

**121A.642 PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING.**

Subdivision 1. **Training required.** (a) For purposes of this section, "school" means a school district, charter school, intermediate school district, other cooperative unit, Perpich Center for Arts Education, or the Minnesota State Academies.

(b) A school must provide a minimum of eight hours of paid orientation or professional development annually to all paraprofessionals, Title I aides, and other instructional support staff.

(c) Six of the eight hours must be completed before the first instructional day of the school year or within 30 days of hire.

(d) The orientation or professional development must be relevant to the employee's occupation and may include collaboration time with classroom teachers and planning for the school year.

(e) For paraprofessionals who provide direct support to students, at least 50 percent of the professional development or orientation must be dedicated to meeting the requirements of this section. Professional development for paraprofessionals may also address the requirements of section 120B.363, subdivision 3.

(f) A school administrator must provide an annual certification of compliance with this requirement to the commissioner.

(g) For the 2024-2025 school year only, a school may reduce the hours of training required in paragraphs (b) to (e) to a minimum of six hours and must pay for paraprofessional test materials and testing fees for any paraprofessional employed by the school district during the 2023-2024 school year who has not yet successfully completed the paraprofessional assessment or met the requirements of the paraprofessional competency grid.

Subd. 2. **Reimbursement for paraprofessional training.** (a) Beginning in fiscal year 2025, the commissioner of education must reimburse schools in the form and manner specified by the commissioner for paraprofessional training costs.

(b) The paraprofessional reimbursement equals the prior year compensation expenses associated with providing up to eight hours of paid orientation and professional development for each paraprofessional trained under subdivision 1. For purposes of this paragraph, "compensation expenses" means the sum of the following amounts attributable to the school's paraprofessionals:

(1) regular hourly wages;

(2) Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) taxes under United States Code, title 26, chapter 21; and

(3) the employer share of retirement contributions required under chapter 352, 353, 354, or 354A.

(c) The commissioner may establish procedures to ensure that any costs reimbursed under this section are excluded from other school revenue calculations.

(d) For reimbursements paid in fiscal year 2026 only, the commissioner must reimburse a school for six hours of paraprofessional training required under subdivision 1, paragraph (b).

(e) In addition to the amounts under paragraph (d), for fiscal year 2026 only, the commissioner must pay each school an additional amount equal to 33.33 percent of the amount in paragraph (d). The school

must use these funds either for paraprofessional test preparation and exam fees under subdivision 1, paragraph (g), or additional training under subdivision 1, paragraph (b).

Subd. 3. **Consultation.** A school district or charter school must consult the exclusive representative for employees receiving this training before creating or planning the training required under this section.

Subd. 4. **Qualifications.** (a) Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, a paraprofessional meets the federal personnel qualifications required in Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, section 300.156, if the paraprofessional:

(1) has at least two years of college credits through an accredited institution of higher education, or an associate's degree or higher;

(2) has received a passing score on an assessment approved by the Department of Education; or

(3) demonstrates the following competencies, regardless of the number of hours of training the paraprofessional has received:

(i) understanding the distinctions between roles and responsibilities of professionals, paraprofessionals, and support personnel;

(ii) understanding the purposes and goals of education and instruction for all students;

(iii) knowledge of relevant laws, rules, regulations, and local district policies and procedures to ensure paraprofessionals work within these parameters;

(iv) awareness of the challenges and expectations of various learning environments;

(v) the ability to establish and maintain rapport with students;

(vi) the ability to follow oral and written direction of licensed teachers, seeking clarification as needed;

(vii) the ability to assist and reinforce elements that support a safe, healthy, and effective teaching and learning environment;

(viii) understanding strategies for assisting with the inclusion of students in various settings;

(ix) the ability to use strategies that promote the student's independence;

(x) understanding applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and procedural safeguards regarding the management of student behaviors;

(xi) awareness of the primary factors that influence student behavior;

(xii) the ability to effectively employ a variety of strategies that reinforce positive behavior;

(xiii) the ability to use ethical practices for confidential communication about students;

(xiv) the ability to follow teacher instructions while conferring and collaborating with teachers about student schedules, instructional goals, and performance;

(xv) demonstrating a commitment to assisting students in reaching the students' highest potential, including the modeling of positive behavior;

(xvi) showing respect for the diversity of students;

(xvii) showing a willingness to participate in ongoing staff development and self-evaluation and to apply constructive feedback;

(xviii) supporting and reinforcing the instruction of students in mathematics following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers;

(xix) supporting and reinforcing the instruction of students in reading following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers. Professional development required under the Read Act in section 120B.123 exceeds this requirement; and

(xx) supporting and reinforcing the instruction of students in writing following written and oral lesson plans developed by licensed teachers.

(b) Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, a paraprofessional meets the federal personnel qualifications required in Code of Federal Regulations, title 34, section 200.58, if the paraprofessional:

(1) has at least two years of college credits from an accredited institution of higher education, or an associate's degree or higher; or

(2) met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing, as appropriate:

(i) reading or language arts, writing, and mathematics; or

(ii) reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

(c) Upon request from a paraprofessional employed by a school district, charter school, or cooperative unit providing direct instructional services, the school district, charter school, or cooperative unit may provide administrative assistance to the paraprofessional when completing requirements related to the competencies required under this subdivision.

**History:** 2023 c 55 art 2 s 42; 2024 c 109 art 2 s 20; 2024 c 115 art 5 s 1; 1Sp2025 c 10 art 2 s 8