the special education office.

Basic First Aid and OSHA Universal Precautions

The school district will provide required annual training in the areas of basic first aid and OSHA universal precautions. This will typically be provided at the start of the school year.

— Section 3 —
Special Services Information

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

FAPE is Free Appropriate Public Education; the education of each child with a disability must be "provided at public expense and without charge" to the child or the child's parents. All specially designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incidental fees that are normally charged to non-disabled students or their parents as a part of the regular education program. What is an appropriate education differs for each child with a disability. The IDEA specifies in some detail how the school and parents are to plan the education that each child receives so that it is appropriate. Evaluations are conducted to identify the child's individual needs so that the school and parents can design an education that responds to these needs. Together school personnel and parents specify what this education will be and write the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP must be reviewed and as appropriate, revised each year, to ensure that the education being delivered remains appropriate to the child's needs. Public generally refers to our public school systems. Children with disabilities have the right to attend public school just as other children do regardless of the nature or severity of their disabilities. Education is what the law is all about. IDEA is an education act. It guarantees that a free appropriate public education is available to eligible children with disabilities and that this free appropriate public education consists of special education and related services provided in conformity with an IEP.

Qualification for Special Education Services

Students and their families must go through an educational evaluation process in order to receive special education services. This process looks at all areas of suspected delay/disability and must address MN Disability Criteria in one of the areas listed in the table below. An evaluation for students' ages 3-21 may take

up to 30 school days from the date that parent permission is received. Students younger than 3 years of age must be evaluated within 45 calendar days from the referral date. Prior to many evaluations (dependent on age and criteria), interventions are required to determine the severity of need and whether or not a formal special education evaluation is required.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)

Students who have been evaluated and found to meet MN eligibility criteria to qualify for special education will have an IEP (IFSP, IIIP) upon parent consent. This is a document that is written following a meeting of IEP team members. In addition to being eligible under one of the areas of disability in the table below, a student may also receive occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech/language therapy (SP), or developmental adaptive physical education (DAPE). You support the implementation of a student's IEP You have access to the IEPs of students with whom you work and in some cases may be requested to attend IEP meetings. For confidentiality reasons, extra copies of IEPs are generally not provided; however, copies of accommodations and IEP goals may be provided in a manner that allows access. Implementing the IEP is a significant focus for all team members, including the ESP. Some students may have specific ESP plans and /or behavior plans as part of their IEP. Access to this information would be readily available when appropriate.

MN Disability Criteria

The descriptions below are brief orientation information and is not diagnostic descriptions or eligibility criteria. Eligibility is determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation team under current Minnesota rules. A disability label does not predict an individual student's abilities, behavior, communication, or support needs. Always follow the student's IEP and use respectful language consistent with student and family preference.

Disability Title	Characteristics and Impact
SLD - Specific Learning Disability	May affect reading, writing, mathematics, oral language, listening comprehension, or related information-processing skills. Support may include explicit instruction, modeling, guided practice, accommodations, and progress monitoring identified by the teacher or IEP.
DCD/MM – Developmental Cognitive Disability (Mild to Moderate)	May affect academic learning, communication, adaptive behavior, daily living, social participation, and independence. Use explicit instruction, consistent routines, accessible communication, and the least intrusive prompts identified in the IEP.
DCD/SP – Developmental Cognitive Disability (Severe to Profound)	May involve significant and individualized needs in communication, health, mobility, learning, adaptive behavior, and daily living. Support access, dignity, choice-making, communication, and independence according to the IEP and health/safety plans.
EBD – Emotional Behavior Disorder	Student has either a mental health diagnosis and/or an educational need for services due to significant social, emotional or behavioral concerns
OHD – Other Health Disability	Student has a medical diagnosis that interferes with their ability to be successful in school (ADHD or a heart condition are two examples)
ASD – Autism Spectrum Disorder	May involve differences in social communication, interaction, behavior, sensory processing, flexibility, or learning. Support communication, predictability, regulation, access, strengths, interests, and self-advocacy as identified in the IEP.

