



Utah State  
Board of  
Education

Special  
Education  
Services

# **PARAEDUCATOR PUSH-IN SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL**

A UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL  
ASSISTANCE DOCUMENT

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# INTRODUCTION

The paraeducator push-in model is an inclusive service delivery method that offers flexibility within general education classrooms. This approach supports both general and special education teachers in their efforts to serve students with disabilities. This model positions paraeducators in the general education classroom. It enables general educators, special educators, or paraeducators to deliver special education services to students with disabilities, while other educators offer support or instruction to the remaining students. Under the direction of a licensed educator, paraeducators can provide tier one, tier two, and tier three instruction and, under the supervision of a special education teacher or related service provider, deliver specially designed instruction (SDI) to students with disabilities. Utilizing paraeducators effectively allows educators to ensure students with disabilities receive special education services while remaining in the general education classroom alongside their peers without disabilities and access grade-level content from a content expert.

## SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION

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The paraeducator push-in model is implemented in the general education classroom to support students with disabilities and foster inclusive practices. This approach guarantees that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum through instruction alongside their peers without disabilities. It enables them to participate in classroom discussions, interactions, and lessons while still receiving their special education services.

# SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

Special education services is when specially designed instruction (SDI) is provided by trained educators. [SDI](#) means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of a student who is eligible under these Special Education Rules (SpEd Rules) the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction in order to:

- a. Address the unique needs of the student that result from the student's disability; and
- b. Ensure access of the student to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the LEA that apply to all students. (SpEd Rules I.E.51).

The special educator will choose the SDI for the student with the disability based on the individualized education program (IEP), implement or oversee the implementation of the SDI and make needed adjustments based on data. While the general educator and paraeducator, under the supervision of the special educator may deliver SDI.

## REQUIRED PROFESSIONALS

The paraeducator push-in model involves licensed educators/providers and paraeducators working together to provide support and services to students with disabilities in the general education classroom, with clearly defined roles for each professional.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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### *LICENSED EDUCATORS/PROVIDERS WORKING WITH PARAEDUCATORS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM*

- Educators/providers that provide supervision, training, and direction for paraeducators could include general and special educators or other related service providers (e.g., speech and language pathologists, school

psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists, and physical therapists, and school nurses). Special educators and service providers are licensed and trained to help students with SDI, IEP related services or accommodations.

- The general educator creates the lesson plan for the whole class based on grade-level content standards.
- The general educator and the special educator or a related service provider, collaboratively, review lesson plan(s) and identify the instructional support activities and SDI or related services that will be implemented during instruction, and plan for the IEP progress monitoring and data collection that will be used to evaluate the student's growth. The tracking of progress toward IEP goal(s) allows the licensed educators to make informed and timely adjustments to the intervention strategies.
  - During collaborative planning, educators/providers are aware of and address the IEPs for all students with disabilities.
- The special educator or related service provider and general educator work together to evaluate the student's achievement or progress.
- General and special educators train and supervise the paraeducator(s) on the content and services they will deliver to students, with intentional training and supervision on the SDI.

### *PARAEDUCATORS WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM*

- Paraeducators may serve students with disabilities on all grade levels from preschool to high school in the general education classroom.
- Paraeducators participate in training on instructional support activities and SDI or related services they provide to students with disabilities.
- Paraeducators, with training, may implement instructional strategies such as SDI, related services, monitoring student work, supporting positive behavior, answering student questions, giving students needed prompts or redirection, and pre-teaching or re-teaching.
- Educators/providers and paraeducators must to work together when supporting and providing services to students with disabilities. An explicitly

trained paraeducator may assist the educator/provider (s) by providing individual or small group instruction and classroom organization and management. They may also assist to provide supplementary aids and services and program modifications and support, such as assistive technology and services, and supervision in non-instructional settings (Board Rule R277-3241).

## COLLABORATION

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Effective collaboration among paraeducators, general educators, special educators, and related service providers is critical for successful implementation of both class instruction and special education and related services. It is essential to clarify and understand what educator/provider will be providing what service and role based on the lesson plan being implemented for that day. Educators/providers and paraeducators should know which students they will be working with, including which educator/provider will be providing the SDI to students with disabilities, and which educator/provider who will be instructing and supporting the rest of the students during that time.

## SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

There are several methods to implement the paraeducator service delivery model in the general education classroom. A key benefit of this model is its adaptability, which permits educators to make necessary adjustments to address the needs of both the entire class and individual students. Employing paraeducators enables students to receive their SDI from qualified educators, while paraeducators assist with overall classroom needs. This approach also allows paraeducators to provide SDI and related services to students with disabilities, while the general education teacher delivers whole class, small group, or individual instruction. Examples of different implementation scenarios are listed below.

