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Dear Paraeducator:

Welcome to the Student Services Department in Blue Valley! This handbook has been provided to you with the intent of informing and clarifying many of the responsibilities and information related to the Paraeducator in the Blue Valley School District. It is our expectation that you will take time to review this manual, so you are familiar with the expectations in your new role.

This handbook was designed to be a guide and resource to you. Hopefully, it will answer some of your questions about your role and how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. It is a general overview of your roles and responsibilities, special education, characteristics of exceptionalities, instructional and behavioral strategies, and resources for paraeducators. Information specific to the students you work with, and further direction will come from the administrators and teachers in your building. Continued professional development will assist you in refining your skills and knowledge related to academic and behavior strategies specific to the students you are supporting.

Our goal is to assist students in becoming as independent as possible and to prepare them for a bright future! We value your work and desire to serve our students and thank you for your dedication and professionalism. Please let us know how we may support you in your endeavor to grow professionally and be a valuable member of our team!

Sincerely,

Student Services Leadership Team
Roles and Responsibilities of Para-educators

The Special Education Paraeducator assists the teacher with educational activities and non-teaching tasks. The teacher is responsible for the development of the instructional program.

The Special Education Paraeducator is a member of the instructional team who works under the supervision of a certified teacher. The Paraeducator completes standard daily tasks and helps to carry out the educational programs developed by the teacher and support personnel.

Paraeducators in gifted education (middle school and high school) are approved to provide clerical support in order to allow the teacher to work with students in groups and individually. Gifted education teachers train their paraeducators in the duties they are allowed to perform in this capacity. Gifted education teachers may have paraeducators supervise students as needed in order for the teacher to work with students individually or in smaller groups.

Acceptable Support Roles and Responsibilities

**Teacher Support:**

- Assists in preparation, care and use of instructional materials and equipment
- Maintain clean and organized instructional settings
- Follows instructions under the leadership of the teacher
- Assists in maintaining desirable behavior standards
- Assumes supervision of student(s) during the teacher’s temporary absence
- Clerical scheduling of meetings and preparation of basic paperwork (gifted education)

**Non-Classroom Support:**

- Assists students in the lunch room, playground, and restroom
- Accompanies teacher on extra-curricular trips
- Aids children in games and proper use of playground equipment
- Assists with clerical duties such as preparing instructional materials, photocopying, typing, charting, etc.
- Assists children to and from the bus

**Student Support:**

Effective paraeducators are critical to the success of our program.
• Provides educational activities to individual or groups of students under the guidance of a certified staff member
• Assists with group and individual activities
• Supervise students during transitions to ensure safety
• Assists children with personal care and sanitary needs
• Provide physical support as needed under the guidance of certified
• Implement behavior support plans
• Assists children with their Individual Education Program under the supervision and guidance of the teacher
• Assists with fire drill and tornado drill procedures
• Provide supervisory support in the classroom to allow the teacher to work with individual students or smaller groups of students (gifted education)

Unacceptable Support Roles and Responsibilities

• Be solely responsible for a classroom or professional support or related service
• Program and prescribe education activities or materials for the students, without the supervision and guidance of the teacher
• Be solely responsible for preparing lesson plans
• Be used as a substitute teacher unless the paraeducator possesses the appropriate certification
• Give medication unless supervised/trained by teacher or nurse
• Grade subjective or essay tests
• Be responsible for assigning grades to students
• Regulate pupil behavior by corporal punishment, aversives, or similar disciplinary means
• Write content or textbox information in IEPs (gifted education); gifted education teachers must write the content of IEPs
• Access the Gifted Data System (gifted education); teachers only have access to this system
• Read content of IEP files (gifted education); teachers may have gifted education paraeducators file paperwork, but files should not be read by paraeducators
Paraeducator Chain of Supervision

Below you will find the order in which concerns regarding job expectations, roles and responsibilities should be addressed. If student or staff safety is a concern, please do not hesitate to bring an issue to an administrator immediately.

Step 1
The first step in reporting a student concern, is talking with your supervising special education teacher.

Supervising Special Education/Gifted Education Teacher

Step 2
The supervising special education teacher may refer you to the principal if the teacher cannot resolve the problem. If you do not feel comfortable addressing the issue with the supervising teacher, the next step would be to make an appointment with the building principal.

Building Principal

Step 3
If the problem cannot be resolved through discussions with the supervising teacher or principal, ask for an appointment with the Special Education Administrator assigned to your building or program. If you have questions regarding who is assigned to your building please call Vickie Murphy at 4044.

Special Education Administrator

Step 4
If the problem cannot be resolved through discussions with the supervising teacher, building administrator, or Special Education Coordinator, then the next step would be requesting an appointment with the Director of Special Education.

Director of Special Education

Step 5
If the problem cannot be resolved through discussions with the supervising teacher, building principal, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Special Education, ask for an appointment with the Director of Human Resources.

Director of Human Resources
Paraeducators function as a member of a team and have a special relationship with teachers, other school personnel, students, parents, 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. Therefore, it is important that paraeducators are exposed to and discuss ethical guidelines.

This section will cover a code of ethics as it relates to working with students, teachers, the school, and the community. The information will give the paraeducator insight into what it means to abide by a code of ethics and why professionals adopt a code of ethics.

The confidentiality worksheet will enable the paraeducator to assess knowledge of ethical concerns, including confidentiality of information and records concerning student and parents.

