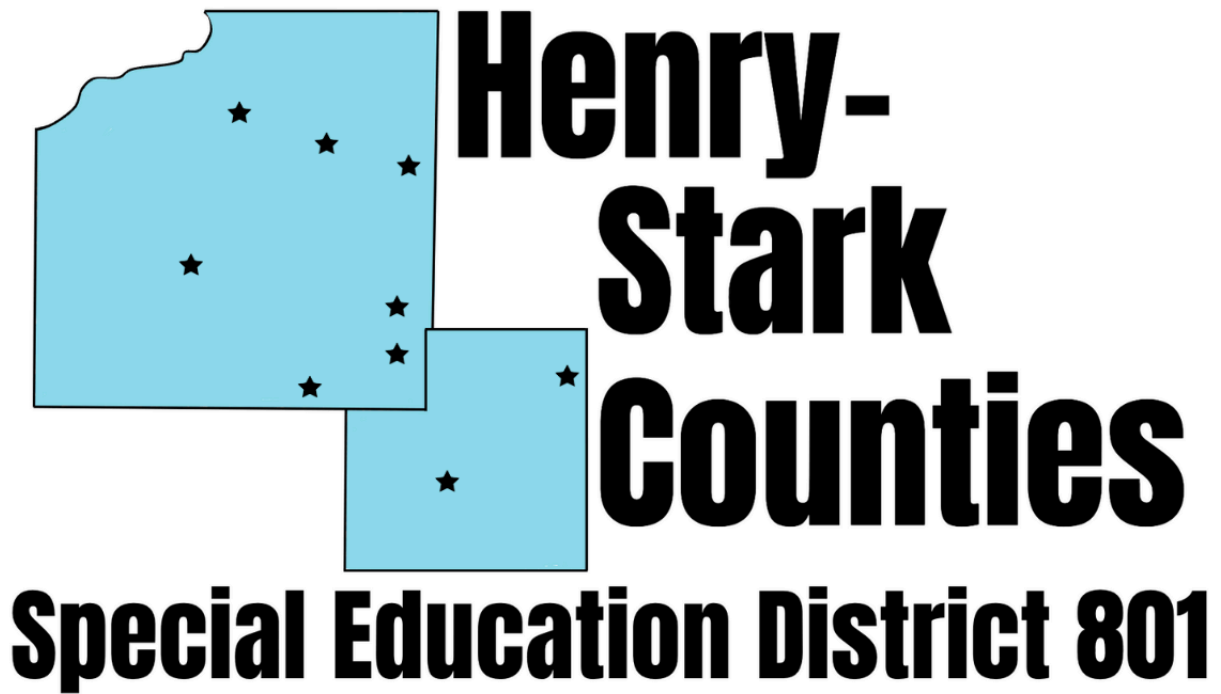


**Special Education  
Paraprofessional Handbook**



**August 2024**

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## **Welcome to Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District!**

It is a pleasure to have you with us. As a special education paraprofessional, you have an important and challenging role within the school system. Special education paraprofessionals are an integral team, assisting students with special education needs to meet their educational goals and personal care needs. The role of paraprofessionals in educational environments has changed dramatically over the past several years. New educational priorities emphasize the education of all students with disabilities therefore, increasing the need for and use of paraprofessionals.

Along with the increased need for paraprofessionals comes the need for training and professional development. At HSCSED we have identified some core competencies that paraprofessionals hired to work in schools must have. These core competencies, which form the basis of this handbook, are designed to provide the special education paraprofessional with the basic skills and knowledge required to be successful in their role as a special paraeducator.

The enclosed information is to provide you with a resource to answer your questions or guide you to a source for answers to your questions. This handbook is intended to be a guide that serves as a basis for training. Henry-Stark SED will assist in providing ongoing training and support to paraprofessionals, which may be provided through a variety of mediums such as in-services, web based instruction, and one-on-one support. You will also find that as a member of the Henry-Stark special education team, you have resources in your colleagues who possess a wealth of knowledge and can help you find the answer to just about any question you might have.

