

Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards

Overview

A paraprofessional practices responsibilities under the supervision of a highly qualified and certified/licensed professional in a manner consistent with the requirements of state and federal laws and regulations, as well as local district policies and procedures.

Recognizing the valuable role that paraprofessionals serve within the schools, districts, communities and the state of Alaska, paraprofessional standards were created to;

- correlate the standards of paraprofessionals with those of teachers;
- provide guidance to school district;
- comply with district, state and federal requirements;
- encourage paraprofessionals to aspire to a higher level achievement; and
- demonstrate the status, knowledge and professionalism of the paraprofessionals.

This document will serve diverse purposes for a variety of people and educational entities:

- **Paraprofessionals:**
induction into the profession, self-assessment, and career guidance
- **Teachers/providers :**
responsibilities and obligations toward paraprofessionals and supervisory role of teachers/providers
- **School Districts :**
hiring, needs assessment, job description, evaluation, and professional development (independently and in collaboration with universities)
- **Institutions of higher learning :**
provide professional development programs for paraprofessionals and training to preservice teachers on working with and supervising paraprofessionals

The Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance standards were created and reviewed by committees representing paraprofessionals, teachers, superintendents, special education educators, professional development educators, administrators, universities, US Department of Labor, paraprofessional labor organizations, and other educational community members.

The development process for paraprofessional performance standards began in May of 2002. Draft standards were reviewed by districts and other members of the educational community and went through numerous revisions. Feedback was received throughout the development process and incorporated into the final document.

The eight standards are divided into sections identifying knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators that demonstrate proficiency in the standard. These indicators are not intended to be all-inclusive. Indicators are identified as entry, intermediate, or an advanced level:

- Entry level paraprofessionals meet district, state and federal requirements and all standard indicators marked as (E) within ninety days of employment.
- Intermediate level paraprofessionals meet standard indicators marked as (E) and (I).
- Advanced level paraprofessionals meet standard indicators marked as (E), (I), and (A).

Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards

I. Professional and Ethical Practices

A paraprofessional practices ethical and professional standards of conduct and continues professional improvement.

II. Characteristics of Student Learning

A paraprofessional understands how students learn and develop and how to assist in providing opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

III. Instructional Content/Assisting Practice (No Child Left Behind NCLB)

A paraprofessional knows the content areas and applies the elements of effective instruction to support teaching and learning activities.

IV. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

A paraprofessional motivates and assists children and youth to build self-esteem, develop interpersonal skills and strengthen abilities to become more successful.

V. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

A paraprofessional understands the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel in the areas of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation.

VI. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

A paraprofessional adheres to communication protocol with colleagues, community members, and parents. The paraprofessional follows instructions, shares information and uses interpersonal skills to become an effective member of the instructional team.

VII. Supporting Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Learning Environment

A paraprofessional understands and possesses the ability to implement district and state guidelines for protecting the safety, health, and well being of students and staff, including the school district's crisis response plan.

VIII. Technology

A paraprofessional utilizes technology to assist and enhance teaching and learning.

I. Professional and Ethical Practices

A paraprofessional practices ethical and professional standards of conduct and continues professional improvement.

Knowledge

1. Shows awareness of own professional strengths and needs including personal attitudes and behaviors affecting job performance. (E)
2. Understands professional conduct and ethics, including confidentiality. (E)
3. Understands laws and procedures of the district, state and federal government. (I)
4. Understands one's leadership role and other leadership roles within the organization. (E)
5. Shows knowledge about and sensitivity to the beliefs, traditions, and values across cultures and the effect of the relationships among students, families and schooling in a multi-cultural society. (A)

Disposition

1. Commits to professional development and seeks relevant training. (E)
2. Commits to on-going reflection, assessment, and learning as a process of increasing self-awareness. (E)
3. Responds appropriately to feedback from others. (E)

Performance

1. Chooses an ethical course of action. (E)
2. Complies with the requirements of confidentiality for educational and medical records. (E)
3. Follows legal requirements regarding the reporting of abuse, discipline, and inappropriate conduct, i.e. touching. (E)
4. Complies with district policies and procedures regarding delegation and supervision, and issues of insubordination. (E)
5. Utilizes constructive feedback to improve job performance. (I)

II. Characteristics of Student Learning

A paraprofessional understands how students learn and develop and how to assist in providing opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.

