

Paraeducator Handbook

Tarkio R-1

2024-2025



Dear Paraeducator,

The role of the paraprofessional is extremely important. The knowledge and skills required to perform the assigned responsibilities are great. Getting off to a good start is imperative in order to better meet the needs of students.

This position is an always-changing, never-boring job! Flexibility and a good attitude is a must. I am excited to work with each of you and would like to thank you for choosing to be a Paraeducator in the Tarkio R-I School District. You are an asset to the district and hopefully your reward will be the many lives you will touch.

I hope this school year will be a great year for you. I encourage you to keep in strong communication with your cooperating teachers and all other pertinent school personnel. I have an open door policy, so feel free to talk with me anytime during the year.

Yours in Education,

Kari Taylor
Kari Taylor, Tarkio Schools

If you have questions not covered in this handbook, please see Kari Taylor, Special Education Director. Procedures outlined here are intended to complement Board Policy and the NonCertified Staff Handbook. For an in-depth look, please refer to the School Board Policies in the Superintendent's Office.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CHAIN OF COMMAND

The smooth operation of our school district requires a high level of professionalism at all times. Use the chain of command to solve problems. Discussion of school problems with outside sources does not help resolve problems. Never discuss school problems with students.

Chain of command is as follows and works in **both** directions:

Students/Parents –Teachers/Staff—Building Principal &/or Special Education Director—Superintendent—Board of Education

Communication and problem resolution benefit from following the chain of command. Skipping links in the chain may create friction and delay the resolution.

All communication or reports to the Board from staff members should be submitted through the Building Principal to the Superintendent, all communication to the staff from the Board should be handled through the Superintendent to the Building Principal. This is not to deny communication, rather to ensure that chain of command is respected and that issues are resolved by the closest links in the chain.

Absences

If you are going to be absent, you must let the Special Education Director as well as your cooperating teacher know. See Board Policy and Staff Handbook for more information regarding absences.

Dress

Staff is expected to dress in a manner that reflects professionalism and good taste. Rules for student dress apply to teachers.

Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD)

Paraeducators are required to meet the following criteria for professional development:

First year in the school district with no teaching certificate: **15 hours of professional development**

Second year and all years following in the school district with no teaching certificate: **10 hours of professional development**

Teaching certificate: **No requirement for professional development**

The district "Compliance Plan" states:

Paraeducators who do not hold a teaching certificate shall receive a minimum of 15 hours of training during their initial year of employment and a minimum of 10 hours of training in subsequent years.

Paraeducators who hold a teaching certificate shall receive training necessary to provide for proper orientation and induction.

Minimum hours of training shall be in addition to any general orientation workshops provided by the district prior to the opening of school.

At a minimum, training shall include information and experiences related to:

The type of disabilities displayed by the students with whom the paraeducator will work;

Basic principles of behavior modification;

Basic instructional techniques expected to be used in the class (demonstration, modeling, cueing, reinforcement, correction, etc.) and;

Other areas as necessary (positioning, lifting, and transferring techniques, feeding procedures, etc.)

The district will maintain documentation sufficient to detail the training provided. CSPD forms must be sent to the attention of Kari Taylor, Special Education Director. Forms will be kept on file in your personnel file in the Superintendent's Office upon completion. All hours **must be** turned in by **May 9, 2025**.

Professional development activities may vary. There are opportunities to acquire professional development hours within our school district by attending building or district level staff development activities. Other professional development opportunities are offered outside of the school district such as: area paraeducators conferences and other conferences that are of interest to you that are related to the area in which you work. We would like all paraeducators to participate in CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) training offered at the district level.

After attending any professional development activity please complete the CSPD form in the appendix and put it in your file in the special education office. These are necessary documentation for the Compliance Plan as well as MSIP reviews.

All professional development activities must be pre-approved by your director. Pending approval you may be reimbursed by the school district for expenses related to attending these activities. Any expenses must be referred to the school district by completing the reimbursement form. These forms must be sent to the Special Education Director. Reimbursements are paid once a month and must be sent to Kari Taylor by the second Thursday of the month.

Confidentiality Training

The paraeducator will receive confidentiality training each year. The "Compliance Plan" for our school district states:

The district assures the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the following manner: persons collecting or using personal data will receive training, and a current list of names and positions of those employees having access to personally identifiable data will be maintained.

This training will be part of the back to school orientation. It is the paraeducator's responsibility to attend the meeting in which confidentiality training is being presented.

