Paraeducator Handbook

West Linn-Wilsonville School District

Guiding Principles

Paraeducators are key members of the instructional team. The primary role for paraeducators is to support students in learning academic skills. In addition, paraeducators support students in communication, behavior, organization, social-emotional, mobility, transition, and skills of daily living.

While some students may need significant support from paraeducators, we are always working toward developing independence and phasing out support (in accordance with the principles of Least Restrictive Environment and Inclusive Cultures).

Power of Beliefs
- A student's beliefs about themselves as a learner are the strongest predictor of success in school
- Our beliefs about students are reflected in our actions and language
- By presuming competence in our students, we raise our own expectations for what they can accomplish

Productive Struggle builds Student Efficacy
- By facing and overcoming (appropriately) challenging situations (with as little support as possible), students build confidence and competence

Relationships with High Expectations
- Maintain high standards while offering emotional support and instructional scaffolds
- Fade instructional supports whenever possible

Person-First Language
- Our Beliefs Affect our Language → Our Language Affects our Beliefs
- Questions to consider:
    - How does the language we use to refer to students affect students' beliefs about themselves as learners?
    - How does our language affect the way peers & adults think about & interact with students?
- We strive to use Person-First Language whenever possible
    - Instead of "SPED Kid" → "Student served by special education"
    - Instead of "Autistic Kid" → "Student who experiences autism"
    - Instead of "Behavior Kid" → "Student with challenging behaviors"

Growing Student Independence

Our District mission question is, *"How do we create learning communities for the greatest thinkers and most thoughtful people... for the world?"* Embedded in this question is the power of creating critical, independent thinkers who know how to actively engage in their learning. The role of the paraeducator is to facilitate and support this active engagement. At times this might mean interacting fully with a small group of students, at other times it might be stepping back and prompting students more indirectly. For a very small number of students with health or safety needs, our interactions may be very close to a student. Regardless, our goal must always be to empower our students to be agents of their own learning -- to be active, independent learners.

Roles and Responsibilities

Job Requirements/Expectations (from Paraeducator Job Description)
Paraeducators are expected to help the teacher establish and maintain a climate of learning; work as part of a team; demonstrate initiative in responding to students' day-to-day needs; and implement behavior, medical, and safety protocols for students when necessary. Protocols may involve physical intervention; therefore the paraeducator's physical characteristics should include the ability to bend, lift, and move quickly. Due to the interpersonal nature of working with students, a positive attitude and warm personality are considered essential characteristics of a paraeducator. We expect all of our employees to model a Growth Mindset and demonstrate a belief that all students can learn and all students belong as part of their classroom & school community.

The role of the paraeducator will vary depending upon the student needs within the classroom.
Some common roles include:

- Collaborating with general education and special education teachers and other specialists

- Working individually and in small groups with students at all skill levels with the goal of fostering independence in the areas of:
    - Academics
    - Social-emotional skills
    - Communication
    - Behavior
    - Functional routines

- Collecting and recording data

- Preparing instructional materials (as directed by teachers)

- Monitoring student progress and checking for understanding during classroom instruction

- Making accommodations necessary for instruction and assessment (in alignment with the IEP)

- Providing supervision and support for students in all school settings, including:
    - general education classrooms
    - special education classrooms
    - gymnasiums & athletic facilities
    - hallways & common areas
    - lunch rooms
    - playgrounds
    - in the community

- Supporting the hygienic and personal needs of students, including:
    - medical protocols
    - safe eating
    - assisting with bathroom needs and/or changing
    - mobility
    - lifting and other physical assistance

Paraeducators, under teacher direction, can provide support to any student. The chart below helps to differentiate the roles of the teachers and paraeducators.