## **Contacts and Important Phone Numbers:**

Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District #801  
1318 W. Sixth St, P.O. Box 597  
Kewanee, IL 61443  
Telephone 309-852-5696 (800-396-4555)  
Facsimile 309-853-4398

### **Staff Directory:**

T. Gregory Wertheim - Executive Director  
Jennifer Harker - Human Resources Manager/Time Off/Board Secretary  
Shari Heberer - Receptionist/Office Secretary  
Amanda Birdsong - Assistant to the Director  
Alissa Ince - Administrative Assistant/IEPs  
Barb Lempke - Student Personnel Funding Manager  
Kelly Miller - Technologist  
Casey Miller - Assistant Director/Program Coordinator  
Tami Bryan - Program Coordinator  
Kim Johnson - Life Skills Program Coordinator  
Cassie Hanson - Program Coordinator  
Marci Jett - Program Coordinator  
Tom Baney - Program Coordinator  
Susan Draminski - ECE Program Coordinator  
Steve Wheelock - ExCEL Principal  
Cassie Hook - ExCEL Secretary  
Teresa Ince - Instructional Coach  
Stacie Phelps - Instructional Coach

## **District/Building Numbers:**

Annawan District #226	309 935-6781
Annawan Elementary (Pre K-8)	309 935-6623
Annawan High School	309 935-6781
Bradford District #1	309 897-2801
Bradford Elementary (Pre K-5)	309 897-4441
Bradford Jr. High (6-8)	309 897-2801
Cambridge District #227	309 937-2144
Cambridge Elementary (Pre K-5)	309 937-2028
Cambridge Jr/Sr (6-12)	309-937-2051
Galva District #224	309 932-2108
Galva Elem (K-6)	309 932-2420
Galva HS (7-12)	309 932-2151
Geneseo District #228	309 945-0450
Millikin Elem (K-5)	309-945-0475
Northside Elem (PreK-5)	309-945-0625
Southwest Elem (K-5)	309-945-0699
Geneseo Middle (6-8)	309-945-0599
Geneseo High (9-12)	309-945-0399
St. Malachy's Elem (K-6)	309-944-3230
Kewanee District #229	309 853-3341
Lyle Pre K	309 853-2741
Belle Elem (K-1)	309 852-2449
Irving Elem ((2-3)	309 853-3013
Central Elem/Jr High (4-8)	309 853-4290
Kewanee High (9-12)	309 853-3328
Neponset (Pre K-8)	309 594-2306
Stark County District #100	309 695-6123
Stark Elem (PreK-5)	309 695-5181
Stark Jr High ( 6-8)	309 286-3451
Stark High School	309 286-4451
Wethersfield District #230	309 853-4860
Wethersfield Elem (Pre K-6)	309 853-4800
Wethersfield Jr/Sr (7-12)	309 853-4205
ROE	309-936-7890
ExCEL	309-936-7790



## **School Procedures**

What follows is for informational purposes and serves only as a quick reference. It is not meant to replace any contractual information or information that may otherwise be presented in the collective bargaining agreement. The information below is meant to serve as a quick reference regarding procedures specific to Henry-Stark Special Education District.

### **Absences:**

If you need to be absent, follow your building specific procedures to report absences. This generally entails notifying your teacher, principal and special education coordinator. If you know of your absence ahead of time, please make arrangements as far in advance as possible of the absence to give ample time for a substitute to be secured. You will need to complete your absence request in the Skyward system for approval. Personal day requests are also completed through the Skyward system and require advance notice. Please refer to the collective bargaining agreement for specific procedures for personal requests.

### **School Calendar:**

Staff members will follow the calendar of the school district in which they are placed. Your days of work will be the days that students attend school. You will not work on school improvement days unless your supervisor requests that you attend training.

### **Hours of Work:**

Hours of work depend on an individual's assignment. Your work hours will be set per building and will initially be when students are in attendance. You may be requested to work longer than student attendance time if needed and approved by the director. On half day student attendance you may leave when students do unless you are requested to stay for training. You will be paid according to the working hours on those days.

### **Pay Periods:**

Pay periods are every other Friday. The first Friday that you are eligible for payroll will be established with Human Resources when completing your employment paperwork. Direct deposit is available for all employees. Notice of payroll deposits are made via your Henry-Stark email and may be viewed through Skyward.

