

4 AAC 04 is amended by adding a new section to read:

**4 AAC 04.220. Paraprofessional standards.** (a) The content, knowledge, disposition, and performance standards for paraprofessionals as set out in the document titled *Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards*, as revised as of November 2003, are adopted by reference.

(b) Each district shall ensure that all paraprofessionals employed by the district who work in a program that receives funding under 20 U.S.C. 6301-6339 (Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

(c) Except as provided in (e) of this section, and in addition to the requirement of (b) of this section, each district shall ensure that a paraprofessional hired after effective date of these regulations, who works in a program that receives funding under 20 U.S.C. 6301-6339 (Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act), has met at least one of the following requirements:

(1) completed at least two years, or 48 semester hours or equivalent, of study at a regionally accredited institution of higher education;

(2) obtained an associate's or higher degree at a regionally accredited institution of higher education; or

(3) demonstrated, through a formal assessment under (f) of this section, that the paraprofessional has met, at an entry level or above, the instructional content/assisting practice standards set out in *Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards*, adopted by reference in (a) of this section.

(d) Except as provided in (e) of this section, after January 8, 2006, each district shall ensure that all paraprofessionals employed by the district who work in a program that receives funding under 20 U.S.C. 6301-6339 (Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act) meet at least one of the three requirements in (c) of this section.

(e) A paraprofessional is not required to meet the requirements of (c) or (d) of this section if the paraprofessional

(1) acts as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children;

(2) has instructional-support duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities; or

(3) has only non-instructional duties, including providing technical support for computers, providing personal care duties, or performing clerical duties.

(f) The formal assessment of a paraprofessional under (c)(3) of this section shall be administered by the district that employs the paraprofessional. The formal assessment must consist of

(1) the Higher Education Learning Profile (HELP) assessment, published by Educational Resources, Incorporated; and

(2) observation and interviews by district personnel qualified to evaluate the paraprofessional.

(g) To demonstrate that the paraprofessional has met the requirements of (c)(3) of this section, a paraprofessional must

(1) achieve a passing score on the HELP assessment described in (f)(1) of this section; and

(2) show, through the observations and interviews described in (f)(2) of this section, that the paraprofessional has mastered all entry level requirements of the instructional content/assisting practice content standard set out in *Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards*, adopted by reference in (a) of this section.

(Eff. \_\_/\_\_/\_\_, Register \_\_\_\_)

Authority:                    AS 14.07.060                    AS 14.50.080

**Editor’s note:** The Alaska State Paraprofessional Performance Standards, adopted by reference in 4 AAC 04.210, and information on the Higher Education Learning Profile assessment may be obtained by writing to the Department of Education and Early Development, 801 W. 10th Street, Suite 200, Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894.

4 AAC 04.900 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

(2) “paraprofessional” means a person who is not required to have a professional license or certification and who, under the supervision of a teacher or other professional educational service provider, provides instructional or other educational support to a student. (Eff. 3/2/2000, Register 153; am \_\_/\_\_/\_\_, Register \_\_\_\_)

Authority:    AS 14.03.015                    AS 14.07.060                    AS 14.07.165

## 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** demonstrate competency in all standards and indicators marked as (E) and (I).
- **Advanced level paraprofessionals** demonstrate competency in all standards and 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**

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 one's leadership role and other leadership roles within the organization. (E)
4. Understands laws and procedures of the district, state and federal government. (I)
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

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

#### Knowledge

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

#### 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 confidentiality. (E)
6. Recognizes the roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional and the teacher/provider. (E)
7. Respects the diversity of learning styles. (I)

Performance
-------------

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

#### **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 cultural influences on social interaction. (E)
3. Understands positive behavioral supports. (I)
4. Understands the demands of various classroom and non-classroom environments. (I)

##### **Disposition**

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

##### **Performance**

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

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

### **Disposition**

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

### **Performance**

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

## **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. Uses appropriate lifting, carrying, and transferring techniques. (E)
3. Understands and practices infection control and public health precautions. (I)

### **VIII. Technology**

A paraprofessional utilizes technology including but not limited to tape recorders and headsets, projectors, telephone, phone, fax, computers, VCR, copier, 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

**academic skills (basic skills)** The fundamental skills needed to succeed in school. Most people think of basic academic skills as the ability to read, write, and compute.

**accelerated methods** Faster presentation of content to more closely match the speed at which gifted students learn.

**accommodations** Techniques and materials that allow individuals with special needs including English Language Learners (ELL) to complete school or work tasks with greater ease and effectiveness. Examples include spellcheckers, tape recorders, and expanded time for completing assignments. As used in testing, accommodations are alterations in how a test is presented to the test taker or how the test taker responds. Accommodations include a variety of alterations in presentation format, response format, setting in which the test is taken, timing, or scheduling. The alterations do not substantially change level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to "level the playing field;" that is, to provide equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known.

**affective** Influenced by or resulting from the emotions. Concerned with or arousing feelings or emotions.

**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](http://www.ankn.org)

**assessment** Measuring the learning and performance of students or teachers. Different types of assessment instruments include achievement tests, minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments.

**caregiver** A person who assists a sick or disabled person. A person who tends to the needs of a child or dependent adult.