Knowledge

1. Knows and respects the influence that families have on student learning and development. (I)
2. Understands the impact that a disability or a combination of disabilities may have on a student's life and learning. (I)
3. Possesses basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and, instructional activities. (I)
4. Possesses a basic knowledge of the strategies used to support the learning of students whose first language is not English. (A)

Disposition

1. Appreciates individual variations within each developmental domain (intellectual, social, physical, emotional). (I)
2. Recognizes the impact of the paraprofessional on student learning. (I)

Performance

1. Uses developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies as directed by the teacher/provider. (E)

III. Instructional Content/Assisting Practice (No Child Left Behind NCLB)

A paraprofessional knows the content areas and applies the elements of effective instruction to support teaching and learning activities.

Entry Level	Intermediate	Advanced
Meets District and State/Fed requirements – Meets all standards and indicators marked @ the entry level	Completed proficiency in all standards and indicators marked @ the entry and intermediate level	Completed proficiency in all standards and indicators marked @ the entry, intermediate, and advanced level

Knowledge

1. Possesses basic academic skills needed to perform assignments. (E)
2. Possesses strong knowledge of and ability to begin to apply reading, writing, and mathematics (I)
3. Possesses knowledge of content areas taught in the levels to which assigned. (I/A)
4. Possesses knowledge of basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities in which assigned. (I)
5. Understands the components of reading. (A)
6. Understands the relationship of the concept of numeracy and the development of math skills. (A)
7. Understands writing processes. (A)
8. Understands the similarities and differences between age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate materials and activities. (I)
9. Understands the importance of connecting new knowledge with student’s prior knowledge. (I)
10. Possesses a basic knowledge of how students develop and learn. (I)
11. Understands the need to access and use a variety of learning resources and strategies. (I)
12. Understands that teaching students from diverse experiential, cultural, economic, and language backgrounds may require a variety of strategies. (I)
13. Understands basic instructional, remedial, and accelerated methods, techniques and materials for teaching students with different ability levels used by the teacher provider. (I/A)
14. Understands district/state school report card. (I)
15. Possesses basic knowledge of the state assessment system. (I)
16. Understands basic ethics and confidentiality issues. (E)
17. Possesses basic knowledge of data collection and observation techniques. (I)
18. Possesses knowledge of the Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools. (A)
19. Understands the need to use technology as a tool. (E)
20. Understands basic classroom management techniques. (E/I)
21. Understands individual student affective needs. (I)

22. Understands the educational history of Alaska. (A)
23. Possesses a basic understanding of instructional techniques and educational resources. (I)

Disposition

1. Believes all students can learn and that no child should be left behind. (E)
2. Commits to acquiring content knowledge. (E)
3. Recognizes the value of life long learning. (E)
4. Recognizes the value of communication and teamwork. (E)
5. Respects the diversity of learning styles. (I)
6. Respects confidentiality. (E)
7. Recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional and the teacher/provider. (E)

Performance

1. Demonstrates basic academic skills needed to perform assignments. (E)
2. Assists the teacher/provider in differentiating instruction while teaching students at different levels. (I)
3. Assists the teacher/provider in applying a variety of instructional techniques and educational resources. (I)
4. Assists the teacher/provider in using specific instructional techniques. (I)
5. Assists the teacher/provider in using data collection and observation techniques to assess learning. (I)
6. Assists in utilizing small group and individual instructional techniques to promote learning. (I)
7. Assists the teacher/provider in selection of a variety of learning resources. (I)
8. Interacts appropriately with students. (E)
9. Complies with all NCLB/IDEA performance requirements. (E)
10. Assists the teacher/provider in the selection and modification of instructional materials. (I/A)
11. Cultivates reading readiness and reading skills appropriate to chronological age and/or developmental level, if applicable. (A)
12. Cultivates math readiness and math skills appropriate to chronological age and/or developmental level, if applicable. (A)
13. Cultivates writing readiness and writing skills appropriate to chronological age and/or developmental level, if applicable. (A)
14. Uses technology as a tool for a variety of purposes. (I/A)
15. Uses a variety of instructional techniques and educational resources as directed by the teacher/provider. (E)

IV. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills

A paraprofessional motivates and assists children and youth to build self-esteem, develop interpersonal skills and strengthen abilities to become more successful.

Knowledge

1. Understands teamwork and group dynamics. (E)
2. Understands positive behavioral supports. (I)
3. Understands the demands of various classroom and non-classroom environments. (I)
4. Understands cultural influences on social interaction. (E)

Disposition

1. Recognizes when the actions of others are based on culture/background. (I)
2. Commits to explore other cultures and share their own culture. (E)
3. Recognizes the need for understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in a variety of settings. (E)

Performance

1. Supports the development of student social skills. (A)
2. Assists in applying prevention and intervention strategies. (I)
3. Follows procedures specified in the classroom behavior management plan. (E)

V. Assessment, Diagnosis, and Evaluation

A paraprofessional understands the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel in the areas of assessment, diagnosis and evaluation.