## **Classroom Conversations**

Once you are hired and placed within a specific classroom, the following are questions that you should review with the classroom teacher:

1. Where do I park?
2. How do I enter the building? Do I swipe a badge, etc?
3. Where do I put my coat, purse, lunch, etc.?
4. Do I have a mailbox? How do I know what's going on?
5. Where is the copy machine?
6. Where are supplies kept?
7. What is the lunch procedure? When do the kids go to lunch? When do I go to lunch?
8. How do I acquire a substitute? Do I find one or does someone find one for me?
9. Where can I get a list of staff members in the building?
10. When do students arrive and leave?
11. What are my hours?
12. If working with more than one teacher, how is my time divided?

NOTES:

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## **Roles and Responsibilities**

A clear description of roles of the teacher and the paraprofessional is an important element of a successful program. Identifying teacher/paraprofessional roles serves as a guide in supervision and performance evaluation. Individual teachers may vary the responsibilities of the paraprofessional. The following list suggests duties that may be expected of a paraprofessional:

- Assist individual students in performing activities initiated by the teacher
- Supervise children in the hallway, lunchroom and playground
- Assist students with toileting needs
- Assist students to/from the bus
- Assist in monitoring supplementary work and independent study
- Reinforce learning individually or in small groups while the teacher works with others
- Provide assistance with individualized program materials
- Assist in data collection and maintain appropriate records for teachers
- Perform clerical tasks such as attendance, lunch count, etc.
- Assist the teacher in observing/charting behavior
- Assist the teacher with crisis problems and behavior management
- Assist in the preparation/production of instructional materials
- Carry out instructional programs designed by the teacher
- Work with the teacher to develop classroom schedules

**Differentiation of teacher/paraprofessional roles:**

	<b>TEACHER</b>	<b>PARAPROFESSIONAL</b>
<b>Classroom Organization</b>	Plans weekly schedule, lessons, room arrangements, learning center, and activities for individuals and entire class	Implements a plan as specified by the teacher.
<b>Assessment</b>	Member of IEP team. Coordinates the delivery of special education services-convenes IEP meetings, writes IEP, “case manager.” Monitors student performance.	Supports and assists with collecting data.
<b>Setting Objectives</b>	Determines appropriate objectives for groups and individual students.	Carries out activities to meet objectives.
<b>Teaching</b>	Teaches lessons for the entire class, small groups, and individual students. Teaches strategies for accessing the content material. Provides curriculum accommodations/modifications that allow students to participate. Provides specialized education based on a student's individual needs.	Reinforces and supervises practice of skills with individual and small groups.
<b>Behavior Management</b>	Observes behavior, plans and implements behavior management strategies for the entire class and for individual students. Collects data on such plans.	Observes behavior, collects data, carries out behavior intervention plans.
<b>Working with Parents</b>	Primary contact with parents regarding all special education services and specialized instruction. Provides parents with reports on progress towards IEP goals.	Communicates general information to parents; refers to teachers for specific behavior/academic concerns and information.
<b>Building a Classroom Partnership</b>	Arranges schedule for conferences, shares goals, and philosophy with paraprofessional, organizes job duties for the paraprofessional.	Shares ideas and concerns during conferences and carries out duties as directed by a teacher.

## **Job Description:**

### **Qualifications:**

1. At least 19 years of age
2. One of the following
  - a. Associate's degree or higher
  - b. 60 semester hours of coursework
  - c. High school diploma or GED *and* a score of 460 or higher on the ETS Parapro
  - d. High School Diploma or GED *and* the following on the ACT Workkeys:
    - i. Applied Mathematics/Applied Math - 4
    - ii. Reading for Information/Workplace Documentation - 4
2. Previous experience in an educational environment preferred
3. Physically capable of performing essential duties of the job.

**Reports to:** Director of Special Education, Coordinator of Programs for Students with Disabilities, Building Principal, and Special Education Teacher

**Job Goal:** To assist (under professional supervision) and facilitate student success in the general education and special education classroom setting

**Assignment:** Will be within a HSCSED member district, follow the assigned district's calendar, and adhere to those buildings normal hours of operation unless otherwise specified

### **Academic Support:**

1. Adapt classroom work/homework under the direction of the teacher for the purpose of providing a method to support and/or reinforce classroom objectives and behavioral skills
2. Assist teachers for the purpose of implementing lesson plans and/or developing student's daily living and behavioral skills