CONTRACT HOURS

You are contracted to work 166 days. This includes the 163 days of student attendance, plus 8/15/24, 8/16/24, 8/20/24 (8-11:30am) and 10/17/24 (8-11:30am). There will be additional monthly meetings and professional development opportunities in which you will keep those hours on a timesheet.

Professional Development days- Certified Staff Only:

You are not contracted to work these days.

August 19, 2024, September 23, 2024, November 4, 2024, January 3, 2025*(this may be a half day to go over new schedules), January 27, 2025, February 13, 2025, February 24, 2025, April 7, 2025, May 16, 2025.

Early Dismissal days:

December 20, 2024 & May 15, 2025

Most early dismissal days you may leave after the students leave. However, you are still paid for a 7 hr day, regardless of the time of dismissal. You will want to make sure to check with your cooperating teacher and/or director to know your expectations for early dismissal days.

Your typical work-day is a 7 hr day, 7:35a-3:05p. Please be prompt and accurate with timesheets. Timesheets are due to the Special Education Director by the 5th of the following month, unless otherwise specified. **Anything logged over 7 hrs must be approved by the Special Education Director/Building Principal.**

Ethical Issues**

Paraeducators function as a member of a team and have a special relationship with teachers, other school personnel, students and the community. The quality of these relationships depends not only on the work performed, but also on the ethical behavior demonstrated on the job. Paraeducators are faced with ethical issues on a daily basis, including confidentiality, record management, and the demands placed on them by teachers and staff. You may at times become a very important part of the IEP or staffing team. It is of vital importance that you understand the ethical issues involved with this responsibility.

Accepting responsibility:

- Engage only in non-instructional and instructional activities for which you have been assigned or those which you are qualified or trained (i.e. restraint).
- Do not communicate progress or concerns about the students to parents unless you are asked to by your supervising teacher.
- Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to your supervising teacher.
- Recognize that the teacher has the ultimate responsibility for instruction and behavior management of the students and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.

Relationship with Student and Parents:

- Discuss the child's progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the teacher in the appropriate setting.
- Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel, and only when the student is not present.
- Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
- Present yourself as a positive adult role model.

Relationship with the Teacher:

- Recognize the role of the teacher as your direct supervisor.
- Express differences of opinion only when the students are not present.
- Establish communication and a positive relationship with the teacher.
- Discuss concerns about the teacher or teaching methods directly with the teacher.
- If issues are not resolved, then discuss concerns only with the teacher's Supervisor.
- Do not discuss teacher problems with the students, other teachers, and paraeducators.

Relationship with the School:

- Accept responsibility for improving skills.
- Become familiar with school policies and procedures.

- Represent the school and its programs in a positive manner.

****Copied from *Teacher/PARA Teaming, Exercise Your Options***

Cell Phone Usage

As a Paraeducator you serve as a role model to many students both inside and outside of the classroom. With the use of technology today by students and adults, there are guidelines to adhere to while in the school building and classroom. Cell phone usage should be limited to personal break times within reason. Communication about students may occur via text or email, so it is understood you will have your phone, but please understand that you are being an example to the little eyes around you at all times. Please see Mrs. Taylor if you have questions about this policy.

Email

Check email on a regular basis throughout the day as time allows if you receive an email from an administrator – please check and respond ASAP.

Evaluation

You will receive a formal evaluation by your cooperating teacher and a SPED Director each year. The administration may or may not ask for input from teacher(s) with which you are assigned to work. Please be familiar with the evaluation form and ask your supervisor (teacher or Special Education Director) any questions you have concerning the evaluation form. *Form 4620*

STUDENT MATTERS

Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect

School employees are mandated reporters. Contact your cooperating teacher or Special Education Director if you believe a condition exists that qualifies for mandated reporting.

Sexual Harassment/Bullying: Staff should make themselves aware of the district's policies on sexual harassment and bullying. Harassment or bullying reported by a student should never be taken lightly and must be reported. The teacher is report to the building administrator of any sexual harassment/bullying by students or staff towards students or staff. Board policy books can be found in Superintendent's office regarding sexual harassment/bullying.

Sexual/Physical Abuse/Neglect: Staff should make themselves aware of the district's policies on sexual/physical abuse/neglect. The policies are located in the Superintendent's Office. Sexual/Physical Abuse or child neglect should never be taken lightly and must be reported. **As of July 1st, 2014, all staff at the school district become mandatory reporters.** If you suspect sexual/physical abuse or child neglect, it is your responsibility to hotline the information.