	Roles of Classroom Teachers and/or Learning Specialists	Roles of Paraeducators
Curriculum & Lesson Planning	• Plan weekly/daily schedule • Plan lessons/activities for all students • Align lessons with standards, IEP's and student needs	• Implement plans as specified by teacher • Assist coordinating and managing activities
Materials	• Determine/prepare/obtain needed materials	• Prepare/obtain needed materials
Assessment	• Assess whole class and individual students -- both formal and informal • Use assessment to inform lesson plans	• Assist with monitoring and assessing student work • Gather data related to specific goals
Classroom Environment & Culture	• Design room arrangement to support range of instructional strategies • Teach common classroom expectations	• Support arrangement of classroom for specific learning tasks • Support/reinforce common classroom expectations
Instruction	• Teach lessons for the entire class • Confer with small groups and individual students • Work with students who have more intensive learning needs	• Provide additional support to small groups and individuals -- allowing the Teacher to work with students who have more intensive learning needs • Provide minimal prompts to promote student engagement in lessons
Social-Emotional Learning & Behavior	• Teach social-emotional regulation strategies for all students • Establish routines and behavior expectations for all students • Plan collaboratively to support students with more intensive behavior needs	• Reinforce social-emotional regulation strategies, routines and behavior expectations for all students • Provide additional opportunities to practice social-emotional skills • Implement behavior support plans • Gather data for behavior support plans
Working with Parents	• Communicate regularly with parents regarding student's strengths and areas of growth & concern	• Be pleasant and warm in interactions with parents, but do not engage in communication w/parents about student • Direct parent requests/concerns to classroom teacher or case manager
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	• Serve as member of IEP team • Design instructional materials to target specific IEP goals -- related to classroom learning targets and grade-level standards • Design and monitor specific accommodations or modifications • Review data and monitor student progress toward IEP goals	• Promote independence in students • Implement IEP as specified by teacher & IEP team -- including accommodations or modifications • Gather data & monitor student progress • Prepare individualized materials designed by classroom teacher or case manager • Provide feedback and observations to assist case manager in developing IEP

9 Tips for Paraeducators

1. Use a "Zone Defense" rather than "One-on-One"
   a. Work with multiple students in the classroom to avoid 1 student building reliance on your support
   b. Work with larger groups to allow the classroom teacher to work individually with students who have more significant needs
   c. A student may receive direct adult support all day long, but we do not assign a single paraeducator to be in a "One-on-One" role with a student all day. (see research on p.10)

2. Facilitate Peer Relationships
   a. Remind peers to communicate directly with the student
   b. Seat the student with other students in the classroom, cafeteria, etc.
   c. Give students the space and freedom to socialize and develop friendships in age-appropriate ways
   d. Help the student identify peers who could be good to connect with
   e. Provide prompts and social skills to help the student interact with peers

3. Let Students Make Mistakes and Take Risks
   a. Everyone learns from mistakes
   b. Let natural consequences be part of the classroom experience
   c. Productive struggle is essential to building confidence & competence (self-efficacy)

4. Give as Few Prompts as Possible
   a. Presume competence
   b. Foster independence
   c. Use lowest level of prompting to help students initiate and complete tasks
   d. Allow the student time to observe peers and respond to prompts
   e. Avoid developing reliance on your prompts

5. Watch your Voice and Volume
   a. Discussions with other adults or students can be disruptive to the class
   b. Save important discussions for less disruptive times/locations

6. Maintain Student Dignity
   a. Avoid discussing a student's learning needs with other students, parents, etc.
   b. Be discreet about the student's physical needs

7. Help Students Create Authentic Work
   a. Students learn when they actively participate in classroom activities alongside their peers -- engaging in the same tasks as their peers whenever possible
   b. Avoid completing assignments, taking tests, answering questions or speaking for students

8. Ask for Help
   a. You are part of an instructional team (with the classroom teacher and learning specialist)
   b. Make sure you understand the teachers' expectations for your work with students

9. Let Students Make Choices
   a. Promote student voice -- and listen to what they say
   b. Give students the ability to control how they interact with peers and their environment
   c. Learn how the student communicates (oral language, AAC device, non-verbal behavior, etc.)

Levels of Prompting

The paraeducator is always working to create greater independence for students.

Consider the following levels of prompts -- always aiming toward the least restrictive prompt.