### **Professionalism:**

1. Maintain professional attitude and behavior
2. Comply with board policies and regulations
3. Dress and act in a professional manner
4. Communicate effectively with assigned teacher(s)
5. Respects the confidentiality of students and staff
6. Work cooperatively with the entire staff
7. Maintain reasonable and consistent attendance
8. Adhere to the Personal Technology and Social Media Policy
9. Report absences to Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District and, as appropriate, to assigned district/building . Planned absences and vacations must be approved by Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District

**Professional Development:**

1. Participate in meetings and/or training sessions as provided by Henry-Stark Counties Special Education District or cooperating school district if requested by assigned teacher(s) or administration
2. Document professional growth by submitting required form to Henry-Stark Counties Special Education for inclusion in personnel file

**Additional Duties:**

1. Perform record keeping, data collection, basic clerical functions, etc., for supporting the teacher in maintaining students' progress
2. Monitor students in less structured environments such as playground, lunch, hall, specials, etc., as needed
3. Support social skill needs of students
4. Accept other duties as determined by the Coordinator and Building Principal with the approval of the Director of Special Education

**Equipment Used:**

Wheelchair lift, ramp, augmentative communication device, copier, other related office equipment

**Working Conditions:**

Mental Demands: Reading, ability to communicate effectively (verbal and written), maintain emotional control under stress

Physical Demands: May be required to lift and transfer students to and from wheelchair or assist with positioning students with physical disabilities, conduct physical restraint as needed.

The foregoing statements describe the general purpose and responsibilities assigned to this job and are not an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties, and skills that may be required.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
HSCSED Administration

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Evaluation Rubric Paraprofessional

### 1: Planning and Preparation

#### 1a: Demonstrating knowledge of content.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Little understanding.	Basic understanding.	Solid understanding.	Extensive knowledge.

#### 1b: Demonstrating knowledge of students.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Little or no attempt to acquire knowledge.	Partial knowledge of students' background skills.	Thorough knowledge of students' background skills	Extensive knowledge of students' background skills.

#### 1c: Understanding instructional goals.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Limited experiences, unsuitable for students.	Moderate value or suitable for students.	Valuable learning and are suitable for students.	High level of learning relating to curriculum and standards.

#### 1d: Planning and preparing for coherent instruction with supervision by certified educator.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Little or no evidence of following directions.	Able to follow most of the time, needs support.	Independently follows directions, collaborates with certified educators.	Contributes ideas, showing initiative, able to prepare for differentiated instructional strategies.

### 2: The Learning Environment

#### 2a: Creating an environment of respect and rapport.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Interactions are negative, inappropriate.	Interactions are generally appropriate.	Interactions are warm, caring, respectful.	Interactions are highly respectful, genuine.

#### 2b: Understands strategies to assist in the inclusion of students in various settings.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
No understanding of inclusion as it relates to students.	Knows and identifies what is meant by inclusion and best practice.	Implements best practice and strategies to facilitate inclusion.	Resource/model that encourages collaboration.

#### 2c: Classroom procedures to promote student independence.

Unsatisfactory	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Excellent
Unable to use inclusive strategies to promote student independence.	Can implement some strategies to promote student independence.	Knows and implements strategies to promote student independence.	Implements and encourages collaboration of the team on promoting student independence.

<b>2d: Managing student behavior.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Limited knowledge, unable to perform in a crisis.	Some knowledge, able to perform in mild crisis.	Has an understanding, reinforces positive behavior, good in crisis.	Variety of strategies to reinforce positive behavior, performs in all crisis.

<b>2e: Organizing physical space.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Limited awareness of healthy/safety factors.	Inconsistent in identifying factors affecting health/safety.	Consistently identifies factors affecting health/safety.	Proactive, problem solves factors affecting health/safety.

<b>3: Instruction/Delivery of Service</b>
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<b>3a: Communicating with students.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Written/oral communication absent, poor, vague.	Written/oral communication generally clear, concise.	Written/oral communication are clear/concise.	Strong ability to communicate ideas.

<b>3b: Using questioning and discussion techniques.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Limited knowledge of question/discussion techniques.	Able to use questioning and discussion techniques.	Knows and implements a variety of questioning and discussion techniques.	Encourages collaboration regarding questioning and discussion techniques.