24hours a day: The toll free number is **1-800-392-3738**

Mutual Respect

Staff should model appropriate behavior. Fellow staff and students should be treated with the respect that we believe we deserve. Even when dealing with negative behavior, remain in control and model respectful behavior. Student matters should be dealt with according to the Student Handbook whenever appropriate. Staff should know building policies and follow them in the classrooms. It is difficult to support a staff member who is doing something that directly contradicts what the Student Handbook states.

Relationships with Students

Staff need to develop appropriate relationships with students. Students may want to share concerns or frustrations, it is not appropriate for staff to share concerns or frustrations with students. Staff members should never discuss another teacher with a student; direct them to administration or counselor. Staff members should not provide a forum for students to air grievances about other teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities

As special education delivery services have changed, so have the roles and responsibilities of paraeducators. Outlined here are a few of the many roles and responsibilities a paraeducator may be asked to do in the Tarkio R-I School District. These roles and responsibilities may change day to day and may vary greatly from building to building. It is the responsibility of each paraeducator and teacher to clearly define the expectations of the roles and responsibilities.

Any combination of the following roles and responsibilities may fall upon the paraeducator:

- Escorting students to and from the bus, relay information from the bus driver to the teacher or the teacher to the bus driver).
- Escort students from classroom to the cafeteria and other locations in the building.
- Supervise special education students in the cafeteria and playground.
- Maintain behavior charts or other records.
- Help students with personal hygiene care.
- Set up; maintain classroom equipment and learning centers.
- Tutor individual students using instructional or IEP objectives and lessons developed by the teacher.
- Administer classroom assessment instruments, score objective tests, and written papers, and keep appropriate records of assessment.
- Implement behavior management strategies using the same emphasis and techniques as the teacher.
- Assist the teacher with crises and discipline.
- Assist with the preparation of materials for use in specific instructional programs.
- Attend staff or IEP meetings at the request of the teacher or administrative personnel.
- Supervise students in community-based learning environments.
- Help maintain and organize student files (teachers are responsible for writing the IEP and all paperwork related to the student).
- Additional duties as assigned by the building level administrator.
- May attend grade level and/or student assigned grade level field trip(s) as scheduled during the school year

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

ALL EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS, STUDENT TUTORS, STUDENT TEACHERS, SUBSTITUTES, and EMPLOYEES OF TARKIO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Students and staff members in the Tarkio School District have the right to expect that information about them will be kept confidential by ALL employees, volunteers, student tutors, student teachers, substitutes, and employees of outside agencies. Additionally, the U.S. Congress has addressed the privacy-related concerns of educators, parents, and students by enacting the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (known more commonly as "FERPA").

- Each student with whom you work has the right to expect that nothing that happens to him or her will be repeated to anyone other than authorized school district employees, as designated by the administrators at each school. Even when discussing a student with those who are directly involved in a student's education, such as a teacher, principal, or guidance counselor, you may not share otherwise confidential information with them unless it is relevant to the student's educational growth, safety, or well-being.
- You may not share information regarding a student even with others who are genuinely interested in the student's welfare. You must refer all such questions to the school district employees so authorized to do so, typically the

student's teacher or building administrator. The only exception is in the event of an urgent medical emergency, in which confidential information may be necessary for a student's medical care.

• Parents, friends, or community members may in good faith ask you questions about a particular student. Again, you must refer all such questions to an authorized school district employee. You may not share information about a student even with members of your own family or the student's family.

*Before you speak, always remember that violating a student's confidentiality isn't just disrespectful, it is against the law.

*In addition, conversations about, and/or information regarding other staff members must also be kept confidential at all times. Under no circumstance shall any employee of the Tarkio School District discuss confidential information about other staff members to other members of the staff or individuals outside the school district. A violation of any of these will result in immediate action determined by the administration and/or school board.

Classroom Modifications

As a paraeducator you will be asked many times to help implement classroom modifications. These modifications will be specifically outlined in each student's IEP. It will be very important that you are familiar with the student's modifications, as you will play a very important part in seeing that these modifications are correctly implemented. The modifications may be used in the typical classroom or the special education classroom or both. Please be sure to inform yourself of all modifications necessary to help the student be successful. It is your responsibility along with the teacher to see that these modifications are correctly implemented so please take the time to inform yourself of the needs of the student.