What Are Ethical Standards?

Paraeducators may face situations where their own interests, a student’s interest, or the school’s interests may conflict. Ethical standards help us to become aware of the correct course of action with regard to a variety of perspectives other than just our own. We need to consider the ethical implications of the decisions that we make and the potential impact on students and other school staff.

Ethics are particularly important because paraeducators and teachers are placed in a position of authority over students. Students are often vulnerable and have limited influence, relying on paraeducators, teachers and parents to protect their best interests. Paraeducators are obligated to be as fully prepared as possible to function ethically, as well as legally, in the school environment. Ethical standards provide a framework for reflecting on appropriate behavior.

General Ethical Considerations for Working with Students with Disabilities

As an integral part of the educational team, paraeducators have a commitment to maintain ethical standards of behavior in their relationships with students, parents, their supervisor, and other school personnel. Teachers have a responsibility to help the paraeducator develop ethical responses to situations that arise. A code of ethics, such as the one provided below, can establish guidelines for appropriate behavior.
Accepting Responsibilities

1. Do not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents as this is the role of the teacher. Exceptions may be made by the supervising teacher for daily communication logs, but guidance must be provided by the teacher.
2. Refer concerns expressed by parents, students, or others to your teacher or supervisor.
3. Recognize that the supervisor has the ultimate responsibility for the instruction and behavior management of the children and follow the directions prescribed by him/her.

Relationship with Student and Parents

1. Discuss a child’s progress, limitations, and/or educational program only with the supervising teacher in the appropriate setting.
2. Discuss school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel, and only when students are not present.
3. Discriminatory practices based on a student’s disability, race, sex, cultural background or religion are not tolerated.
4. Respect the dignity, privacy, and individuality of all students, parents, and staff members.
5. Present yourself as a positive adult role model.
6. Use behavior management strategies which are consistent with standards established by the local school district and classroom teacher.

Relationship with the Teacher

1. Recognize the role of the teacher as supervisor.
2. Express differences of opinion appropriately and only when students are not present.
Code of Ethics for Paraeducators

1. The Paraeducator should discuss the children’s limitations only with the supervising teacher and those directly involved with the child’s educational program.

2. The Paraeducator should refrain from: (a) discussing school problems and confidential matters, including personalities, outside of school; (b) discussing administrative and inter-departmental problems in the presence of pupils; and (c) gossiping about problems with those who cannot assist in the solution.

3. The Paraeducator should be consistent in managing the behavior of the students.

4. The Paraeducator should express differences of opinion or dissatisfaction with the supervising teacher only in a private setting.

5. The Paraeducator should only show anger at himself/herself away from the presence of the students.

6. Students are not to be threatened.

7. Programming and prescribing educational activities and materials for children is not the responsibility of the Paraeducator.

8. Evaluation of children from psychological or diagnostic instruments is not a responsibility of the Paraeducator.

9. Preparing lesson plans and initiating original concept instruction is the responsibility of the supervising teacher.

10. Discipline of children is the direct responsibility of the supervising teacher.

You are a member of a most important profession. What you do in the classroom will have an impact on the lives of students. A child may learn to read because of your efforts. A student may begin to see himself/herself as an important human being because of your efforts on his/her behalf. Your individual help may give a student new confidences in dealing with future problem situations. Others may learn greater tolerance and respect for those with different ability or from other racial or economic groups because of your actions.
Confidentiality

One of the most important aspects of ethical behavior for paraeducators is the handling and disclosure of confidential information about students and their families. During the normal course of daily activities the paraeducator comes in contact with a wide variety of information about students. Information may include test scores, behavior, attendance, family problems and many other kinds of personal information. School personnel, including paraeducators, are required by law to keep this information confidential.

Confidentiality can be broken down into three areas:

1) Confidentiality of written records
2) Confidentiality of observed behavior
3) Confidentiality of personal communication

GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY

- Confide completely in the teacher
- If the teacher is not available, use the chain of command
- Determine with the teacher which professionals have a need to know and which do not
- Do not repeat information that may cause harm to the student or his/her family
- Tactfully turn away questions that ask for confidential information
- Never participate in lounge talk
- Direct any questions from parents about the progress or problems of a student to the teacher first, if the teacher is not available then to the building principal
- Student behavior in or out of the classroom is confidential and not to be discussed with anyone other than the teacher. Parent requests concerning behavior are to be referred to the teacher.

Laws, regulations, policies and other legal considerations restrict and determine the use of information about students. The paraeducator will discuss the student only with the supervising special education/gifted education teacher and those school officials who have responsibilities for the student’s educational programs. Under no circumstances is the paraeducator to relay information about students to others. Refer any questions to the certified teacher.

Paraeducators are members of the school community. They will at times become aware of information that persons in authority should know. When passing on information, such as information about a student, the paraeducator must be careful to relay only facts, not opinions.
Paraeducators will also acquire information concerning students, personnel, and incidents that occur during the school day. This information should not be passed on to those outside of the school environment. Gossip is unbecoming, destructive, and should be avoided at all costs. Remember that you represent the school district.

Breaching confidentiality is grounds for termination. If you are not sure what information is considered confidential, always refer to your supervising teacher or principal.
State Required Professional Development Hours

Inservice hours are a requirement of the Kansas Department of Education and are a job requirement. Obtaining these hours is crucial to Special Education reimbursement in any school district. There are two in-service tiers which are explained below. Each year all inservice hours are due in mid-April. The specific date will be sent out annually and all hours will need to be received by Stacy Smith by that date.