Speech/Language Disorder	May affect articulation, fluency, voice, receptive language, expressive language, or social communication. Allow processing time, model and support the student's communication system.
VI - Vision Impairment	Student has a medically verified visual impairment accompanied by limitations in sight that interfere with acquiring information or interaction with the environment
DH/H – Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Student has a diminished sensitivity to sound, or hearing loss, that is expressed in terms of standard audiological measures.
SMI – Severely Multiply Impaired	Student has severe learning and developmental problems resulting from two or more disability conditions
TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury	An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that may adversely affect the student's educational performance
PI – Physically Impaired	Student has a medically diagnosed chronic, physical impairment, either congenital or acquired, that may adversely affect physical or academic functioning
Deaf/Blind	Verified vision loss coupled with a medically diagnosed hearing loss that together interfere with student's ability to interact with their environment
DD – Developmental Delay (Early Childhood Special Education/Early Intervention)	For a child under age seven, development may be delayed in one or more areas such as cognition, communication, physical development, social-emotional development, or adaptive behavior. Support learning through routines, play, communication, participation, and family-centered goals.

Related Services
(as part of the IEP)

Physical Therapy (PT)	Physical therapy (PT) is a related service who provides support to students who have a disability that interferes with their educational performance and ability to benefit from their education program. Using their unique expertise in movement and function, PTs ensure a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living. The school-based PT promotes motor development and the student's participation in everyday routines and activities that are a part of his or her program. The PT designs and performs therapeutic interventions, including compensation, remediation and prevention strategies and adaptations, focusing on functional mobility and safe, efficient access and participation in educational activities and routines in natural learning environments.
Occupational Therapy	Occupational therapy (OT) is provided to students with disabilities.

(OT)	Occupational therapy may be recommended for an individual student for reasons that might be affecting his or her learning or behavior, such as motor skills, cognitive processing, visual or perceptual problems, mental health concerns, difficulty staying on task, disorganization, or inappropriate sensory responses. Occupational therapy works to ensure that a student can participate in the full breadth of school activities—from paying attention in class; concentrating on the task at hand; holding a pencil, musical instrument, or book in the easiest way; or just behaving appropriately in class.
Developmental Adaptive Physical Education (DAPE)	Developmental Adapted Physical Education (or DAPE as it is also called) means specially designed physical education instruction and services for pupils with disabilities who have a substantial delay or disorder in physical development. Developmental adapted physical education: special education instruction for pupils age three through 21 may include development of physical fitness, motor fitness, fundamental motor skills and patterns, skills in aquatics, dance, individual and group games, and sports.
Nursing	The school nurse is an invaluable partner in ensuring that students are healthy, safe, and prepared to learn. According to the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), the role of the school nurse is to advance the well being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; and actively collaborate with others to build every student's capacity for adaptation, self-management, self-advocacy, and learning.

Common Special Education Acronyms

ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	A neurodevelopmental condition that may affect attention, activity level, impulse control, organization, or executive functioning. School supports are based on the student's individual educational needs.
AT - Assistive Technology	Any device, software or equipment that can help kids with learning and attention issues work around their challenges.
ECSE - Early Childhood Special Education	A school district program that provides supports and services to infants, toddlers and preschool children with disabilities and their families.
ER - Evaluation Report	Is an essential beginning step in the special education process for a child with a disability. Before a child can receive special education and related services for the first time, a full and individual initial evaluation of the child must be conducted to see if the child has a disability and is eligible for special education.
ESY - Extended School Year	Extended School Year (ESY) services are individualized special education or related services included in an eligible student's IEP and provided at no cost when necessary for FAPE during a period when school is not typically in session. The services are individualized to help each child maintain their skills and not lose the progress they have made toward their goals.
FAS - Fetal Alcohol	Fetal alcohol syndrome is a condition in a child that results from alcohol