IEP Modifications/Adaptations

The following recommendations for modification of instruction are appropriate for the regular classroom. The modifications/adaptations take into account federal and state laws as they relate to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These laws require reasonable accommodations for disabled students so they may receive educational services in a regular environment. Para Educators will implement modifications and accommodations that are written into the IEP by the case manager.

Time Allocations

Allow additional time for passing in the halls.

Increase length of time to complete task.

Increase length of time to complete course.

Provide more time to complete assignments.

Set up time line for completion of assignments.

Assist parent/student in structure of study time.

Use techniques for self-monitoring, i.e. timer.

Other _____

Study/Work Aids

Use organizational notebooks(s).

Use individual notebooks for each subject.

Adjust the number of problems expected.

Provide contingency contracting.

Provide student with assignments that require little writing (true-false, multiple choice, or matching)

Provide lecture guides.

Permit student to record lectures.

Permit student to dictate or type responses to assignments.

Permit student to dictate or type responses to tests.

Provide student with assignment sheet.

Provide student with monthly calendar.
Provide predictable structure and routine.
Teach use of mnemonic devices.
Provide frequent opportunities for review.
Provide highlighted copies of textbooks.
Provide highlighted copies of study sheets, worksheets, and assignments.
Provide adapted worksheets.
Provide study guides.
Use progress charts.
Provide correctly completed examples.
Break assignments into small segments.
Permit student to make oral reports or presentations.
Provide detailed oral and written instructions.
Provide advanced organizers for student.
Color codebooks and notebooks to specific subjects.
Pair student with regular classroom student to assist special education student in staying on task, keeping his place, taking notes, etc.
Provide student with a copy of another's notes.
Other _____

Materials

Provide graph paper for aligning written work.
Use recorded books, or a program like Bookshare
Provide enlarged print texts, multiplication charts, time lines, etc.
Provide student with personal copy of the text.
Use low-level reading materials.
Use audiovisual materials while lecturing.
Use book bags or backpacks to assist in organization and transportation of material.
Student may use computer to record assignments/notes rather than copy by hand
Other _____

Classroom Organization

Preferential seating arrangement specify _____
Provide study area free from distraction.
Minimize visual distraction.
Provide a consistent daily routine.
Provide clearly delineated rules and consequences.
Provide clear classroom expectations.
Provide headphones to limit distraction.
Other _____

Techniques in Teaching

Allow provisions for physical movement (run appropriate errands, pass out papers, etc.).
Reinforce appropriate participation in class.
Recap the main points of the lecture.
Provide frequent feedback.
Provide positive reinforcement.
Use concrete or manipulative material.
Use audiovisual material while lecturing.

Monitor class presentation to assure learning style accommodation.

Other _____

Testing

Provide opportunity to preview exact form of test.

Provide opportunity to retake tests.

Read tests orally to student.

Adapt format of tests.

Break test into smaller components.

Provide a modified test.

Provide enlarged print copy.

Permit open book/notes for tests.

Provide a word bank for answers to accompany test.

Allow more time for completion of test items.

Allow student to respond to test orally.

Reduce reading level on test material.

Provide list of correctly spelled responses.

Reduce number of tests per semester.

Require fewer correct responses.

Reduce number of items.

Allow partial credit for self-correcting.

Allow test taking in resource room or a small, quiet, secluded area.

Use projects and papers as alternatives to written tests.

Other _____

Grading

Use checklist of skills/concepts to be mastered.

Provide narrative comments by the teacher.

Supplement standard grades with narrative.

Provide standard grades based upon IEP goal progress.

Provide standard grades to reflect a comparison of student ability and performance.

Provide adjusted grade for regular classroom.

Standard grades given based on modified materials.

Standard grades given based on modified expectations.

Standard grades given based on modified methods.

Use pass/fail system.

Alter percentage of emphasis placed on daily work and tests.

Modified grading scale

Other _____

System of Professional Development (CSPD)
Reporting Form for
Tarkio R-I Paraeducators

Paraeducators Name _____

Date of Professional Development Activity _____

Location of Professional Development Activity _____

Name of Professional Development Activity _____

Hours Acquired from this Activity _____

Total CSPD Hours this Year after this Activity _____

Total CSPD Hours still needed this Year _____

Give a brief description of what you learned and/or describe the type of professional development information you acquired:

**Acknowledgement of the Tarkio School District's Paraeducator Handbook Policies/Guidelines
2024-2025 School Year**

I have read through the Tarkio School District's Paraeducator Handbook Policies/guidelines and understand my roles and responsibilities of being a Tarkio School District faculty member.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____