

# A Guide for Understanding the Roles of Westfall Local School District's Paraprofessionals and the Educators, Related Service Providers, and Administrators Who Guide Them

The purpose of this guide is to define the roles of Westfall's paraprofessionals in our learning community and to use paraprofessionals in our classrooms more effectively and efficiently. The descriptions of the roles will be reviewed yearly. Any necessary changes identified at the time of the review will be incorporated into the guide at that time.

## Who are the members of the Westfall learning community?

- Any person who contributes to the education of Westfall Local School District students in Prekindergarten through Grade Twelve.

## Who is a Paraprofessional?

- A person\* who works alongside an educator within a school and is generally responsible for specialized or concentrated academic or non-academic assistance for students in elementary and secondary buildings and classrooms.

\*Sometimes referred to as a para, para-pro, paraeducator, instructional assistant, educational assistant, teacher's aide, or classroom assistant.

## Who is an Educator?

- A person who provides educational instruction such as a general education classroom teacher and intervention specialist.

## Who is a Related Service Provider?

- A person who provides occupational and physical therapy; speech-language and audiology services; or adapted physical education services.

## Who is an Administrator?

- A person who is in a position having supervisory responsibilities and duties, including building principals, special education director, curriculum director, and superintendent.

## Overlapping Roles of Members of the Westfall learning community

- OR1. Collaborate and communicate with other members of the instructional team to develop, implement, and evaluate appropriate instructional support for all students
- OR2. Engage in team meeting dialogue by offering ideas and insights related to instructional support for all students
- OR3. Challenge oneself to advance one's knowledge and skills to be able to successfully include and support all students in the classroom
- OR4. Continuously advocate for the development of the whole student to address their needs and to encourage their independence
- OR5. Maintain a strict adherence to the professional code of conduct, including that of confidentiality, in and out of the school building

## The Roles of Paraprofessionals and the Educators and Administrators Who Guide Them

The role of the <b>paraprofessional</b> is...	The role of the <b>educator</b> is...	The role of the <b>related service provider</b> is...	The role of the <b>administrator</b> is...
1. Implementing small-group and individual instruction for all students as planned for and assigned by educators	Planning academic content and discussing with paraprofessionals various instructional strategies to assist students in learning content	Providing supports that allow students in inclusive settings access or participation and ensuring those supports have been adequately communicated to paraprofessionals and educators	Facilitating scheduled opportunities, stating clear expectations, and encouraging inclusive attitudes for effective collaboration among educators, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, when appropriate, <b>for planning academic instruction</b>
2. Engaging in class-wide instructional monitoring of student work and performance identified and planned for by educators	Providing paraprofessionals appropriate methods for monitoring student academic work and performance	Providing paraprofessionals and educators appropriate methods for monitoring student academic work and performance for students placed in inclusive settings	Facilitating scheduled opportunities, stating clear expectations, and encouraging inclusive attitudes for effective collaboration among educators, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, when appropriate, <b>to discuss appropriate methods for monitoring student academic work and performance</b>
3. Collecting data on student progress as instructed by educators, including related service providers when appropriate	Discussing with paraprofessionals all relevant data collected and analyzed on student progress	Working with paraprofessionals and educators to determine when supports should be continued, modified, faded, or discontinued based on relevant student data	Facilitating scheduled opportunities, stating clear expectations, and encouraging inclusive attitudes for effective collaboration among educators, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, when relevant, <b>to analyze data to reach school improvement goals</b>
4. Accepting constructive feedback and demonstrating the flexibility to change performance based on feedback	Through summative methods, monitoring paraprofessionals' performance and providing them with constructive feedback	When appropriate and relevant, providing constructive feedback to paraprofessionals and educators related to inclusive students	Identifying for paraprofessionals their areas of strengths and weaknesses through the evaluation process
5. Maintaining professional behavior when addressing concerns related to students, classrooms, or classroom instruction with educators or related service providers and to meet with administrator, if not resolved	Developing a professional relationship with the paraprofessionals to allow for concerns of the paraprofessionals to be discussed and addressed	Developing a professional relationship with paraprofessionals and educators to allow concerns related to inclusive students to be discussed and addressed	When the need arises, discussing and addressing the paraprofessionals' concerns related to students, classrooms, or classroom instruction in a professional manner
6. Responding positively to new academic concepts being taught and instructional strategies suggested	Ensuring paraprofessionals have appropriate knowledge and skills to assist with new academic concepts taught and instructional strategies suggested	Ensuring paraprofessionals and educators have necessary training to implement adaptive equipment prior to using it	Providing access to relevant staff development and learning to ensure paraprofessionals have appropriate knowledge and skills to assist with academic concepts taught, instructional strategies suggested, and adaptive equipment used in the classroom
7. Being actively engaged in student learning when in the classroom	Planning for paraprofessionals' lessons and active interactions with students so as not to have paraprofessionals making inappropriate pedagogical decisions	Selecting adaptive equipment that allows for access, active participation or prevents negative outcomes (e.g., regression, discomfort, pain, etc.) for students placed in inclusive settings	When performing walkthroughs, make mental notes or written notes to paraprofessionals to provide them with feedback and support.