Syndrome	exposure during the mother's pregnancy. Fetal alcohol syndrome causes brain damage and growth problems. The problems caused by fetal alcohol syndrome vary from child to child, but defects caused by fetal alcohol syndrome are not reversible
FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education	Students with disabilities have a legal right to a free appropriate public education, known as FAPE. The right is guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
FBA - Functional Behavior Assessment	Is a process that identifies specific target behavior, the purpose of the behavior, and what factors maintain the behavior that is interfering with the student's educational progress.
IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	IDEA requires schools to find and evaluate students suspected of having disabilities, at no cost to families. Once kids are found to have a qualifying disability, schools must provide them with special education and related services to meet their unique needs.
IQ - Intelligence Quotient	Is a total score derived from several standardized tests designed to assess human intelligence.
LRE - Least Restrictive Environment	LRE is part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA says that children who receive special education should learn in the least restrictive environment. This means they should spend as much time as possible with peers who do not receive special education.
PACER-Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights Center	PACER provides individual assistance, workshops, publications, and other resources to help families make decisions about education and other services for their child or young adult with disabilities.
PCA - Personal Care Attendant	Personal care assistance services support eligible students with disability- or health-related activities of daily living according to an authorized plan and applicable billing requirements.
PLAAFP - Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance	The section of the IEP that describes the student's skills and abilities based on the special education evaluation. The PLAAFP should cover all areas of development in which the student may need support.
Section 504	A federal law that protects a student with an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, regardless of whether the student receives special education services.

Student Support Services
(not part of the IEP)

North Homes	School based mental health services strengthen students and their families through prevention and intervention within a school setting. In order to determine eligibility for the program, students need to complete a Diagnostic Assessment conducted by a mental health professional. If determined eligible, a mental health professional or practitioner will meet with the student and

	family to formulate goals and objectives identified by the family and student in conjunction with feedback from school professionals.
Homelessness Support	According to the McKinney-Vento Act homeless students are defined as lacking a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence, including children who are: • Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship; • Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of adequate accommodations; • Living in emergency or transitional shelters; • Are abandoned in hospitals; • Awaiting foster care placement; • Living in public or private places not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; • Living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, transportation stations or similar settings; • Migratory children living in conditions described in the previous examples; • Or unaccompanied youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
Truancy Prevention	Students under the age of 16 are required to attend school according to Minnesota's Compulsory Attendance Law M.S. 120.101. According to Minnesota State Statute (260c.007, Subd.19), truancy is defined as being absent from one or more classes, seven or more times during a school year. There are Truancy Prevention Specialists available to assist families in getting students to school.
School Social Worker (RJEMS and GRHS)	School social workers address the psychological and social well-being of students, ranging from elementary school to high school students. They provide information and counseling and help students, parents and school staff work together to solve problems by communicating and providing referrals to other resources.
Student Support Specialist (Elementary)	Student support specialist assists children and young people facing a range of barriers to learning to achieve their educational and developmental potential by providing a range of strategies and specialized support at the individual, group, school and area levels.
School Counselors	Counselors offer services for the needs of students and parents alike, to assist in maximizing student potential. Services include individual and group counseling, referrals, system support, and consultation with parents and faculty.
American Indian Education	Since 1974, the American Indian Education Programs of ISD #318 has helped ensure the highest quality education for all children of Indian descent. Mission: ISD #318 American Indian Services program is here to assist American Indian students and their families by promoting academic success and cultural understanding between community, staff, parents and students.

Strategies for Interacting with Students

In addition to implementing IEP goals, adaptations, behavior plans, etc, the following list of strategies may be helpful in your interactions with students.

Relationship Building

- Develop a positive rapport with students.
- Maintain a professional, but supportive role with student as opposed to a "friend" relationship.
- Provide positive, specific and frequent feedback.
- Maintain your voice at a non-threatening moderate level.
- Use respectful language with all students.

Behavioral Support

- Provide clear expectations of behavior and check for understanding of those expectations.
- Implement fair, consistent, teacher- or team-approved responses and supports. Do not create or impose an independent consequence. Cue student to return to a task without drawing negative attention to him/her.
- Catch the student displaying appropriate behavior or for finishing a task well and praise him/her.
- Consistently follow individual behavior intervention plans (BIPs) that were developed by the student's team of professionals.
- Continually evaluate the stress and frustration level of student.
- Communicate your observations and perspectives with the general and/or special teacher.

Moving Towards Independence

- Avoid becoming overprotective.
- Students may initially require intensive support, but you should fade to a coaching and indirect support role as soon as possible.
- Encourage independence and interdependence with classmates.
- Students will interact more naturally when you are not sitting or standing next to them.
- Recognize the importance of peer modeling of appropriate behavior and point out examples of effective behavior and its consequences.
- Natural supports enhance student's independence and social acceptance.
- Assist students by providing resources rather than giving them the answers.
- Allow students to make as many decisions for themselves as possible.
- Give opportunities for making choices.