## PREPARATION AND APPROACH

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Educators/providers must regularly collaborate and plan to ensure the needs and services of students with disabilities are addressed in upcoming lesson plans. The

general education teacher should proactively communicate with the special education teacher/provider giving adequate time to identify necessary adaptations, modifications, and accommodations for the students with disabilities. Subsequently, educators/providers will need to assign responsibilities for implementing the lesson plan, ensuring the paraeducator understands their role, and possesses sufficient knowledge of the content to effectively support either the entire class, small group, or individual student.

## EXAMPLES OF INSTRUCTION AND SERVICE DELIVERY DURING IMPLEMENTATION

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The following are examples of how paraeducators can assist educators in the general education classroom while students with disabilities receive their special education services.

Who is Providing SDI?	Special Education Teacher/Related Service Provider	General Education Teacher	Paraeducator
Paraeducator provides SDI to a student with a disability	The special educator prepares an adapted lesson plan for the paraeducator to give after the general educator has taught the content provided during a whole group lesson.	The general educator teaches the whole group lesson to all students, then gives directions for independent work.	The paraeducator supports students during the whole group lesson and provides supports to students with disabilities by providing reinforcement to the student for on-task behavior, participation, and staying in their seat. The paraeducator then works with the student while reteaching and delivering the adapted lesson plan during individual work time.



Who is Providing SDI?	Special Education Teacher/Related Service Provider	General Education Teacher	Paraeducator
Paraeducator and general educator provides SDI to a student with a disability	The school psychologist shares with the paraeducator a social skills goal and a lesson plan for a student to practice peer interaction skills during a small group activity.	The general educator explains the steps for a small group activity to all students and instructs them to form groups and follow the steps. The student with a disability joins a group, and the general education teacher monitors to ensure the student is participating and meeting the activity requirements.	The paraeducator first uses the lesson plan to practice social skills with the student individually. During the small group activity, the paraeducator reinforces appropriate social skills with all students.

Who is Providing SDI?	Special Education Teacher/Related Service Provider	General Education Teacher	Paraeducator
All educators are providing SDI to a student with a disability	The special educator teaches a reading lesson to a small group of students, including one with an IEP goal on fluency. The teacher targets this student's individual needs while working on fluency with the whole group.	The general educator teaches a small group of students, including one with an IEP goal on comprehension. The teacher addresses comprehension skills for the entire group, while also meeting the specific needs of the student with the IEP.	The paraeducator teaches a small group of students a reading lesson prepared by the general education or special education teacher. Within the group is a student with a behavior that the special education teacher can support and provide communication services too.
General educator provides SDI to a student with a disability	The special and general education teachers collaborate on a math lesson that includes SDI for a student with a disability.	After the lesson, the general educator teaches a small group of students, including those with disabilities, checking for understanding using math tasks and manipulatives.	The paraeducator provides support to the whole class answering individual questions during independent work time.

# USING SPECIAL EDUCATION-FUNDED STAFF FOR THE PARAEDUCATOR PUSH-IN SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Paraprofessionals funded with special education funding may be used in multiple roles when pushed into the general education classroom including delivering SDI to students directly and supporting general educators while they provide SDI. For example, a paraeducator paid with special education funding may monitor other students completing independent work or lead an extension activity with the other students while the general education teacher delivers SDI to a student with a disability.

Special education funds may also be used as one of several funding sources braided together, to fund a paraeducator that provides interventions to a group of students, including SDI to students with a disability. This paraprofessional may stay in the general education classroom for the full day and provide supports, for example, to students who are English learners and other students who have been identified as at risk for not meeting achievement goals. In this case, the funding should be allocated according to the proportion of the paraeducator's time that is spent supporting and providing direct services to students with a disability.

## DOCUMENTING SERVICES WITHIN THE IEP

The paraeducator push-in model can be documented in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and in the services section on the IEP. In the PLAAFP section of the IEP, IEP team members can outline how the student's SDI and related services will be provided, and what evidence-based practices work best for the student. There is no federal or state requirement to document which professional will provide the support on an IEP.

- If paraeducator support is documented on the IEP, it should be documented as the type of support (e.g., behavior, academic, or social skills) and not the role of the person providing it. The location the services will be given should also be documented by checking the environment box on the IEP.

- For example:
  - Math Support (general education classroom)
  - Reading Support (general education classroom)

## BENEFITS OF THE PARAEDUCATOR SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

The paraeducator push-in model supports students with disabilities in learning alongside their peers without disabilities, building peer relationships, and also promotes meaningful inclusion in general education classrooms. The push-in model increases individualized instructional support and implementation of SDI in the general education classroom and reduces the student-to-teacher ratio.