Most Independent	Fully Independent	Student begins the task without additional prompting, perseveres through challenging parts, and completes the task.
	Natural Supports	Student looks around the environment to use the same supports that other students use to complete the task (directions on the board, posters on the wall, notes in the binder, models of other students engaged in the task, etc.)
	Gestural Prompt	Paraeducator points to something that will help the student know what to do next (directions on the board, posters on the wall, notes in the binder, models of other students engaged in the task, manipulatives, calculator, pencil case)
	Indirect Verbal	Paraeducator prompts the student with a general question: "What do you need to do?" "What's next?" "Did you follow all of the directions?"
	Direct Verbal	Paraeducator gives a specific verbal direction: "Start by writing your name on the paper" "Read question #1" "Remember to put a period at the end of the sentence" "Look at the teacher"
	Model	Paraeducator demonstrates how to do the task; then student does the task
	Partial Physical Prompt	Paraeducator gives the student a gentle nudge as a physical cue to help them get started. (Tap on the hand to remind them to pick up a pencil)
Least Independent	Full Physical Prompt	Student completes the task while the paraeducator guides their hand or wrist.

Give as Few Prompts as Possible
- <u>Presume competence</u>. Believe the student can do more than they are doing now.
- <u>Foster independence</u>. Let the student do as much as they can without prompting.
- <u>Use lowest level of prompting</u> to help the student initiate and complete tasks.
- <u>Allow the student time to observe classmates and respond to prompts</u>. Some students take a longer time to process a prompt and act on it. If you give a second prompt while you are waiting for them to act, the new prompt may be confusing and the processing time may start over.
- <u>Avoid developing reliance on your prompts</u>. You will not always be around to help the student.

When using verbal prompts, the paraeducator should guide the student back to what they do know. Starting from a foundation of confidence will help the student move forward into areas of new learning.

In math, the paraeducator could ask questions like:
- What do you think the question is asking? What do you need to know to find the answer?
  - What are the key words?
  - What numbers do you need from the original question?
  - What operations will you need to perform?
- Do you think your answer makes sense? Can you explain to me why it makes sense?
- How would you explain your answer to your younger brother?
- Would the same process work if you used a different numbers?

In social studies the paraeducator could ask questions like:
- What do you remember about _____?
- What other people/places/concepts are connected to _____?
- What resources do you have to help you figure this out? (notes, textbook, websites, timelines or posters on the wall, etc.)
- What did you do last time you were stuck?

If a student is struggling with a math problem, help them identify the barriers to understanding. The more the student can recognize the source of their barrier, the more likely they are to independently overcome that barrier in the future.
- Are they having difficulty choosing which operation or algorithm to use?
- Are they having trouble identifying how to arrange the numbers in an algorithm?
- Are they having trouble with decimals/place value or units?
- Consider simplifying the numbers in the problem so the student can make sense of the process before returning to the original problem.
  - For example: "A baker has 7¾ cups of cake mix. Each cupcake takes 1⅔ cups of mix. How many cupcakes can she bake?"
  - The student may identify that the operation is division, but struggle to decide which mixed number to put in which place in the division algorithm. Is it 7¾ ÷ 1⅔ or 1⅔ ÷ 7¾?
  - Reframing the question with simpler numbers may make it easier to conceptualize the operation: "What if the baker has 8 cups of mix and each cupcake takes 2 cups of mix? How would you arrange the numbers?"
  - The student may have a much easier time recognizing that the process is 8 ÷ 2 rather than 2 ÷ 8.
  - This reframing can also be helpful for guiding the student check to see if their answer is reasonable. By using 8 and 2, the student can see that the answer to the original problem will probably be something close to 4. If they originally calculated the answer to be 0.23 cupcakes, they can recognize that they probably reversed the operation.

If a student is struggling with a social studies or science concept, consider having them make a reasonable guess and then return to the question later in the activity -- after they have a chance to build or activate additional background knowledge.

- Some students feel stuck and are unwilling to move on if they don't have the right answer
- Other students are happy to take a random guess and move on, regardless of whether their guess has any connection to the actual task

The paraeducator can help the student navigate a balance between these two positions by making an educated guess and then returning to the concept later in the lesson to evaluate how accurate their original guess was. Even if the original guess was far off, the paraeducator should promote a Growth Mindset -- highlighting how our understanding grows and our original ideas can change as we acquire new information.

Remember that *Productive Struggle* is essential to building confidence and competence. If students never struggle to understand a concept, they may never build the belief that they can learn and do hard things.

Help Students Create Authentic Work
- Students learn when they actively participate in classroom activities alongside their classmates -- engaging in the same tasks as their classmates whenever possible
- ***Avoid completing assignments, taking tests, answering questions or speaking for students***
- For some students, the paraeducator may assist with writing/scribing the student's ideas. Consult with the teacher to see if scribing is appropriate for the student.