**components of reading** National Reading Panel determined that the following five elements are the basis for effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

**confidentiality** With regard to schools and classrooms, the ability to keep information relating to students private.

**content area** When used in reference to NCLB this term refers to the following subject areas: English, language arts or reading, mathematics, science, history, civics and government, economics, art. The State of Alaska has defined art to include theatre, art, and music.

**Crisis Response Plan** For the purpose of the plans each district and school must have in place, a crisis encompasses any event, impending event, or unstable condition which

- Seriously impacts members of the school community
- Causes persons to feel distress, hardship, fear or grief
- Results in temporary weakened problem-solving/coping skills or emotional insecurity
- Has traumatic elements or events which might leave people vulnerable to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or traumatic reactions.

**culture** The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought. These products considered as the expression of a particular community or population.

**developmental domain** Intellectual, social, physical, emotional characteristics of learners at various stages.

**disability** Section 504 regulation defines a person with a disability as any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.

**disposition** Mental attitude and way of behaving that contributes to success in life, such as being able to make a plan and follow it or to make decisions based on sound information.

**district/state report card** Report cards of a school's performance require districts to inform the public about schools' performances by means of student test scores and other measures. Data for the state, districts, and schools are reported in the "Report Cards to the Public," which reports the percentage of students scoring as proficient or above and below or not proficient.

**diverse needs** Students come to school with a variety of backgrounds: language, culture, experiential, and economic which require a variety of strategies for effective instruction.

**diversity** In education, discussions about diversity involve recognizing a variety of student needs including those of ethnicity, language, socioeconomic class, disabilities, and gender.

**empathy** Identifying with another person's situation, feelings, and motives.

**ethics** The rules or standards governing the conduct of a person or the members of a profession.

**hardware** This refers to any physical pieces of a computer. For example, the computer itself, a monitor, a printer, memory, and a video card are all hardware. See also software.

**IDEA** Individuals With Disabilities Education Act is a federal law passed in 1991 and amended in 1997 that guarantees a free appropriate public education for eligible children and youth with disabilities. According to the law, a child with a disability means a child with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance, orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities.

**information technology (IT)** - This term refers to the field of work dealing with computers and technology.

**interpersonal** Relating to or involving several people

**learning style** a way of learning. Learning Styles identified by Dr. Howard Gardner are: **Verbal/Linguistic** - these are the people who are able to communicate well. **Logical/Mathematical** - structure and order make sense to these people. **Visual/Spatial** - these people need to see things in order to understand them. **Bodily/Kinesthetic** - these people are the "do-ers". **Musical** - music and rhythms come naturally to these people. **Interpersonal** - these people work well in groups and may often be seen as leaders. **Intrapersonal** - these are the people who motivate themselves easily. **Naturalist** - these people understand the natural environment.

**multi-media technology** - This refers to any use of audio or video in a computer. In simplest terms, this refers to the basic functions of sound cards and video cards. In addition the term also covers television and video integration in computers.

**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.

**on-going reflection** Continuous self-reflection involves looking at how a person responds to situations and uses the information from the self-reflection to learn and grow.

**paraprofessional** A person who is not required to have a professional license or certification and who, under the supervision of a teacher or other professional educational service provider, provides instructional or other educational support to a student.

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds. This includes paraprofessionals who:

- Provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher,
- Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials,
- Provides instructional assistance in a computer laboratory,
- Conduct parental involvement activities,

- Provide support in a library or media center, act as a translator, or provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I.

**parents** Natural or adoptive parent of a child; a guardian, (but not the state if the child is a ward of the state); a person acting in the place of a parent (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).

**preservice** Refers to people enrolled in teacher preparation.

**professional development** Also known as staff development, this term refers to experiences, such as attending conferences and workshops, that help teachers and administrators build knowledge and skills.

**protocol** The plan for a course of medical treatment.

**reading, writing, math readiness** Skills developed in early childhood that lay the foundation for the ability to read, write, and mathematical reasoning.

**Title I** A compensatory education program established in 1964 to provide additional funding to schools in high poverty areas and areas with high numbers of migrant children. The funds are administered through the states' departments of education.

**remedial** Instruction intended to correct or improve deficient skills in a specific subject, i.e. remedial reading.

**school report card** State requirement that each school annually report specific information about student performance to their communities and the state of Alaska beginning July 1, 2000. The information required includes such information as school accreditation status; results of norm-referenced achievement tests; results of state standards-based assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics.

**software** The programs that run on computer hardware. This can include operating systems, office suites, games, and Web browsers. Software runs on hardware.

**Special Education** Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

**state assessment system** By state regulation all grade 4, 5, 7, and grade 9 students are assessed using a Norm-Referenced test in the areas of reading, language arts, and math. The California Achievement Test, sixth edition, is used. Data for the state, districts, and schools are reported in the "Report Card to the Public," which reports the national percentile of the mean NCE and the percentage of students scoring in the upper and lower

quartiles. All students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 10 are assessed using a Criterion-Referenced test. The Criterion-Referenced tests have been custom designed to measure student achievement on the Alaska Performance Standards in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

**teacher/provider** Professional who is licensed to teach or provides a special service, i.e. Speech/Language Pathologist, Occupational/Physical Therapist, Adaptive Physical Education etc.

**technology** In education, a branch of knowledge based on the development and implementation of computers, software, and other technical tools, and the assessment and evaluation of students' educational outcomes resulting from their use of technology tools.