The majority of paras will fall in tier I which requires twenty hours of inservice per paraeducator in order for a district to receive special education reimbursement for the para educators.

The second tier is a requirement of ten10 hours for paras who meet the guidelines. A para must have worked in an educational institution as a para for three consecutive school years and have met the ten hour inservice requirement each year. Paras who meet these guidelines must contact Stacy Smith to complete the form indicating that only ten hours are required.

What if I started after the first day of Inservice?

Throughout the school year, new paras will be hired. Below is a chart which will help to determine how many inservice hours should be completed according to the time of hiring. For example, if a para was hired on November 12th, he/she will need to complete fourteen hours of inservice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th># Inservice hours needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Counts as Inservice?

- All paraeducators, new and returning must receive an Orientation and Confidentiality training for two hours annually. This requirement is completed through five assigned Infinitec modules online. For more information on these modules, please visit www.bvparapl.weebly.com.
- All paraeducators need to complete the Blood Borne Pathogens training either at the Classified Orientation with Human Resources (for new hires), or online via Infinitec. Additionally, all paraeducators must complete de-escalation and emergency safety intervention training online via Infinitec.
- College course related to education or related field can be counted towards inservice hours. Each college credit will count as 20 hours of inservice. Credit will be given in the same year as which the coursework was obtained. College course can only count for ½ of the required inservice hours.
- Paraeducators have access to Infinitec Modules for inservice opportunities. Please see appendix A for Infinitec instructions.

How do I log my inservice hours?

- Inservice logs can be picked up in your building office.
- Paraeducators need to ensure that all logs are signed by his or her supervising teacher.
- College courses submitted for inservice hours must include a transcript at the end of the semester to receive credit.
- Once logs are completed, send the inservice log to Stacy Smith, at Hilltop Learning Center. Best practice is for logs to be submitted monthly.

*More information and links to para professional learning opportunities can be found at: www.bvparapl.weebly.com.*
# Examples of Approved Paraeducator Inservice Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Equivalent hour(s) for in-service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District Sponsored Staff Development Opportunities</td>
<td>Staff development opportunities have to be special education related to count towards paraeducator inservice log.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified Orientation Session</td>
<td>3-3.5 hours: This event is for New paraeducators only and can be counted one time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning Assignments as assigned by supervising teacher.</td>
<td>To be completed with approval from supervising teacher. Inservice hours earned equivalent to number of hours spent in activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>On the Inservice log, you MUST BE SPECIFIC about the activity. You cannot put “training with supervising teacher.” It must be specific. I.e. “training on student behavior plan for acting out behaviors.”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend building level inservice sessions (must be pre-approved by Special Services Coordinator)</td>
<td>Inservice hours earned equivalent to number of hours spent in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend district level Para-educator in-services</td>
<td>Inservice hours earned equivalent to number of hours spent in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infinitec Modules</td>
<td>Completion certificate should be turned in with log. Time allotment varies per modules and will be indicated on completion certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism Modules</td>
<td>Each module is counted as 1 hour of professional learning. Post-test should be turned in along with log.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR</td>
<td>Inservice hours earned equivalent to number of hours spent in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI Initial or Refresher training session</td>
<td>Inservice hours earned equivalent to number of hours spent in session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-approved college classes</td>
<td>Each college hour will be counted as 20 staff development hours. Credit will be given in the same year as which the coursework was obtained. College course can only count for ½ of the required inservice hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology based classes</td>
<td>Classes accepted if they will be directly used in the special education classroom for student learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Performance Appraisal

The performance appraisal for paraeducators is an online process. The elements of the performance appraisal include the following:

- Essential Functions of Position - found in job description
- Job Related Competencies - found in job description
  - Ability, Knowledge, Skills, and Responsibilities
- District Defined Standards - Blue Valley Standards

Blue Valley Standards:
All classified employees will be appraised on the following district defined standards:

- Understands & respects the importance of professional confidentiality
- Ability & willingness to work as a collaborative team player
- Courteous to students, parents, colleagues & patrons
- Professional approach to all situations
- Attendance / Punctuality
- Organization / Attention to Detail

District Standard Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Standards:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job Description

Special Education Paraeducator

Purpose Statement
The job of Special Education Paraeducator is done for the purpose/s of assisting in the supervision, care and instruction of special needs students in the regular classroom, interrelated resource rooms, or in a self-contained classroom; assisting in implementing plans for instruction; monitoring student behavior; providing information to appropriate school personnel; and performing classroom clerical tasks.