Classroom Modifications and Adaptations

Modifications are a type of adaptation. Adaptations are defined "as any adjustment or modification in the curriculum, instruction, environment, or materials in order to enhance the participation of a member of the classroom community" (Udvari-Solner, 1992, p. 3). Many students, with or without disabilities, benefit from adaptations in order to accomplish tasks more efficiently and to participate fully in classroom activities.

ESPs provide valuable observations and practical ideas about student access and participation. Licensed teachers and IEP teams are responsible for designing and approving accommodations, modifications, curriculum, grading expectations, and instructional plans. ESPs must not independently change them. When contributing ideas to the teacher or team, use these principles:

- Focus on what the student CAN do.
- Use the least intrusive support first.
- Use age-appropriate materials, goals and activities when planning.
- Maximize active student participation.
- Facilitate positive and valued interactions with peers.
- Promote independence.

A Process for Considering Modifications
Based upon the subject and activity occurring in the classroom consider the following questions to assist in creating modifications for a student(s):
1. Can the student do the same activity, in the same way, at the same level as peers?
If not... **2.** Can the student do the same activity but with modified expectations?
If not... **3.** Can the student do the same activity but with modified expectations and materials?
If not... **4.** Can the student do a similar activity but with modified expectations?
If not... **5.** Can the student do a similar activity but with modified materials?
If not... **6.** Can the student do a different parallel activity?
If not... **7.** Can the student do a different activity in a different section of the room?

— Section 4 —
Student Observation & Data Collection

ESPs are often asked to provide data regarding a student they work with as a means of documenting progress toward IEP goals and determining the effectiveness of a student's program. This documentation may be in the form of anecdotal reports, checklists or formal and informal observations.

Observing and Keeping Good Data
Acquiring and using objective skills of observation and keeping data are important to all ESPs. Much of the information needed by the team to determine whether or not children are gaining new skills is acquired by careful observation and good record keeping. In addition, observation will keep the team posted on whether or not the individuals are learning and using the functional skills necessary to let them achieve the objectives and long-term goals that are outlined in the IEP.

The written information as to what has been observed is called "data". It serves as a more permanent record of what is seen or heard and, when done well, is an objective account of the individual's activities and skills. It is important to keep written data on all the observation activities. If this is not done, there is a risk of reporting inaccurately what has happened.

Carrying out observations and keeping data must be done with an objective point of view. Sometimes, we may be tempted to let our biases or prejudices get in the way. We may like one student better than another and tend to look more favorably on his/her activities. It is very important to guard against these inclinations and to put down precisely what is seen or heard and to avoid anything that is stigmatized by personal perceptions of a child or a specific behavior.

<u>Observation Is:</u>
Systematically watching what a person does and says, then recording the behaviors in order to make instructional decisions. Observation should:

- Be done for a specific reason;
- Provide samples of a child's/student's behavior over a period of time, in a variety of settings; and
- Be objective.

<u>Objective Observation Means:</u>

- Watching events without being affected by personal biases/prejudices;
- Watching what is happening without guessing at the reasons that cause the action;
- Watching the activity without judging whether it is good or bad, and
- Producing an objective record that states exactly what an observer sees and hears.

Through observation, we can learn what the child can do, what the child likes or dislikes, how the child behaves under various circumstances and how the child interacts with people.

Observing Objectively

There are two points to remember when making observations:

- A behavior must be observable and
- A behavior must be measurable.

In other words we must be able to see or hear a behavior and we must be able to count or time how often a behavior occurs.

Keeping Data

There are several ways to keep data. They include:

Checklists-These may be in the form of standardized checklists that include specific skills and behaviors based on developmental levels, or a list of behaviors compiled by the teacher. When ESPs work with a checklist, they simply watch the child and record whether or not the behavior described is observed.

Anecdotal Records-These usually consist of a sentence or two written in a notebook that describe what the child is doing at a specific moment. When making an anecdotal record, only behaviors that can be seen or heard and behaviors that can be counted should be recorded.

Interviewing-This is a specific kind of record keeping, one in which the team is trying to determine what the child likes or dislikes, what the child's interests are, or other feelings or beliefs that cannot be observed. When interviewing, it is extremely important to record precisely what the child says. There is no room for editorializing in this kind of record.

