

**GOOD AFTERNOON!**

**Please put your name and school in the chat**

**Now is a good time to get a drink or a snack before we start 😊**



**WELCOME!**

**TO THE TEAM**

*We're Glad You're Here!*

**Overview:** The Professional Development Program “Orientation for Unit D Members” has been designed to support new Unit D in the Springfield Public Schools and will be comprised of one day of training. Topics will include detailed information on topics including professional expectations, professionalism, attendance policies, acceptable social media use, probationary period, district policies and the benefit package including competitive wages, paid sick leave, paid holidays, earning incentive days, and Professional Development opportunities including a robust Para to Teacher Pipeline program.

## Best Practices:

- Be on time
- Camera ON and facing you
- Audio OFF if not speaking-please don't speak over others
- Use the CHAT for questions
- Please turn off your cellphone
- Be respectful

Your success is our priority and we have made  
a commitment to support you!



A word cloud centered around the word "Leadership". The word "Leadership" is the largest and most prominent, written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Surrounding it are various other words in different colors and sizes, all in a sans-serif font. The words include: "Appreciation" (purple, top left), "Strategy" (orange, top center), "Humility" (light blue, top right), "Commitment" (green, middle left), "Responsibility" (red, middle right), "Integrity" (red, vertical on the far left), "Listening" (blue, vertical on the far right), "Honest" (blue, bottom left), "Communication" (light blue, bottom center), "Values" (blue, bottom left), "Purpose" (green, bottom center), "Determination" (red, bottom right), "Passion" (orange, bottom center), and "Principles" (purple, bottom right).

Appreciation Strategy Humility  
Commitment Responsibility  
Integrity Leadership Listening  
Honest Communication  
Values Purpose Determination  
Passion Principles

Catherine Mastronardi, President, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals, 12:15 - 1:00 pm

Darcia Milner Watkins, Chief Schools Officer-Zone 1, Springfield Public Schools 1:00 - 1:30 pm

Catherine Mastronardi, President, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals 1:30 - 2:00 pm

Break 2:00 - 2:15 pm

Tracy Thibert: Employee Assistance Program, ESI 2:15 - 2:30 pm

Kristin Reardon, Senior Administrator of Human Resources, Springfield Public Schools 2:30-  
2:45 pm

Roberto Ortiz, Senior Administrator of Talent Acquisition & Diversity Development, 2:45 - 3:00  
pm



# Knowing Your Contract

Catherine Mastronardi, President, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals

The SPRINGFIELD FEDERATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS, LOCAL 4098  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO

is the exclusive bargaining agent and representative of **Paraprofessional employees** of the Springfield Public Schools for the purpose of collective bargaining with respect to hours, wages, and conditions of employment. Such unit shall include Paraeducators, Paraeducators in Training, Certified Nursing Assistants, Licensed Practical Nurses, Health Assistants, Assistant Teachers, Occupational Therapy Assistants, Physical Therapy Assistants and Tutors.

The district will often refer to our group as “Unit D” or “the Paras”

| July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026                           |           |            |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
|                                                        |           |            |           |
|                                                        | 0-5 years | 6-10 years | 11+ years |
|                                                        |           |            |           |
| <b>Para-educator In Training</b>                       | \$19.10   |            |           |
|                                                        |           |            |           |
| <b>Para-educators and Certified Nursing Assistants</b> |           |            |           |
| Highly Qualified/Associates or 60 Credits              | \$22.03   | \$23.03    | \$25.57   |
| Bachelors                                              | \$22.75   | \$24.00    | \$26.55   |
|                                                        |           |            |           |
| <b>LPNs, Health Assistants and Assistant Teachers</b>  |           |            |           |
| Highly Qualified/Associates or 60 Credits              | \$39.21   | \$39.51    | \$39.81   |
| Bachelors                                              | \$40.11   | \$40.41    | \$40.71   |
|                                                        |           |            |           |
| <b>OTA and PTA</b>                                     |           |            |           |
| Highly Qualified                                       | \$34.55   | \$36.47    | \$38.42   |
| Bachelors                                              | \$35.59   | \$37.57    | \$39.57   |

We are contracted to be paid for 188 days per school year.

180 School Days with students in attendance

7 Professional Development Days (4 during PD week in August & 3 during the school year)

1 Convocation Day (Friday of PD week)

We get paid for a full day for delay days and early dismissal days.

Paraeducators in training are paid hourly

All other Unit D members are paid on a salary basis over 22 pay periods:

Gross pay before deductions:

$188 \text{ days} * 6.5 \text{ hours} * 22.03/\text{hour} = \$ 26,921/\text{year} \quad \$1223.67 \text{ per pay period}$

**Paraeducators In Training** are not Highly Qualified (yet). Paraeducators in Training are temporary in nature and a preparatory position to advance to that of a Paraeducator.

To become Highly Qualified, you must pass the WorkKeys test

You can take the WorkKeys exam at [STCC](#) but you need to register to take the test .

For Paraeducators in Training who would like to register to take the WorkKeys test please email Carmen Molina-Figueroa at molina-figueroac@springfieldpublicschools.com.

You can access the practice tests by..

[WorkKeys Assessments Online Practice Test](#)

# Probationary period

Any highly qualified employee who has completed a 120 working day probationary period as hereinafter defined shall not be discharged, suspended, demoted, or disciplined without good cause, (hereinafter defined). Such good cause shall be given to the employee in writing. In the Springfield Public Schools we follow progressive discipline in most cases.