Essential Functions
- Adapts and provides accommodations of classroom activities; assignments and/or materials under the direction of the teacher for the purpose of providing an opportunity for special education students to actively participate in classroom activities.
- Aids students in and out of classroom (e.g. packing backpacks, note taking, relationship building, field trips, social skills, etc.) for the purpose of providing assistance to students' needs and social growth.
- Assists students requiring support in addressing personal care needs due to medical condition and/or physical limitations (e.g. lavatory, nutritional, etc.) for the purpose of allowing students to function in the school environment.
- Attends meetings and in-service presentations (e.g. CPR, education strategies, specific disability education, etc.) for the purpose of acquiring and/or conveying information relative to job functions to meet established annual State requirements.
- Collaborates with staff for the purpose of providing necessary support and information related to the student's progress as established in their Individual Educational Program.
- Implements educational and behavioral programming under the supervision of the classroom certified staff for the purpose of developing new skills for students.
- Implements behavioral plans for students as designed by the IEP team for the purpose of assisting in meeting special education students' needs and providing a consistent environment under the direction of certified staff.
- Instructs students in a variety of activities in individual and group settings (e.g. academic subjects, social skills, daily living skills, etc.) for the purpose of meeting Individual Educational Program goals under the direction of certified staff.
- Maintains instructional materials and data sheets for the purpose of ensuring availability of instructional materials and/or providing reliable information regarding student progress.
- Monitors students during assigned periods within a variety of school environments (e.g. rest rooms, playgrounds, hallways, bus loading zones, fire drills, assemblies, cafeteria, parking lots, etc.) for the purpose of providing a safe and positive environment conducive to learning.
- Performs various administrative support and record keeping functions for the purpose of providing documentation in conformance with established State and Federal program standards.
Other Functions
Performs other related duties, as assigned, for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the work unit.

Job Requirements: Minimum Qualifications

Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

SKILLS are required to perform multiple tasks with a potential need to upgrade skills in order to meet changing job conditions. Specific skill based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: adhering to safety practices; operating standard office equipment including using pertinent software applications; preparing and maintaining accurate records; and using district approved crisis intervention techniques.

KNOWLEDGE is required to perform basic math; read and follow instructions; and understand complex, multi-step written and oral instructions. Specific knowledge based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: instructional procedures and practices; age appropriate student activities; safety practices and procedures; conflict resolution; and stages of child development/behavior; and safe handling of blood-borne pathogens and crisis de-escalation techniques.

ABILITY is required to schedule activities and/or meetings; gather and/or collate data; and use job-related equipment. Flexibility is required to work with others in a wide variety of circumstances; work with data utilizing defined but different processes; and operate equipment using standardized methods. Ability is also required to work with a diversity of individuals and/or groups; work with a variety of data; and utilize a variety of job-related equipment. Problem solving is required to analyze issues and create action plans. Problem solving with data may require independent interpretation; and problem solving with equipment is limited to moderate. Specific ability based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: adapting to changing work priorities; communicating with diverse groups; maintaining confidentiality; working as part of a team; and working with constant interruptions.

Responsibility
Responsibilities include: working under direct supervision using standardized procedures; providing information and/or advising others; utilization of some resources from other work units may be required to perform the job’s functions. There is some opportunity to impact the organization’s services.
Work Environment
The usual and customary methods of performing the job's functions require the following physical demands: significant lifting, carrying, pushing, and/or pulling, some climbing and balancing, some stooping, kneeling, crouching, and/or crawling and significant fine finger dexterity. Generally the job requires 30% sitting, 35% walking, and 35% standing. The job is performed under minimal temperature variations and under conditions with exposure to risk of injury and/or illness.

Experience: Job related experience is desired.

Education: Targeted, job related education with study in job-related area

Continuing Educ. / Training: Up to 20 hours annually of in-service training

Clearances: Criminal Justice Fingerprint/Background Clearance; Kansas Certificate of Health

Job Competency Example
Job Description

Gifted Education Para Educator

Purpose Statement
The job of Gifted Paraeducator is done for the purpose/s of working, under the supervision of a certificated teacher, with individual and/or small groups of gifted students; and providing administrative/clerical support to the gifted teacher.

Essential Functions
- Administers tests, homework assignments, make-up work, etc. for the purpose of supporting teachers in the instructional process.
- Assists students, individually or in small groups, with assignments (e.g. special projects, competitions, etc.) for the purpose of practicing and/or reinforcing learning concepts and assisting students in reaching the stated goals of their Individual Educational Program.
- Attends meetings and in-service presentations for the purpose of acquiring and/or conveying information relative to job functions to meet established annual State requirements.
- Collaborates with staff for the purpose of providing necessary support and information related to the student's progress as established in their Individual Educational Program.
- Implements, under the supervision of assigned teacher, instructional programs and/or projects for the purpose of assisting the teacher in implementing differentiated lessons for identified gifted students through a defined curriculum.
- Maintains classroom equipment, work areas, students files/records (e.g. work area, attendance, assignment progress, activities, etc.) for the purpose of ensuring availability of materials and/or information for the students' program.
- Monitors students in a variety of settings (e.g. classroom, field trips, competitions, etc.) for the purpose of identifying any required assistance and ensuring the maintenance of a safe and positive learning environment.
- Performs various administrative support and record keeping functions (e.g. maintaining IEP documentation, student progress reports for parents, student files, meeting notices, required reevaluations, student goal documents, etc.) for the purpose of providing documentation in conformance with established State and Federal program standards.
- Performs various administrative support and record keeping (e.g. copying, correcting papers, completing attendance verifications, taking and recording phone calls, etc.) for the purpose of supporting the teacher and/or in providing necessary records/materials.
- Supports students in various activities (e.g. individual projects, competitions, group assignments, etc.) for the purpose of providing guidance and/or identifying resources in the implementation of special projects and activities.

Other Functions

Blue Valley Para-educator Handbook
• Performs other related duties, as assigned, for the purpose of ensuring the efficient and effective functioning of the work unit.