Frequency or Duration Notes- Sometimes the information that is to be collected refers to how often or how long a behavior is occurring. For example, the team may want to know how many times a child talked to or communicated with playmates or how often a child initiated a conversation with peers. For this kind of record keeping, ESPs will count the frequency and length of the behavior occurring.

— Section 5 —
Professionalism and Ethical Practices

Professional Ethics

Many times, the ESP is in an awkward position. They are involved in the educational process with students and many of their expectations are similar to that of a classroom teacher. However, an ESP is in a professional position that requires the following ethical guidelines.

Accepting Responsibilities

- Engage only in instructional and other activities for which you are qualified or trained.
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents, community members or other teachers; this should be communicated to your supervising teacher.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to the special education teacher.
- Recognize the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and management and follow the prescribed directions.
- Help to see the best interests of individual students are met.

Relationships with Students and Parents

- Discuss a child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program ONLY with the supervising teacher in an appropriate setting (i.e. do not discuss students in the teacher workroom with other teachers during lunch time).

- Express differences of opinion with your supervising teacher ONLY when students are absent from the room.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters ONLY with appropriate personnel.
- Do not discriminate or harass based on any protected status, including race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital or familial status, disability, age, or status with regard to public assistance, or any other status protected by law or district policy. Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
- Be a positive role model.

Professional Boundaries, Communication, and Technology

- Maintain a supportive professional relationship rather than a friendship, family role, or exclusive relationship with a student.
- Use district-approved communication channels. Do not connect with students through personal social media, personal messaging, gaming accounts, or personal email.
- Do not photograph, record, post, livestream, or share student information or school incidents except through an authorized district process.
- Do not transport a student in a personal vehicle, meet a student privately off campus, or provide personal services outside the assignment unless specifically authorized by the district and permitted by policy.
- Follow district policy regarding gifts, money, food, physical contact, and one-to-one interactions. Consider student age, disability, culture, consent, dignity, and the student's plan.
- Immediately report suspected grooming, sexualized conduct, boundary violations, retaliation, or other staff misconduct through an administrator who is not involved in the concern.

Relationship with the Teacher

- Recognize the teacher as the person who directs your work
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- When problems cannot be resolved, use the school district's grievance procedures (a copy of which can be found in the district office).
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher in an appropriate setting.

Relationship with the School

- Engage in behavior management strategies that are consistent with district policy.
- Accept responsibility for improving your skills.
- Know and follow school policies and procedures.

Represent the school in a positive manner.

— Section 6 —
ESP Feedback and Realignment

Educational Support Professional Feedback Session

This is an opportunity to conduct a self reflection in regards to your job performance and have a discussion with the special education teachers about how things are going. This is a valuable opportunity in many ways as the main focus of this meeting is to identify areas where things are going well, areas that need to be improved and to answer questions that may come up as a result of this discussion opportunity. Grand Rapids Area Schools wants our ESPs to attain their highest level of effectiveness in order to provide the best support to the students and to the teachers. The ESP Feedback Session is conducted once every school year.

Suggested Teacher/ESP Feedback Session Procedure:

1. A 15-30 minute appointment between the teacher and ESP for the purpose of going over the completed evaluation form. (an EDA will be approved for this time if it needs to be scheduled outside the normal work day)

2. The teacher will complete the ESP Feedback Form provided by the Human Resources Department.
3. Meet on the scheduled appointment date/time to review the evaluation (both teachers and the ESPs) for an opportunity to have a good discussion about how things are going and to set goals for the remainder year.
4. The teacher and the ESP should sign/date the bottom of the Feedback Form.
5. The teacher will send a copy of the form to their Principal, Special Services Director, and Human Resources Director.

ESPs needing additional meetings should be brought to Building Principals and Human Resources Attention- especially those on probationary status.

Direction of Work and Supervision

Educational Support Professionals are assigned a licensed teacher who provides ongoing day-to-day direction, consistent with Minn. Stat. § 125A.08 and Minn. R. 3525.0200. When appropriate and possible, health-related work is also supervised by the licensed school nurse. Building administrators supervise employment performance, address conflicts and safety concerns, and ensure district procedures are followed.