<b>3c: Engaging students in learning.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Unable to read or follow a lesson plan, unable to provide student instructions.	Limited knowledge of how to adapt materials, difficulty following directions.	Understands and demonstrates adaptation process, seeks clarification.	Collaborates with team to meet student's needs by adapting lessons.

<b>3d: Using assessment in instruction.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Unable to track and record data and/or assessment for goals.	Limited ability on tracking and recording data/or assessments for goals.	Understands and demonstrates the ability to track and record data or assessments for goals.	Understands and demonstrates ability to record data or assessments for goals, can calculate percentages.

<b>4: Professional Responsibility</b>
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<b>4a: Reflecting on practice.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Little or no evidence of thinking about programs, practices or students.	Sometimes shows evidence of thinking about or reflecting on supporting students.	Reflects on experiences with students, makes some suggestions for how to improve program or support.	Reflects and provides constant ideas and improvements, attitude of action.

<b>4b: Maintaining accurate records.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Does not follow protocols for documenting student learning or behavioral data.	Documentation of student learning and behavioral data is partially aligned to protocols.	Documentation of student learning and behavioral data is aligned with protocols.	Documentation data is fully aligned with protocol, students may monitor own progress.

<b>4c: Communicating with families/colleagues.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Relationships are negative or self-serving.	Relationships are cordial.	Relationships are supportive and cooperative.	Relationships are supportive/cooperative, takes initiative with leadership.

<b>4d: Participating in professional learning opportunities.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Avoids professional learning opportunities.	Participates in professional learning opportunities only when asked.	Seeks out professional learning opportunities, applies to his/her work.	Shares outcomes of his/her learning and assumes leadership role to assist others.

<b>4e: Showing integrity, professionalism and confidentiality.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Trouble maintaining confidentiality or has made errors in judgment.	Occasional lapses in maintaining confidentiality or in professionalism.	High standards of integrity in all interactions, respects confidentiality.	Model of professionalism, uses best practice for confidentiality and ethics.

<b>4f: Displaying a positive work ethic/attendance.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Regularly late, not present or not prepared for work.	Usually punctual, present and prepared for work.	Reliably punctual, present and prepared for work, works well under pressure.	Reliable in any circumstance, committed to work on personal level.

## **Confidentiality**

**Confidentiality is one of the most critical aspects of the paraprofessional's job.** It is a legal responsibility to observe both the rights of students with disabilities and parents in regard to data privacy. Like teachers and administrators, paraprofessionals have access to personal information about children and their families including these examples:

- The results of formal and informal tests
- Behavior in classrooms and other education settings
- Academic progress
- Family circumstances and family relationships

### **Confidentiality Pointers**

- Avoid using names if you are asked about your job.
- Suggest that questions about a student are best directed to the special education teacher.
- Do **NOT** share other student's names or information regarding their programs with parents during conferences or informal conversations.
- Information regarding specific students and programs should not be shared in the lunchroom, staff room, office areas, out in the community or any other setting.
- No matter who asks you a question about a student, if you are unsure whether you should answer, **DON'T**. Remember only staff that has a need to know should be given information about a student.
- Do **NOT** share information with people not directly related to or serving the student.
- Do **NOT** answer questions about students, share information about students, or discuss students with bus personnel during bus duty times. Often the parents share information with the bus personnel and they will comment or ask further questions of staff. What a parent decides to share with bus personnel is beyond our control but we are **NOT** to discuss or share information with bus personnel.
- Do **NOT** discuss one student with another student.
- If a student has a medical issue that should be monitored during transport, a member of administration or nursing should escort the student to the bus and they will share only what information they deem necessary to safely transport the student.

### **Digital Confidentiality**

With the influx of social media as a way to provide instruction and stay connected to families within the educational context, there is a significant shift to the use of digital technology to instruct and communicate. The requirements of confidentiality extend equally to the application of digital confidentiality. The sharing of specific student information on social media, with those not associated with the students IEP, information used inappropriately, information or digital images are all strictly prohibited. Parents are required to authorize the use of students' photography and video at the beginning of the school year. Staff are also required to sign an Acceptable Use Policy regarding the internet at the beginning of each school year.



## Verification Statement



My signature below indicates that I have received the Paraprofessional Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and adhere to policies and practices contained within the handbook.

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(Signature)

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(Printed Name)

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(Date)

Submit this verification statement to your coordinator upon receiving and reading the manual.