Job Requirements: Minimum Qualifications
Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

SKILLS are required to perform multiple tasks with a need to occasionally upgrade skills in order to meet changing job conditions. Specific skill based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: operating standard office equipment including using pertinent software applications; and preparing and maintaining accurate records.

KNOWLEDGE is required to perform basic math, including calculations using fractions, percentages, and/or ratios; read a variety of manuals, write documents following prescribed formats, and/or present information to others; and understand complex, multi-step written and oral instructions. Specific knowledge based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: concepts of grammar and punctuation; stages of child development and learning styles; and age appropriate activities.

ABILITY is required to schedule activities, meetings, and/or events; collate data; and use job-related equipment. Flexibility is required to work with others in a variety of circumstances; work with data utilizing defined but different processes; and operate equipment using standardized methods. Ability is also required to work with a wide diversity of individuals; work with a variety of data; and utilize a variety of job-related equipment. Problem solving is required to identify issues and create action plans. Problem solving with data requires independent interpretation of guidelines; and problem solving with equipment is limited to moderate. Specific ability based competencies required to satisfactorily perform the functions of the job include: communicating with diverse groups; maintaining confidentiality; setting priorities; working as part of a team; and working with constant interruptions.

Responsibilities
Responsibilities include: working with immediate supervision; providing information and/or advising others; utilization of some resources from other work units may be required to perform the job's functions. There is some opportunity to affect the organization’s services.

Work Environment
The usual and customary methods of performing the job’s functions require the following physical demands: occasional lifting, carrying, pushing, and/or pulling, frequent stooping, kneeling, crouching, and/or crawling and significant fine finger dexterity. Generally the job requires 25% sitting, 35% walking, and 40% standing. This job is performed in a generally clean and healthy environment.
Appraisal Timeframe for All Para Educators

All classified employees receive their first performance appraisal after the initial four months of employment. Thereafter, classified employees will be appraised annually at the end of each school year.
Special Education and the IEP Process

What is special education?
Special education is instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of children who have exceptionalities (disabilities and giftedness). This is done at no cost to the parents. Special education can include special instruction in the classroom, at home, in hospitals or institutions, or in other settings.

Over 5 million children ages 3 through 21 receive special education and related services in public schools each year in the United States. Each of these children receives instruction that is specially designed:

- To meet the child’s unique needs (that result from having an exceptionality); and
- To help the child learn the information and skills that other children are learning.

This definition of special education comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Who is eligible for special education?
Certain children with exceptionalities are eligible for special education and related services. The IDEA provides a definition of a “child with a disability.” This law lists 13 different disability categories under which a child may be found eligible for special education and related services. These categories are:

- Autism
- Deafness
- Deaf-blindness
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Serious emotional disturbance
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Visual impairment, including blindness

According to the IDEA, the disability must affect the child’s educational performance. Eligibility for special education for a disability requires that schools determine if a student has a disability AND if there is an impact on the student’s education/learning due to that disability. That is, the disability must cause the child to need special education and related services.
Giftedness
In addition to the 13 categories of exceptionalities defined by IDEA, the state of Kansas also includes giftedness as special education exceptionality. The laws that govern special education processes also apply to students who are determined to be gifted, and these identified students also have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Eligibility for gifted education requires the school team to determine that the student is gifted AND that because of the giftedness, there is an impact on the student’s education/learning. Blue Valley has a separate eligibility process to determine if students are gifted; a three-phase process incorporates numerous data points, and the team makes final determinations based on what the data shows. Students who are identified as gifted by Blue Valley receive special education services from gifted education specialists.

What is an IEP?
IEP stands for Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a written legal document that describes the education plan for a student with exceptionality. IEPs include information about the exceptionality, skills that are needed to learn, what services the school will provide, and where the learning will take place.

Why Do Students with Exceptionalities Need an IEP?
It is the law. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each student with a disability who receives special education services to have an IEP. It is an educational program written just for that student.

It is also part of Kansas law that students identified as gifted will have an IEP that defines the student’s individual services in gifted education. This is a mandated requirement for all districts in Kansas.

What is the Purpose of an IEP?
The IEP has two general purposes: (1) to set reasonable learning goals for the student; and (2) to state the services that the school district will provide for the student.

Where is the IEP Developed?
The IEP is developed during the IEP meeting. The people concerned with the education of the student meet, discuss, and develop the IEP goals and services for the year.

Who Comes to the IEP Meeting?
- The Student
- Student’s Parents
- At least one of the regular education teachers if the student is in general education classes
- At least one of the special education teachers
- Someone who can talk about the evaluation results and what they mean
• Someone from the school system who knows about special education services and can talk about the resources needed for the student. This person may be the principal or a person in a similar position
• People from transition service agencies (such as vocational rehabilitation) to help plan a program for the student upon graduation or after age 21
• Other people who know the student’s strength and needs and can help plan the educational program

How often is the IEP Meeting Held?
The law requires that each student’s IEP is reviewed and if necessary revised at least once a year. This requires at least one meeting per year; however, a student, family, or school staff can request more IEP meetings if necessary.
Paraeducators in the General Education Classroom

There are many accommodations, adaptations, modifications, and types of assistance a paraeducator can provide in an inclusive classroom. The following is a partial list of possibilities to assist teams in determining the appropriate role for the paraeducator. Adaptations are individually determined based upon student need. Paraeducator should only begin an adaptation following instruction from the teacher or related services provider. Any adaptation should first be approved and designed by the team prior to the paraeducator’s implementation of the modification. Paraeducators for gifted education spend their time in the gifted education classroom working under the direction of the gifted education teacher.