Study Strategies
- The paraeducator can help the student generate memory devices to remember key ideas, vocabulary, etc.
- Consider a variety of strategies for studying -- flash cards, drawing/cartooning, creating rhymes, acronyms, acting out ideas or concepts, etc.
- Use a highlighter to focus on important words in the directions or key vocabulary words
- Use blank paper or blank note cards to cover up portions of the page so the student only sees one task at a time. This can be particularly helpful for students who get easily distracted by excess information on the page. This can also be helpful for students who get overwhelmed by the idea of completing a full page of work. Seeing only one step at a time can free up mental energy to allow the student to focus on the current task.

Communication Devices*

Think of an AAC Communication Device as a student's voice. The device should always be within arm's reach so the student can initiate communication. If you can see the student, you should also be able to see their AAC device. (AAC = Alternative and Augmentative Communication)

Volume for AAC Devices: Teachers and paraeducators should never turn off or mute the communication device. We do not de-activate other students' ability to speak in the classroom. It is ok to adjust the volume to match the acceptable volume for other student voices in the room (loud, standard volume, whisper). And it is ok to coach the student on when to use their voice appropriately in class.

When a student is learning to use an AAC device, it is like learning another language. The only way to become proficient is to use the language over and over.

- We expect the student to make mistakes. Saying unexpected words through an AAC device is a playful way for the student to understand how the icons on the device make sounds that relate to ideas.
- Approximations are acceptable. A one or two word statement may be a good way for a student to start using the language. Don't require students to use grammatically complete sentences until they have become much more proficient with the device. Our first goal is clarity of communication, not precision of grammar.

How you talk to a student who uses an AAC Device makes a big difference:

1. Narrate what you are thinking and doing.
2. Avoid asking a series of questions in a row. Allow wait time for a student to formulate a thought and find the icons to answer the question.
3. Describe what you are doing and use the device to model. Paraeducators should tap or point to the icons when they are speaking. Don't worry if you don't know where everything is. Paraeducators and students will learn together. Be sure the student is comfortable with you holding or using the device.
4. Use a conversational tone and natural humor. Talk to the student the same way you would talk to any student their age. A student who doesn't use verbal language should still be involved in conversations about things their classmates like to talk about.
5. Think about Engagement. What would the student want to talk to you about? Use the device while playing games and interacting socially. This will encourage the student to use the device.
6. Involve Peers. Interacting with peers is highly motivating for most students. Using the device to communicate with peers can be a powerful way to develop language. The paraeducator can teach peers to use the device to interact with the student.

Students who use an AAC device are often underestimated because they have a different communication system. Be sure to have high expectations:

1. Set the Bar High
2. Provide Support & Guidance
3. Engage the Student in High Quality Instructional Tasks or Meaningful Social Interactions
4. Focus on Progress, not Perfection

*many of the strategies on this page come from *Everyone Deserves a Voice: AAC Strategies for Success* from www.PrAACticalAAC.org

Responding to Anxious Behaviors -- Avoiding Escalations

1. Proximity – Be aware of how close you are
2. Approach the student from the side
3. Get down on their level rather than standing over their desk

4. Avoid power struggles
5. Listen first – What is the student saying with their words & body language?
6. Use a soft voice
7. Remain calm & Regulate yourself
    - Think about what zone you (the adult) are in before engaging with the student

8. Provide an entry point for the student to begin their work
9. Provide visual or written directions (for academic work and behavior expectations)
    - This can be as simple as a sticky note with 3 steps

10. Provide direct assistance on academic work
11. Split the task into smaller segments – celebrate small successes
12. Use a checklist – let the student celebrate small accomplishments by crossing off the list
13. Accept approximations (of behavior and academic work)

14. Ask short questions: "It looks like you are stuck. Can I help you get started?"
15. Give short directions
16. Walk away and give the student time to calm themselves down and follow directions:
    - "I'll be back in _____ minutes to see how you are doing."