Teacher's Role in Directing ESP Work

- Teachers direct the daily work of ESPs
- Teachers are the usual first point of contact for instructional, student-plan, schedule, and daily-task questions. Teachers will provide a schedule
- Teachers will provide program expectations
- Teachers will provide student specific training and expectations
- Teachers will provide feedback on daily tasks
- Teachers will annually complete a feedback form

Administrator's Role in Supervising ESP Work

- Administrators will address conflicts between ESPs and Teachers
- Administrators are responsible for following the discipline process when there are issues with ESP job performance that are not remedied by repeated expectations and/or training
- Administrators are responsible for investigating issues reported that could jeopardize student safety or create a hostile work environment
- Administrators are responsible for ensuring ESPs receive statute required training

Typical Process for Addressing Concerns if an ESP is Not Meeting Expectations

1. Teacher will restate the expectation and provide training if needed (individual or team)
2. Teacher will have an individual conversation with the ESP and follow up in writing with the expectation and what supports are available to the ESP in meeting the expectation.
3. Teacher will report the issue(s) to the Administrator.
4. Administrator will investigate the issue, if findings indicate the ESP continues to not meet the expectation, a notice of expectation will be issued to the ESP.
5. If the issue persists, the Administrator will contact Human Resources and initiate the discipline process.

*Steps may be skipped for significant issues consistent with District Policy #403.
**If at any time issues cause disruption, safety concerns, or a hostile work environment; those issues are to be reported directly to the administrator who will decide next steps.

Who do ESPs go to if they have concerns?
ESPs go to their Teacher with concerns related to:

- Student Program or Plan questions/clarifications

- Schedule (including breaks, lunches, etc.)
- Specific Daily Tasks
- Building information (where to park, fire drills, etc.)

ESPs go to their Principal with concerns related to:

- Student safety or procedural safety should go directly to a principal.
- ESP has made attempts to resolve an issue with their directing teacher and the issue has not been resolved in a reasonable amount of time given the nature of the issue.
- General education supervision duties

Direct and Alternative Reporting Routes

- Emergency or immediate danger: Call 911 or activate the building emergency procedure and notify the building administrator.
- Suspected maltreatment: Make the required external mandated report directly and notify the building administrator.
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation: Report to the building administrator and Human Resources.
- Privacy or cybersecurity incident: Report immediately to the building administrator.
- Concern involving the supervisor or building administrator: Use Human Resources, the director of special services, superintendent, or another designated administrator who is not involved.

Probationary Period

New ESP Hires

The first three consecutive months of service during the regular school term will be considered a probationary period. "The School District shall have the unqualified right to discipline or discharge such employee without assigning any reason therefore, and without recourse to the grievance procedure."

Current ESP Unit Members

ESPs transferring to a new position will serve 30 working days of probationary status "during which period the School District shall have the right to return the employee to his/her previous position, which right shall not be subject to the grievance procedure."

Realignment

Realignment of ESP positions is conducted each year - typically at a meeting scheduled for July or August. The realignment process is contractual to provide an opportunity for unit members to obtain positions that are either OPEN as new postings (due to resignation or new positions) or which become OPEN during the realignment process on the day of the meeting. Movement is strictly based on seniority during this one meeting instead of spreading the posting process over many months. ESPs will be notified of their position status for the next school year at least 5 days prior to the scheduled realignment meeting. ESPs who are listed without a position for the upcoming school year will be identified as having the 'Right to Bump' and may exercise this right during the realignment meeting. Bumping and new vacancy opportunities do occur during realignment meeting.

All ESPs are encouraged, but not required, to attend this realignment meeting due to the fact that bumping does occur without notice during the meeting. A less senior ESP may be bumped from an existing position by a more senior ESP who has the 'right to bump' during the meeting and will then move to a different position using the realignment process. A proxy may be assigned/arranged if an ESP is not available to attend the meeting. The proxy will have the ability to select a position on behalf of the absent ESP as long as the absent ESP has provided the proxy this right in writing prior to the meeting date. No stand ins will be allowed without a written proxy statement from the absent ESP. Proxy forms are available in the Human Resource office. Union

representatives or the Human Resource office may be contacted if you have questions about the ESP realignment process.

Vacancies that exist at the conclusion of the realignment meeting will be filled by the district hiring procedure.

If you have any further questions regarding the District's realignment process, please contact Human Resources.