For students who are inattentive, a paraeducator could:
- With the teacher’s permission, seat the student in a quiet area, or
- Seat the student near a good role model, or
- Seat the student near a “study buddy.”
- Assist the student in setting short-term goals.
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions.
- Give clear, concise instructions.
- Have student repeat instructions or expectations.

For students who are impulsive, a paraeducator could:
- Ignore minor, inappropriate behavior.
- Increase immediacy of rewards and consequences.
- Supervise closely during transition times.
- Attend to positive behavior with compliments.
- Acknowledge positive behavior of other students.

For students who are very active, a paraeducator could:
- Provide reassurance and encouragement.
- Frequently compliments positive behavior and work product.
- Speak softly in non-threatening manner if student shows nervousness.
- Review instructions of new assignments to make sure the student understands.
- Look for opportunities for student to display leadership in the class and mention them to the teacher.
- Make time to talk alone to the student.
- Encourage social interactions with classmates if student is withdrawn or shy.
- Reinforce frequently when signs of frustration are noted.
- Spend time talking to students who seem pent up or display anger easily.

A para affects eternity—“you can never tell where your influence stops.”
Henry Adams.
• During a lecture, model note taking of key concepts on overhead projector, chalkboard or flipchart.
• Make sure that both written and oral directions are given.
• Provide feedback to the team about whether or not a student may need shortened assignments or longer time to complete assignments.
• Assist the teacher in providing immediate feedback to student after completion of assignments.
• Assist student with an alternate assignment when the team has determined one to be appropriate (Example: If the student has poor writing skills, the teacher may allow the student to do an oral assignment).
• Read material aloud with the student to allow another method of input.
• Assist students who have trouble memorizing to use manipulatives, cards, number lines, math fact tables or calculators.
• When a student has trouble aligning numbers, use graph paper or turn lined paper in a vertical direction.

For students who have difficulty with visual perception, a paraeducator could:
• Give oral directions to an assignment.
• Tape record directions, so that the student may replay as often as needed.
• Reduce the visual distractions in the student’s work areas.
• Make sure that directions given are concise and clearly written.
• Make sure that the student has a copy of the teacher’s lecture notes.
• Teach the student to take notes and proofread.
• Assist the student to highlight key points in textbooks purchased for the student.
• Introduce new vocabulary before a new chapter/story/assignment.
• Check for comprehension after reading.
• Discuss written responses with the student.
• Assist the student to make a small notebook dictionary of misspelled words to use as a reference.
• Have the student verbally state steps to solving math equations before doing them.

For students who have difficulty with auditory perception, a paraeducator could:
• Provide short oral directions.
• Have the student repeat the directions back to you.
• Talk slowly to the student – give them time to process.
• Provide a quiet work area for the student.
• Try to pair a visual cue with auditory directions when possible.
• Provide a lecture outline.
• Provide an example on worksheets for the student to refer back to.
• Increase your “wait time” before expecting a response.
Paraeducators can assist the classroom teacher in providing a variety of instructional arrangements:

- Assisting one or more cooperative groups to complete an assignment or activity.
- Assist peer partners to complete an assignment or project.
- Assist peer tutors or cross-age tutors.
- Assist students during independent work time.

Paraeducators can assist the teacher in changing the format of a lesson:

- Facilitate a small group discussion following presentations of some material.
- Assist the teacher in developing and providing games, simulations, role-playing and activity based lessons. This could include gathering and preparing materials, making games, setting up activities, supervising small groups or individual work.
- Provide instruction in a community setting (particularly for students with moderate to severe exceptionalities).

Other things paraeducators can do:

- Assist students who have different learning outcomes for a particular activity. (Example: A student with severe exceptionalities may have a learning outcome that focuses on reaching and grasping materials during a science experiment rather than acquiring knowledge of a scientific process).
- Provide information to the team about adaptations that are needed to the physical environment such as accessing materials or activities, lighting and seating location.
- Provide information to the team about adaptations needed for instruction materials such as larger print, need for manipulatives, etc.
- Provide suggestions to the team for ways to fade out adult assistance and substitute peer assistance or independence when possible.
- Develop a picture schedule for the student to use throughout the day.
- Take data on behavior or IEP objectives.
- Provide suggestions to the team about new vocabulary to teach based upon the student’s daily schedule, interests.
- Provide positive support for the teacher.
Promoting Student Independence and Fading Support

Special educators and paraeducators are dedicated to providing the supports needed by students with disabilities. However, we are sometimes guilty of providing too much support which can prevent a student from developing independence. Our goal must be to promote as much independence as possible for the students we serve. Here are some tips and reminders:

- Watch before assisting – Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer?
- Can the student problem-solve on his/her own?
- Have high expectations regarding what the student understands and can do independently
- Provide a consistent classroom schedule and teach student how to use it. (Posted and visual at desk, if needed. Include reinforcements in the schedule.)
- Begin with the least intrusive prompts to get the student to respond.
- Prompt the student, then back away allowing independent time
- Use strengths/weaknesses, likes/dislikes
- Model, guide (watch & assist), check (leave and check back)
- Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students)
- Encourage age appropriate work habits – see what other students are doing
- Be aware of proximity – sit with student only when necessary
- Encourage peer assistance and partnering – teach peers how to help, but not enable
- Utilize self-monitoring checklists for students
- Color code materials to assist with organization
- Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition
- Break big tasks into steps
- Use backward chaining (i.e. leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task)
- Encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS)
- Provide positive feedback (be specific to the situation)
- Ask facilitative questions: “What comes next?”; “What are other students doing?”; “What does the schedule say?”; “What did the teacher say?”
- Give choices
Accommodations vs. Modifications

*Think of the paraeducator’s role of providing accommodations/modifications for students like working with a thermostat.*

*The special education teacher turns on the air conditioner and the paraeducator adjusts the thermostat.*

Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to participate actively with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities. Specific accommodations and modifications are identified and approved for students by the IEP (Individual Education Plan) Team. The special education teacher will share the specific accommodations and modifications for each student to be successful. As a paraeducator or inclusion helper, you will assist in providing the appropriate accommodations and modifications in academic settings.

For students in gifted education, the only accommodations available to them are related to their intellectual giftedness (i.e. academic differentiation strategies, advanced resources, etc.). Some students are identified with both disabilities and giftedness (twice-exceptional students); these students will receive services for all of their needs from the certified experts for each area of need (i.e. gifted education teacher for giftedness, IRR teacher for dyslexia, etc.). Twice-exceptional students have IEPs that include all their areas of need.

**Accommodations**

- Changes HOW a student accesses or demonstrates learning
  - Setting
    - Small group
    - Seating in front of the room
    - Limited distractions
    - Study carrel
  - Presentation
    - Chunking –breaking up tasks/assignments into smaller pieces
    - Outline/highlight key points/concept
  - Scheduling
    - Occasional Breaks
    - Use of timers
    - Visual schedule
Response Mode

- Dictated response
- Picture Symbols
- Extended time for written response

Examples of Accommodations

- test taken orally
- large print textbooks
- additional time to take test
- locker with an adapted lock
- weekly home-school communication tool, such as a notebook or daily log book
- peer support for note taking
- lab sheets with highlighted instructions
- graph paper to assist in organizing and lining up math problems
- tape record lectures
- use of a computer for writing

Modifications

- Changes WHAT a student is expected to learn

  - Requiring a student to learn less material or content
  - Revising assignments to reduce expectations
  - Reducing test content

Examples of Modifications

- outline in place of essay for major project
- picture/symbols choices on tests
- alternative books or materials on the same theme or topic
- spelling support from a computerized spell check program
- word bank of choices for answers to test questions
- use of a calculator on a math test
- film or video supplements in place of text
- questions re-worded using simpler language
- projects substituted for written reports
- important words and phrases highlighted
Positive Behavioral Strategies and Supports

Positive behavioral strategies and supports are intended to help students behave in ways that are helpful to their learning. Adults implement these strategies and support in an effort to modify behaviors that may impede the student’s learning or the learning of others.

- Behavior is a means of communication. Consider what the student is trying to tell you with the behavior. Is she hungry? Is he frustrated? Is he trying to get attention? Is she trying to escape the demand? Is he sick?

- Behind most behaviors exists a skill deficit:
  - Language and social difficulties
  - Sensory processing difficulties
  - Academic and writing skill deficits
  - Difficulties managing stress and anxiety
  - Attention difficulties
  - Difficulties handling transition and change
  - Difficulties with self esteem
  - Organizational difficulties

- Implement classroom and individual student behavior plans created by the teacher and/or IEP team consistently.
- Remind students of expectations prior to the transitions of an activity.
- Be cognizant of triggers/antecedents (what happens prior to the behavior occurring) that may lead to inappropriate behavior.
- Communicate with the teacher regarding student behaviors within a reasonable time frame.
- Encourage, expect and reinforce age appropriate behavior, even with students with lower cognitive abilities.
- Be proactive when assisting with behavior management. Provide structure and routine in an environment that is conducive to learning.
- When communicating with students, state directions and expectations in a simple, explicit, and positive manner. Tell the students what they are supposed to do. For instance, instead of saying “Don’t run”, say “Please walk in the halls”.
- Offer students choices to avoid a power struggle. Rather than say “Don’t tap your pencil”, state “Would you rather put your pencil in your pencil case or in your desk.”
- Provide and encourage association with appropriate peer role models.
- Avoid overreacting to inappropriate behavior. Some students may be reinforced by negative attention which may increase inappropriate behaviors.
- When possible, ignore attention seeking behaviors that are not disruptive to the classroom.
- Diffuse stressful situations for students through redirection and distraction when appropriate.
• Provide positive reinforcement. Avoid focusing on punitive consequences or loss of privileges.
• When offering positive reinforcement, state what you like about the behavior. Rather than just saying say “good job”, state “I like the way you raised your hand to participate.”
• Avoid discussing incidents of behavior that occurred in the past.
• Physical intervention is used as a last resort. This intervention is utilized only by those trained in Crisis Prevention Intervention. Must complete documentation if physical intervention is used.
• Avoid personalizing student behavior and language.
• Focus on the positive!
Aversives

The purpose of this section is to provide direction and clarity to paraeducators when questions arise regarding students with behavioral concerns. When working within special education classrooms, our foremost responsibility is to ensure the safety of all students and staff. Students with learning differences often struggle with behaviors that are concerning. This is a common issue within the learning environment for students with special needs. It is best practice to utilize a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports plan (PBIS) prior to more restrictive Behavioral Interventions Plan (BIP). The school teams will be using PBIS for all students with disabilities who need more intensive behavioral support. The PBIS creates a learning environment that uses positive interventions to modify the environment and decrease interfering behaviors.

