

## Standards for Instructional Paraeducators – Review and Proposed Updates

In October 2025, the Standards and Assessment Committee had the opportunity to review and provide feedback on a draft of updated standards and competencies for instructional paraeducators. A Qualtrics survey was sent to all Board members to solicit feedback. One comment submitted by Board Member Davis, saying, “I appreciate our USBE and local LEA partners for working on this. Thank you for the revisions.” Based on this feedback, USBE staff is requesting that the Standards and Assessment Committee approve the draft of revised standards and competencies for instructional paraeducators to the full Board for consideration. For historical context regarding Utah’s Standards for Instructional Paraeducators, see the information below.

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has established standards for instructional paraeducators, giving guidance on supervision and training. These standards are incorporated in R277-324 with the intention of providing competency requirements for Utah’s instructional paraeducators. The original standards were created and adopted in 1985. The last review and revision occurred in 2015.

There is no state statute or Board rule regarding a timeline for updating the standards. However, as shared with the Standards and Assessment Committee in October, during the revision of the USBE Paraeducator Manual, completed in 2023, LEA representatives and community partners expressed concerns about outdated language in the paraeducator standards. They also mentioned the need to expand the standards and related competencies, including the addition of special education-specific competencies.

After sharing the feedback from our education partners with USBE leadership, our team collaborated with LEA representatives and community partners to review and update the standards. We met every other week, beginning our work in January 2024. The people involved and the resources utilized in this project are listed below:

1. Participants/Writers involved
  - USBE Paraeducator Team
    - Tanya Semerad – Special Education
    - Marianne Farnsworth – Special Education
    - Ellen Bailey – Special Education
    - Robert Palmer – Student Support
    - Val Murdock – Title I
    - Joanna Sorensen – Teaching and Learning
  - USBE Colleagues
    - Chelsea Oaks – Preschool Special Education Specialist

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- Christina Guevara – Apprentice Education Specialist
- Krisanne Lewis - Student Services Coordinator

- LEA Representatives and Community Partners
  - Stephanie Bowen – Granite/Curriculum Specialist
  - Karen Condor – Utah PTA
  - Shamby Polychronis – U of U
  - Kurt Farnsworth – Davis Administrator
  - Ashley Lennox – Canyons District
  - Noelia Gonzalez Hidalgo – Alpine District

## 2. Resources used to update standards

- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Council for Exceptional Children
- Idaho State Department of Education
- National Operational Paraeducator Framework
- Alaska Department of Education
- Washington State Department of Education
- National Resource Center for Paraeducators

For your information, below are the links to the current standards and the draft of revised standards.

- [Current standards/competencies](#)
- [Draft Updated Standards](#)
  - Please note:
    - i. We have proposed to delete “supporting competencies”
    - ii. We have proposed to add a 5<sup>th</sup> Standard related to professional improvement
    - iii. We have proposed to add special education-specific competencies to Standards where appropriate

Thank you in advance for your participation in this work to support our Utah instructional paraeducators.

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This draft is for consideration during the January S&A Committee meeting (January 8, 2026)

Rule/Statute: R277-324