17. Work to understand the student's perspective
18. Paraphrasing feels validating: "I understand you are feeling ____"

19. Be encouraging – Compliment what the student is doing well
20. Talk about times when the student has been successful in the past
21. Model desired behavior

22. Provide positive reinforcement
23. Offer a preferred activity in an "If…Then…" statement (with a visual)

24. Provide space and time for calm breathing/yoga/physical movement during transition times between activities
25. If a student shows signs of being tired or frustrated, acknowledge that you see how they are feeling
26. Provide limited choices: "Do you want to do ___ or ___?"
27. Remind the student you won't ask them to do something you know they can't do

28. Show the student that you are interested in them as a person
    - Find a topic to connect with the student that is not related to the current task or behavior
    - Ask open-ended questions

29. Connect the student with a supportive peer
30. Minimize distractions from peers and environment
31. Read the room – are there triggers or antecedents that may be increasing the student's escalation?

This list was generated by WLWV teachers during the Inclusive & Equitable Schools workshops in 2018

Research About Paraedcuators

Highlights of Research Articles about Paraeducators
1. If paraeducators do not intentionally *promote positive peer interactions*, they may accidentally increase a student's feeling of social isolation. Other students may perceive the paraeducator as a barrier that keeps them from interacting with the student.

2. If the paraeducator uses intentional strategies to r*educe verbal and gestural prompts,* students can develop greater independence and voice.

3. Students supported by a paraeducator sitting next to them all day may not learn how to *seek help in more typical ways* (peers, classroom resources, general ed teacher, google, etc.)

4. Students supported by a paraeducator sitting next to them all day may not be given *opportunities to try things on their own,* make mistakes and learn from their mistakes.

Research and Resources:
The Paraprofessional's Handbook for Effective Support in Inclusive Classrooms (Causton-Theoharis, 2009)
Avoiding Over-Use of Paraeducators (Stetson; *Inclusive Schools Network*, 2015)
Be Careful What You Wish For: Five Reasons to be Concerned About the Assignment of Individual
     Paraprofessionals (Giangreco, et al.; *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 2005)
What Do Paraeducators in Inclusive Classrooms Say About Their Work? (Liston, Nevin & Malian; *Teaching
     Exceptional Children*, 2009)
Teacher Assistants in Inclusive Schools (Giangreco & Doyle; *The SAGE Handbook of Special Education*, 2007)
One-to-One Paraprofessionals for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms: Is Conventional Wisdom
     Wrong? (Giangreco; *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 2010)
Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants (Sharples, Webster & Blatchford; *Education Endowment Foundation*,
     2015)

General Expectations

Attendance and Workday
Consistent attendance is expected of all district employees. This includes being ready to work by your scheduled time, and staying until the end of your schedule. There may be occasions during the year when student safety or supervisory needs necessitate going beyond your scheduled workday. Please notify your building principal right away if this occurs, as additional time requires administrator approval. If it is not possible to notify your administrator prior, please do so as soon as possible.

Breaks and lunchtimes are scheduled based on the numbers of hours worked. Please see your OSEA Contract for specific information. Your Learning Specialist or Administrator will create break and lunch schedules to align with student instruction and supervision needs.

Leave time (including sick leave) is available as described in your OSEA Contract. Check with your school secretary about the process for getting a substitute. Be sure to communicate with your Learning Specialist or Administrator if you are sick or need to take a leave. They may need to rearrange staff or student schedules.

Technology and Social Media Use

All school staff are expected to use discretion when using technology at school. The use of technology should be in support of your work, not for personal purposes. All staff are responsible for protecting student confidentiality and privacy. This includes not sharing pictures or information about students on social media. Please review Board Policy GCAP regarding Personal Electronic Devices and Electronic Communication -- Staff.

Relationships with Staff, Students and Families

Classroom teachers and special education teachers direct your work as a paraeducator. You will work as a member of a team. The development of positive collegial relationships is critical to this work. Establishing trust is essential. Ways to build this trust include consistent communication, assuming positive intent and addressing concerns or questions with others directly. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved within the relationship, please see your building administrator.