Below is a list of paraeducator push-in model benefits, along with links to the Utah State Board of Education (USBE's) Evidence-Based Practice Playing Cards.

- Peer interaction
  - [Positive peer influence](#)
  - [Classroom discussion](#): Students gain access to the classroom discourse of the general education classroom
  - [Cooperative Learning](#)
- Building relationships with peers and teachers
  - [Belonging](#)
  - [Teacher Student Relationships](#)
- Teaching Strategies and Lesson Adaptations
  - [Differentiation with UDL Focus](#)
  - [Explicit Instruction](#)
  - [Response to Intervention](#)
  - [Deliberate Practice](#)
- Specially Designed Instruction and Student Engagement
  - [Engagement](#)
  - [Effort Management](#)
  - [Small Group Learning](#)
- Practice skills to build students' confidence and transferrable skills
  - [Prior Ability and Achievement](#)

- [Mastery Learning](#)
  - [Transfer Strategies](#)
- Ongoing and immediate progress monitoring to observe student progress toward grade-level standards
  - [Formative Assessment](#)
  - [Teacher Clarity](#)
- Focus on the needs of the individual student and provide immediate feedback
  - [Scaffolding](#)
  - [Feedback \(via technology\)](#)
- Collaboration with the general education and special education teachers
  - [Collective Teacher Efficacy](#)

## CAUTIONS OF THIS SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

Some common missteps while implementing this model include grouping, planning, clear roles, using multiple curriculums, and over assessing. Read more about the risk these missteps pose and how to avoid them below.

### OVER-RELIANCE ON THE PARAEDUCATOR

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General educators, special educators, and related service providers often depend on paraeducators to assist with various tasks. However, general educators, special educators or related service providers need to be cautious of over-relying on the paraeducator to carry out responsibilities or tasks that do not fall within the paraeducator's supportive role.

### TRAIN AND SUPERVISE PARAEDUCATORS

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The amount and type of training paraeducators receive will be determined by the individual LEA, general educator, special educator, and/or related service provider working with the paraeducator. The paraeducator's training should be based on the specific roles and responsibilities they will be assigned. The special educator or

related service provider overseeing the student's IEP, must analyze the types of support the student with disabilities needs to be successful in the general education classroom and the type of training and feedback the paraeducator will need to effectively implement support and instruction. The licensed educator who collaborates with the paraeducator should be open and receptive to the paraeducator's requests for further training and support.

## ENSURE PROGRESS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM

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Special education services ensure a student can access grade-appropriate content. Educators should utilize interventions provided in the general education curriculum or develop methods to adapt or differentiate the general education curriculum when delivering special education services as opposed to using a separate curriculum.

## AVOID OVER-ASSESSING

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Students with disabilities are often given different assessments or an excess of assessments because the curriculum being used in the general education classroom may be different from the curriculum being used for their special education services. This practice leads to over-assessing and can be overwhelming to a student with a disability. Students should only be given assessments matching the curriculum delivered in the general education classroom. If additional data is needed for the IEP, the special educator or related service provider should work with the general educator to determine what data is needed and when and how the data will be collected. Paraeducators may be asked to collect student data and should be appropriately trained. Assessment data can then be shared amongst the necessary IEP team members to make decisions about what is needed to meet the student's academic or behavioral goals.

# HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

When informing parents about the paraeducator push-in service model, it is important to emphasize the benefits for their student. This model offers students the opportunity to engage with their peers without disabilities, while ensuring that SDI is delivered in the general education setting. Additionally, it provides flexibility within the lesson plan regarding who can provide the necessary services to their student. Ensure you communicate the number of special education minutes their student will receive in different education settings and that special education minutes are appropriately identified on the IEP.

## REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK

Below are questions educators/providers and administration may want to consider when determining the effectiveness of the paraeducator push-in service delivery model.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

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- What impact (both positive and negative) did the service delivery model have on student outcomes, including academic performance, IEP goal progress, and student engagement?
- How is the paraeducator push-in model being implemented across different educators/providers, classrooms, and/or the school?
  - Are there any variations in implementation of the model, and if so, what and why?
  - What changes, if any, need to be considered to make the push-in service delivery model more successful in the future?
- What are the key takeaways or lessons learned from the implementation of the paraeducator push-in model that can be documented and shared to improve future student outcomes?
- What data or evidence should be collected to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the paraeducator push-in model?

- How was this data used to inform decision-making and determine future improvements?

## SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- [2024 USBE SES Meaningful Inclusion Manual.pdf](#)
- [Utah Portrait of a Graduate Competencies](#)
- [Utah's Personalized, Competency Based Learning PCBL Framework September 2023](#)
- [DirectorIEPReflectiveFrameworkCompleteManual.pdf](#)