

Paraprofessional Educator
(Also known as Instructional Assistant)
General Overview

South Madison Community School Corporation (SMCSC) employs Paraprofessional Educators (referred to as “paraeducators”) in a variety of roles and across all age and grade levels (preschool, elementary, middle and high school).

Paraeducators are not licensed to teach, but must meet certain specific criteria, including:

- Must pass national background check
- Must have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Must be “highly qualified”, as evidenced by at least one (1) of the following:
 - Completed two years of college experience
 - Completed a two-year degree or greater
 - Completed 48 credit hours of college level classes
 - Pass the Praxis ParaPro Assessment within the first year of employment
 - 1,000 hours or 1 year of previous employment experience in a school or working with children
 - Holds a Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials
 - Annually completes SMCSC’s required professional development modules and received passing rate on the annual school-level evaluation

Paraprofessional educators generally assist teachers in the classroom, work under the direct supervision of a teacher with small groups of students, supervise students outside of the classroom, and provide support for behavior and instruction. Paraprofessionals work directly with students, in which case they may listen to students practice reading aloud, help students understand and complete their assignments, or assist students with special needs. Paraprofessionals may also be assigned to supervise groups of students who are eating, playing outside, on sensory breaks, or on field trips.

Paraprofessional educators are used to help support students in special education settings. Paraprofessional educators in these roles work with students with a variety of disabilities including learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disabilities, health impairments, autism spectrum disorders, developmental disabilities, sensory impairments, and communication disorders. Paraprofessional educators may work in special classrooms, resource rooms or serve as inclusion assistants who accompany individual students throughout their day. Paraprofessional educators in these roles may require specialized training in behavior management, de-escalation, and personal-professional boundaries. In addition, to the above mentioned assignments, duties may include physical care for students who are unable to care for themselves (such as feeding, toileting, lifting, moving, or cleaning) or behavioral management.

Paraeducators are hired and placed on a yearly basis for specific positions, based on the needs of students, teachers and the corporation. Building-level administrators and the Director of Special Education reserve the right to change paraeducator placements at their discretion.

The paraeducator is a part-time position within SMCSC. Paraeducators work up to 29.5 hours per week. Paraeducators work on school days in which students are at school and/or are participating in virtual learning. Paraeducators may have the opportunity to work on defined professional learning days, as determined by the Superintendent or designee.

Types of paraeducator positions within South Madison Community Schools

- General Education
 - Instructional Assistant
 - English as a New Language
 - Library Instructional Assistant
 - Physical Education Assistant
 - Carnegie Learning Center (CLC) Instructional Assistant
 - In-School Restriction Instructional Assistant

- Special Education
 - Inclusion/Resource
 - Essential Skills
 - Preschool
 - Alternative Education Classroom
 - Adult Support, or one on one

Job Descriptions

Each paraeducator position is unique to age/grade level, assignment, and specific student needs. Job duties shall be reviewed with the prospective paraeducator by supervising teacher(s) and/or building administrator(s). Specific job duties may be updated throughout the year as specific student needs change. Any paraeducator may be required to assume additional duties outside of the classroom assignment, such as cafeteria duty (breakfast or lunch), parent drop-off or pick-up, bus duty, and/or recess duty. Additionally, any paraeducator may be asked to serve as a substitute teacher should the corporation not be able to procure enough substitute teachers on any given day.

Listed below is specific information regarding each type of paraeducator. This information is not an exhaustive list of responsibilities, but is intended to serve as a general overview of expectations and duties.

General Education: Instructional Assistant

Classroom Instructional Assistants are placed in classrooms which are at or above contractual size limits. These individuals assist the classroom teacher with instruction and reteaching, help with management of students (such as walking to lunch or specials). An instructional assistant may be assigned to one specific classroom/teacher, or may be assigned to multiple classrooms within the same grade level.

General Education: English as a New Language

Paraeducators working with the English Learner's teachers to support the student's academic needs as they work to develop mastery of the English language.

General Education: Library Instructional Assistant

Media Center paraeducators work under the direction of a licensed educator to care for the school collection, assist students with checking in/out of materials, and instruct some sections of the library special.

General Education: Physical Education Assistant

Physical Education paraeducators work under the direction of a licensed physical education teacher to instruct and assist students with physical education.

General Education: Carnegie Learning Center (CLC) Instructional Assistant

CLC paraeducators work under the direction of a licensed teacher to instruct and assist students with computer-based instructional programs in an alternative education setting.

General Education: In-School Restriction (ISR) Instructional Assistant

ISR paraeducators work under the direction of licensed administrators and teachers to instruct and assist students assigned to In School Restriction.

Special Education: Inclusion/Resource

Paraeducators working to support students in inclusion may expect to work in a multitude of classrooms to support students with a variety of disabilities including learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional disabilities, health impairments, autism spectrum disorders, developmental disabilities, sensory impairments, and/or communication disorders. Students in an inclusive setting are working on academic, learning, and/or behavioral goals. Paraeducators provide a variety of supports such as; pre teaching/reteaching concepts, assisting students to stay organized and complete assignments, providing accommodations and assisting with sensory breaks as necessary.

Special Education: Essential Skills

Students in a Essential Skills setting are working more on individual academic, social, communication and independent living goals. Many of these students have limited verbal abilities or may be nonverbal. Paraeducators assist teachers with meeting individual goals, which may include self-help (toileting, diapering, feeding) or medical (assist with mobility and transfer, specialized medical assistance) skills.

Special Education: Preschool

Preschool special education paraeducators work with 3, 4 and 5 year olds in a half day (½) preschool setting.

Special Education: Alternative Education Classroom

Students in the alternative education classrooms have been removed from the regular classroom setting for a pattern of disruptive behavior. Student behavior can range from verbally disruptive or defiant behavior to physical aggression. The role of the paraeducator in the alternative classroom is to support teachers in meeting the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of all students. Paraeducators may also be assigned to support these students in the regular classroom setting as they transition back into classrooms with their peers. In addition; paraeducators in the GAP program at Carnegie Center will work with students in credit recovery applications.

Special Education: Adult Support or One on one

Paraeducators may be assigned to assist a specific student based on that student's need. Duties of a one-on-one paraeducator may include working to meet individual goals, which may include self-help (toileting, diapering, feeding), related therapy (speech, occupational or physical therapy), or medical (assist with mobility and transfer, specialized medical assistance) skills.