Trusting relationships are also critical with students and families. You will come to know students well in this work. We must at all times respect their dignity, privacy and individuality by:

- Discussing a child's progress or educational program only with the teacher(s) that direct your work; Paraeducators should not communicate progress or concerns about students to parents unless directed to do so by the teacher (*Even if you are friends with the parent outside of school*)
- Discussing school problems and confidential matters only with appropriate personnel
- Using person-first language and avoiding labels
- Refraining from engaging in discriminatory practices based on a student's disability, race, gender, cultural background, language, or religion
- Presenting yourself as a positive role model

To build the relationships necessary for every student to learn, we must all:

- See each child through their unique strengths
- Listen to what they say
- Respect them for who they are
- Believe in every child's capacity to learn
- Understand that children do well if they can. When a child misbehaves, they are attempting to communicate or meet one of their basic needs.

Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is mandated by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). It is the law, and it is imperative that school personnel follow this ethical code of conduct at all times. Important reminders about confidentiality include:

- Only those people who have a "Need to Know" should have specific student information. "Need to Know" always supersedes "Desire to Tell." This sometimes means that a paraeducator will not need to know detailed information about a student's medical diagnosis or family history.
- Medical conditions should only be discussed as they relate to a student's education.
- Discussions about students should never occur in public spaces like hallways or the staff room.
- Written documents with student information should always be secured.
- Avoid all discussion of students in public situations. There is no reason to discuss students outside of school; even the fact that a student attends our school is confidential information.
- If you are unsure about sharing information with an individual, ask the teacher or building administrator.

Supervision

Paraeducators may be assigned to general or specific supervisory roles during recess, lunch, arrival and dismissal. If you have questions about exactly what to do during your supervisory responsibilities, please ask your Learning Specialist or Administrator.

Every staff member shares in the responsibility for creating a safe school environment through effective supervision. Ways we do this include:

- *Identification*: All adults wear appropriate identification while on school property during the school day. Staff wear district-assigned ID; volunteers and visitors check into the office and wear badges. If you see an adult on our school campus without identification, even if you know them, they should be directed to the school office for check in. This includes staff.
- *Timeliness*: When supervising students, arrive at your assigned location on time.
- *Focus*: When supervising, stay focused. For example, staff should not be socializing or using technology while supervising in the lunchroom or at recess.
- *Zone*: In general, it is better to support several students in a classroom rather than focus on one student exclusively. When supervising as a team, divide the area into zones to ensure that all areas of the playground or lunchroom are appropriately monitored. Moving around, scanning your zone and positively interacting with many different students helps zone supervision be most effective.
- *Targeted Support*: There may be times that a paraeducator is assigned supervision and support for an individual student rather than a zone. We should always be thinking about promoting student voice, independent routines, peer interactions and gen-ed teacher interactions.

Shared Language, Routines and Expectations

The district has identified *7 Components of Inclusive and Equitable Learning Communities*. Paraeducators play a key role in providing these 7 Components:

- Effective Physical Spaces
- Teaching Common Expectations
- Teaching Social-Emotional Skills
- Engagement Strategies
- Rituals, Routines & Recognition
- Relationships with High Expectations
- Restorative Practices

Paraeducators partner with Classroom Teachers and Learning Specialists by using shared language, teaching common expectations, and reinforcing classroom routines and rituals. While it takes time to internalize these ourselves and intentionally teach them to students, once we do, student learning increases.

Access to IEP

The case manager works most closely with the IEP, coordinating Specially Designed Instruction and ensuring that Accommodations are provided. The case manager collaborates with the general education teacher and paraeducators to ensure that they have all of the information needed to implement the IEP and gather data about student progress. In general, the paraeducator receives details about Goals, Specially Designed Instruction, Behavior Plans, Accommodations, and other specific strategies directly from the case manager rather than the paraeducator accessing a student's IEP directly on ePEP.

Special Education Terms Glossary

IEP - Individualized Education Program - This is the document that guides the work for a specific student. It is revised every year. It includes Present Levels, Goals, Specially Designed Instruction, Accommodations/ Modifications, and other important details of the student's plan.

IEP Team - The group that is responsible for creating and revising the IEP each year. The IEP team includes the student, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, district representative, an individual who can interpret evaluation data, and others as appropriate. The IEP team must meet once a year, but the student/parent can call an additional IEP meeting at any time. Paraeducators are often consulted to provide data for the IEP team, but paraeducators are generally not part of the IEP Team.

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - This is the federal law that governs Special Education. It has very clear provisions to protect the right of students to a Free Appropriate Public Education in the Least Restrictive Environment.

FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education - This is one of the foundational principles of Special Education (along with LRE). Every student is entitled to FAPE. It is the job of the IEP team to determine what "appropriate" looks like for each individual student to make meaningful progress toward their goals.

LRE - Least Restrictive Environment - This is one of the foundational principles of Special Education (along with FAPE). Each student has a right to receive their education in a context that is as close as possible to their grade-level peers. LRE applies to classroom instruction as well as co-curricular activities, lunch, recess, and buses. Paraeducators should always be working to reduce prompts and promote independence.

Eligibility - To receive Special Education services, a student needs to be found eligible in one of the 12 Categories recognized by the state of Oregon. In addition to the presence of a disability, the eligibility team needs to determine whether there is an Academic Impact and whether the student needs Specially Designed Instruction. It is possible for a student to have a disability (ex. ADHD, Anxiety, Dyslexia), but they have developed coping skills so that the disability does not impact their academic or functional performance in school. In that case they would not qualify for special education services.

The most common eligibility categories are Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Communication Disorder (CD), Other Health Impairment (OHI), Autism (ASD), Emotional Disturbance (ED), and Intellectual Disability (ID). Other Health Impairment is a category that can include a whole range of medical conditions, such as ADHD, Anxiety, Seizure Disorder, etc.

Re-Evaluation - A student's eligibility is valid for 3 years. Every 3 years, a team (including the parent) needs to gather to review current data to determine whether the student remains eligible for special education.

Placement - Once the IEP team determines the services a student needs, the Placement team decides the best context to provide those services. Placement is a collection of services, not a location. In West Linn-Wilsonville, each school can provide the full range of Special Education services.

PLAAFP - Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance - To make a good plan for student learning, we need to have accurate, current information about the student's strengths and challenges. The Present Levels are the first section of the IEP. The Goals and Services are designed based on the Present Levels. Paraeducators and general education teachers often help gather data for the Present Levels.

Progress Notes - The case manager is responsible for writing progress notes to update the parent on the student's progress multiple times during the year (usually at the end of each term). Paraeducators and general education teachers often help gather data for progress notes.

FBA/BIP - Functional Behavioral Assessment/Behavior Intervention Plan - Some students need a specific, detailed plan to help teach behavior skills. An FBA helps the team determine the function of a student's behavior. A BIP (Also called a Behavior Support Plan - BSP) explains the specific skills we are teaching and the specific data we are collecting. Paraeducators play a critical role in supporting students with a BIP.

Procedural Safeguards (Parent Rights) - The purpose of Special Education is to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the full range of educational options. SPED law (IDEA) provides specific requirements to ensure that students' and parents' rights are protected. These are detailed in a booklet called Procedural Safeguards that we provide to parents at every IEP and Eligibility meeting.

ESY - Extended School Year - All students experience some regression during long breaks from school (like summer vacation). A few students with disabilities experience significant regression and then take a long time to regain lost skills when they return to school. These students may be eligible to receive Extended School Year services to maintain skills over the break. ESY is an IEP team decision, based on specific data. It generally applies to very few students each year. ESY is not summer school.

SLP - Speech Language Pathologist - An SLP is a member of the school team who works closely with learning specialists, general education teachers, paraeducators and other staff to support students. The SLP is often the case manager for students with Communication Disorders and Autism. They also have expertise with AAC communication devices and safe eating protocols.

AAC Communication Devices - AAC stands for Augmentative and Alternative Communication. Students who have not developed verbal language may use an AAC device for expressive communication. Most AAC devices have a system of icons that help a student form words and phrases. Paraeducators play a critical role in modeling the use of AAC devices with students.

Transition - As a student nears graduation, the IEP team makes plans for the student's post-school future. The Transition process is led by the student, focusing on their Preferences, Interests, Needs and Strengths. Some students who graduate with a Modified or Extended Diploma choose to remain in the district to receive Adult Transition Services through age 21. These services focus on functional academics, employment, social skills, and independent living skills.

YTP - Youth Transition Program - Some students with disabilities are eligible to receive support for employment skills and job coaching through the Youth Transition Program. The YTP grant helps pay for Transition Specialists to support pre-employment transition skills for students at all three WLWV high schools and the Adult Transition Program.