Knowledge

1. Understands the need to use multiple strategies to assess individual student progress. (A)

Disposition

1. Respects confidentiality in all areas with regard to assessment issues. (E)

Performance

1. Assists teacher/provider with maintaining student records required by the district/state. (E)
2. Assists in providing assessment accommodations/modifications as designed by the teacher/provider. (E)
3. Assists in gathering information using informal/functional assessment methods as designed and directed by the teacher/provider. (E)

VI. Communication and Collaborative Partnerships

A paraprofessional adheres to communication protocol with colleagues, community members, and parents. The paraprofessional follows instructions, shares information and uses interpersonal skills to become an effective member of the instructional team.

Knowledge

1. Understands the roles of all team members in support of student learning. (I)
2. Understands the relationships among schools, families, communities and how such partnerships foster student learning. (A)
3. Understands parents' concerns regarding their children's diverse needs. (I)
4. Knows the rights and responsibilities of parents, students, teachers, professionals, and schools as they relate to students. (I)

Disposition

1. Values the need to share ideas and participates in the team decision-making process. (E)
2. Commits to take initiative when a situation requires leadership. (I)
3. Respects the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, professionals, and other team members. (E)
4. Values diverse learning and communication styles. (E)

Performance

1. Uses effective oral and written communication. (E)
2. Utilizes techniques/strategies for problem solving and negotiation. (I)
3. Engages in self-assessment in order to improve communication knowledge and skills. (I)
4. Organizes ideas and communicates messages appropriately. (E)
5. Responds to feedback and seeks clarification when needed. (E)

VII. Supporting Health, Safety, and Welfare in the Learning Environment

A paraprofessional understands and possesses the ability to implement district and state guidelines for protecting the safety, health, and well being of students and staff, including the school district's crisis response plan.

Knowledge

1. Understands district and state guidelines for protecting the safety, health, and well being of students and staff. (E)
2. Knowledge of school and/or district crisis response and other safety related plans. (I)

Disposition

1. Recognizes the need for and the paraprofessional's participatory role in safety and health-related policies/plans. (E)

Performance

1. Demonstrates the ability to implement the district's safety and health-related policies/plans. (E)
2. Understands and practices infection control and public health precautions. (I)
3. Uses appropriate lifting, carrying, and transferring techniques. (E)

VIII. Technology

A paraprofessional utilizes *technology* (*Cyndy....comprehensive list covering phones, copier, etc...not just computer*) to assist and enhance teaching and learning.

Knowledge

1. Understands basic computer functions, software and hardware. (E)
2. Understands basic operations of multi-media technology. (I)
3. Knows how to use technology to access information and conduct basic student research. (A)

Disposition

1. Recognizes the value of technology as an instructional tool. (E)
2. Commits to explore existing and emerging technologies. (E)

Performance

1. Assists in preparing and organizing technology materials. (E)
2. Assists students in using technology to support independent and group learning. (I)
3. Utilizes a variety of information technology tools to enrich learning activities. (A)

Definitions (Suggested List) from regs, Webster, Link, common practice (what it refers to, i.e., crisis plan), and/or context or standards

1. accelerated methods
2. “NCLB/IDEA performance requirements”
3. teacher/provider
4. parents
5. technology
6. multi-media technology
7. information technology
8. software (not-all-inclusive examples)
9. hardware (not-all-inclusive examples)
10. confidentiality
11. diversity
12. “Crisis Response Plan”
13. assessment
14. “reading, writing, math readiness”
15. interpersonal
16. empathy
17. accommodations
18. diverse needs
19. protocol
20. professional development
21. academic skills
22. content area
23. **“components of reading”** National Reading Panel determined that the following five elements are the basis for effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, test comprehension
24. disability
25. paraprofessional
26. disposition
27. developmental domain
28. ethics
29. “ongoing reflection”
30. technology
31. **NCLB** No Child Left Behind Federal legislation signed into law January 8, 2002 which gave new requirements for paraprofessionals working in schools funded with Title I funds
32. **IDEA** Individuals With Disabilities Education Act Federal legislation signed into law which
33. remedial
34. “district/state report card”
35. affective
36. culture
37. “state assessment system”

38. **“Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools”** Developed by Alaska Native Educators to provide a way for schools and communities to examine the extent to which they are attending to the educational and cultural well-being of the students. Available on the web at www.ankn.org
39. learning styles
40. **preservice** Refers to those people who are in teacher preparation programs.
41. **caregiver**