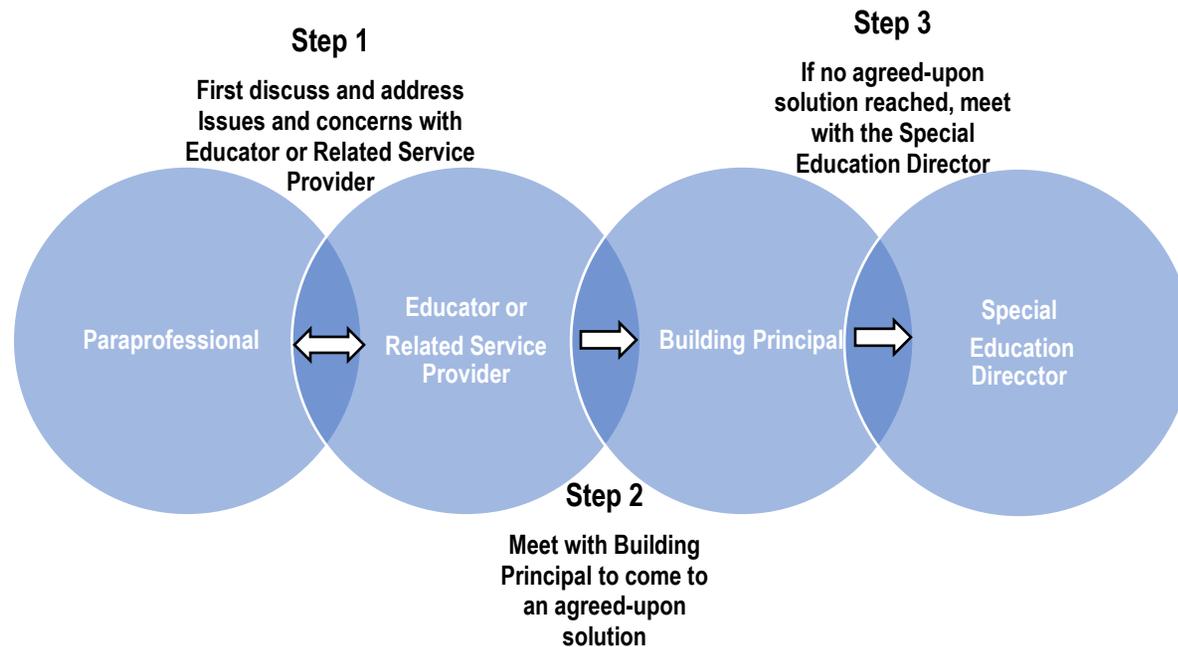
## The Roles of Paraprofessionals and Educators and Administrators Who Guide Them