Aversive behavioral interventions are the application of any procedure, material, intervention, or action, that when applied by an adult following student behavior, is physically painful to the student.

In the past, families may have used aversive procedures as a behavioral management technique to reduce their child’s negative behaviors. Blue Valley School District does not support the use of aversives.

The definition of aversive does not limit staff members from using such interventions as, firm commands; time-limited ignoring of a specific behavior; token fines as part of a token economy system; brief physical prompts to interrupt or prevent a specific behavior; or other similar interventions.

Deciding when interventions are aversives can sometimes be black and white, with an easy yes or no answer. For example, if a student was hit by staff, anyone could tell easily that striking a student is an aversive. However, sometimes there is a “gray area,” and objective analysis is needed. What can be considered aversive is determined by the intent of the person administering the intervention, the reaction of the student, the type of intervention used and other possible factors. It is expected that if you suspect an aversive is being used it must be reported. It is not appropriate to be a silent bystander.
**Mandated Reporting**

Child abuse and neglect can have a disastrous and long last effect on a child’s development and scholastic performance. According to Kansas law (Kansas Statutes Annotated 38-1521), certain individuals are considered to be “mandated reporters” of abuse and neglect. This includes “teachers, administrators or other employees of a school.” When school personnel suspect for any reason that a child has been a possible victim of abuse or neglect by family members or others, they are required by law to file a report to the Department for Children and Families (DCF), which is a division of Social Rehabilitation Services (SRS) of Johnson County.

Failure of school personnel to initiate a report when suspicion exists is a crime (Class B misdemeanor). Failing to report suspected child abuse could result in fines or jail time.

In Kansas, “reason to suspect” means that “there is credible evidence or a discrepant or inconsistent history in explaining a child’s injury” (physical, mental, sexual, emotional or neglect). If it is necessary to file a report, the individual with the knowledge or suspicion will contact the Department for Children and Families. According to law, the identity of the person making the report will not be disclosed; however, it is not appropriate for school employees to make “anonymous reports” of suspected abuse since there can be no documentation of the report being made. While the DCF allows others to report anonymously, school employees must not. Investigation of the report may be conducted at school by DCF personnel who may at times be accompanied by a law enforcement officer. School staff will be included only in the investigation if deemed necessary by either DCF or the law enforcement officer.

The major purpose of reporting incidents is to ensure that children can feel safe in their homes, communities and schools. A second purpose of mandated reporting is to provide early home intervention in situations that require professional assistance. Mandated reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect is for the protection of our children. For further information about child abuse reporting, please contact your school principal, counselor or nurse; or contact Student Services at District Office, (913) 239-4044. For reporting child abuse and neglect, call DCF at 1-800-922-5330.
## Appendix A – Paraeducator Inservice Log

**Kansas State Department of Education**

**Blue Valley School District**

**Paraeducator Training Hours Log**

Date Hired: ____________________________  BVID#: ____________________________
Date Sent: ____________________________  School Year: ____________________________

Name: ____________________________________________  School: ____________________________

Special Education Supervising Teacher: ____________________________________________

**REQUIRED INSERVICE FOR ALL PARAEDUCATORS**

*minimum 2 hours per month for a total of 20 hours per year of employment.*  *See manual for details.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshops/Projects/Attended this period</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Name of Presenter</th>
<th>Date</th>
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College Courses completed this year:

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<th>Course Title (MUST be related to job)</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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**Be sure to attach grade card and/or registration information for proof of classes completed.**

(Required by the State or the hours will not be accepted.)

Paraeducator Signature ____________________________  Supervisor Signature ____________________________

*Send original to: Stacy Smith at Blue Valley Service Center.*  
*Give yellow copy to your Supervising Teacher.*  
*Keep pink copy for your records.*

***REPORTS DUE THE END OF EACH MONTH, AUGUST THROUGH APRIL***
Registering for an Account on MyInfinitec.org

1. Go to:  http://www.myinfinitec.org

2. In the upper, right-hand corner, click on the “Register” link, this is where you will also Sign In.
3. Fill out the information in the profile. Use your business address and phone number.

Then, create your sign-in name, which will be your full email address. This is necessary to avoid duplication of accounts. Then click “Save.”

Please fill out all fields.

4. Congratulations! Your registration has been accepted! Click the link to login to the MyInfinitec website. Alternatively, you can click on the ‘Sign In’ link in the upper right-hand corner of the webpage.
5. After you sign into Infinitec select Online Classrooms

6. Choose the classroom you will like to visit.
7. Choose the Video you would like to watch. After viewing the video you will need to take the Quiz. The video will tell you how much “credit” you will receive for the video.

8. After you take the quiz you will hit the “review quiz results” button in the Online Classroom.
9. Please make sure to print out the completed certificate indicating you have taken and passed the quiz.

10. When submitting In-service hours please include Infinitec modules on the form (example attached) documenting the credit that Infinitec assigns to each session. Please include the certificate documenting your test results along with the PD form.