The role of the <b>paraprofessional</b> is...	The role of the <b>educator</b> is...	The role of the <b>related service provider</b> is...	The role of the <b>administrator</b> is...
8. Demonstrating acceptance and inclusion of all students with or without disabilities.	Modeling behaviors for paraprofessionals that demonstrate acceptance and inclusion of all students with or without disabilities	Providing supports and resources that could be helpful to paraprofessionals and educators of students placed in inclusive settings	Providing supports and resources that could be helpful to paraprofessionals and educators of students placed in inclusive settings
9. Assisting students with personal care supports determined by needs (e.g., eating, using the bathroom, dressing, etc.) and engage in non-instructional tasks (e.g., group supervision in cafeteria, playground, bus arrival and dismissal, etc.) as [determined] by administrator	Ensuring paraprofessionals know students' instructional and non-instructional needs to better assist students	Purposefully discussing with paraprofessionals and educators, students' instructional and non-instructional needs to better assist students in inclusive educational settings	Determining non-instructional tasks assigned to paraprofessionals and providing them with the necessary support to successfully complete the tasks
10. Facilitating appropriate peer interactions based on guidance from educators and related service providers (e.g., supporting as appropriate, intervening when needed, encouraging students to help others, etc.)	Making paraprofessionals aware of school and classroom rules, expectations, and procedures and providing examples of appropriate peer interactions	Being aware of school and classroom rules, expectations, and procedures and providing paraprofessionals and educators examples of appropriate peer interactions within inclusive educational settings	When necessary, providing paraprofessionals, educators, and related service providers opportunities to collaborate and communicate with each other to ensure that examples of appropriate peer interactions are understood and implemented properly
11. Taking the initiative to develop and strengthen one's own knowledge and skills related to academic content and student expectations and behavior	Communicating to paraprofessionals any professional learning opportunities that would benefit them in assisting students with academic and non-academic tasks in and out of the classroom	Consulting with paraprofessionals and educators to provide information and skills associated with positioning a student for learning or programming communication devices that fit within inclusive educational settings	Identifying and communicating to paraprofessionals professional learning opportunities designed to develop and strengthen their knowledge and skills
12. Accepting a reassignment by administrators when student and classroom changes are needed (e.g., student illness, student crisis, student success, personnel changes, etc.)	When possible, identifying ways to support paraprofessionals and to contribute to the success of a re-assignment	Ensuring that any changes made to students in inclusive education settings are known to paraprofessionals and educators	Making paraprofessional assignment decisions, supervising their placement, and evaluating their performance

## Steps for Addressing Issues and Concerns

Effectively communicating issues and concerns that might arise between and among paraprofessionals, educators, related service providers, and administrators is crucial to having a successful working relationship in a school. Paraprofessionals, educators, related service providers, and administrators should develop a relationship that allows for issues and concerns related to students, classrooms, or classroom instruction to be discussed and addressed in a professional manner.

- **Step 1:** It is important that paraprofessionals first discuss issues and concerns with the Educator or Related Service Provider before meeting with the building principal.
- **Step 2:** When issues and concerns cannot be resolved through discussion with the Educator or Related Service Provider, the parties involved should meet with the Building Principal who, acting as a mediator, should attempt to arrive at an agreed-upon solution.
- **Step 3:** If no satisfactory solution can be reached after discussion with the Building Principal, the parties involved in the discussion of the raised issues and concerns, including the Building Principal, should meet with the Special Education Director for resolution.



## References

Michael F. Giangreco (2013) *Teacher Assistant Supports in Inclusive Schools: Research, Practices and Alternatives*. Australian Journal of Special Education.

Michael F. Giangreco, Jesse C. Suter, and Victoria Graf. *Roles of Team Members Supporting Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms*.

National Resources Center for Paraeducators <http://www.nrcpara.org/taxonomy/term/138>

Ohio Guidelines. *Improving Results for All Children; Guidelines for Paraprofessionals Supporting the Education of Children with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties*. <http://opepp.org/guidelines-standards/operating-standards>

Ohio Operating Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities <http://opepp.org/guidelines-standards/operating-standards>

OPEPP. <http://www.opepp.org>

Westfall Local School District Paraprofessional Job Description

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