Paraeducators in Training will remain in probationary period status as long as they continue to be a Paraeducator in Training.

**Working days** shall include fully paid sick leave but shall exclude (not include) days without pay including leave without pay and time spent on Workers Compensation. At any time during the probationary period a newly hired employee may be terminated at the sole discretion of the employer. (Without recourse to the grievance procedure.)

## Disability Days/Business Day 10-4-5 Days

**Disability Days/Business Day:** Highly Qualified Paraprofessionals will be provided with ten (10) disability leave days at the commencement of the school year. 3 of these days can be used as Business Days. Paraeducators in training will be provided with three (3) disability leave days at the commencement of the school year and are not eligible for business days.

Ask your building representative about how your principal wishes to be notified in the event that you will be using a disability (sick) day.

Notify your Principal and school clerk by **email** when you wish to use a business day.

**10-4-5 Days:** If you are Highly Qualified and you use four (4) or less disability leave days in a given year you will have an additional five (5) disability leave days added to your total at the end of the school year. These days accumulate from year to year.

Paraeducators in Training will receive three (3) emergency and disability leave days which if hired after the start of the school year will be pro rated.

If you serve as a substitute for a teacher on a you will be paid an additional \$4.25 per half hour for any part of a half hour that you perform that service (including day to day sub)

If you serve as a Para Teacher of Record-**aka Long Term Substitute-**your hourly rate of pay will be consistent with the pay of a first year bachelor's level teacher (Unit A)-**This does not apply to serving as a day to day sub**-The total hourly rate for Para Teacher of Record in 2025-2026 is \$41.41/hr. Please be aware that is you serve as a Para Teacher of Record you are responsible for everything that a teacher of record is responsible for. (Grading, IEP's, progress reports, late day, open house, parent teacher conferences, etc)

# Diapering/Toileting

Para-educators performing Diapering/Toileting on a regular basis for up to three full time students in the classroom they are assigned to **will be paid a monthly stipend of \$100.00** for up to ten months per regular school year to a yearly maximum of \$1,000.00.

Para-educators performing Diapering/Toileting on a regular basis for four to six full time students in the classroom they are assigned **will be paid a monthly stipend of \$200.00** for up to ten months per regular school year to a yearly maximum of \$2,000.00.

Para-educators performing Diapering/Toileting on a regular basis for seven to nine full time students in the classroom they are assigned **will be paid a monthly stipend of \$300.00** for up to ten months per regular school year to a yearly maximum of \$3,000.00.

The maximum number of **full time** students one Para-educator may diaper/toilet is 9.

If you are asked to diaper/toilet on an emergency basis you will receive \$5.00/day

## Duty Free Lunch & Break

### Break

Each member of the bargaining unit will have one fifteen (15) minute paid unassigned, break per workday, at a time determined by the principal. This time may vary from day to day.

### Duty Free Lunch

Your unpaid duty-free lunch period of one half (1/2) hour should occur around the normal lunch time at your school.

## Professional Work Appearance

All employees covered under this collective bargaining agreement must present a professional work appearance. Employees shall wear neat, clean work attire. Employees are expected to dress in a manner that is normally acceptable in similar professional environments. Employees shall dress in a way that promotes respect and shows students that they are the authority in the classroom.

## Transfer Program

From the **Monday of April vacation through three business days following the last day of the school year**, any bargaining unit member may apply for any position posted in their bargaining unit using the Springfield Public Schools, Recruit & Hire system.\*

Each paraprofessional will be evaluated by the principal or his designee who may be a teacher. The paraprofessional will be rated on:

- a. Promptness and good attendance
- b. Cooperation with teachers
- c. Ability to work with children
- d. Dependability in carrying out tasks
- e. Quality of work
- f. Discretion

You must sign the evaluation, but your signature does not indicate agreement with the contents. You have the right to make a written reply which shall be attached to the report. An unsatisfactory evaluation may only be grieved on the grounds of **bad faith** or **discrimination**.

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

UNIT D

EVALUATION FORM

Name of Paraprofessional:

School:

Employee ID:

Date:

Please evaluate Paraprofessional by checking the appropriate column:

|                                        | Excellent   | Very Good   | Good        | Fair        | Poor        |
|----------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Attendance and Punctuality          | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| 2. Cooperation with Teachers           | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| 3. Ability to work with children       | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| 4. Dependability in carrying out tasks | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| 5. Quality of work                     | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |
| 6. Discretion                          | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> | <div></div> |

Comments:

Signed:  ( Evaluator )

Signed:  ( Unit D Member )

Recommendation: **As the Principal,** I would like to initiate termination procedures as outlined in the Springfield Federation of Paraprofessional Contract.

[ ] YES

[ ] NO

Principal / Director / Supervisor

SIGNATURE:

PRINT NAME:

DATE:

# Thirty Hour Professional Development Program

Must be Highly Qualified

Takes place after regular school hours over a period of ten weeks

Each class is 3 hours long

You are paid for the hours you attend

You must attend a minimum of 27 hours to successfully complete the course

You are eligible to take the 30 Hour PD:

One time during your 2nd-5th years of service,

One time during your 6th-10th years of service

Every third year a beginning with your 11th year of service.

When you successfully complete the 30 Hour Professional Development Program during one school year, at the beginning of the next school year you would either

- Gain a tier increase (Tier 1 to Tier 2 or Tier 2 to Tier 3) the following school year
- Receive an additional \$1000.00 added to your base pay (\$45.45/week) after you are on Tier 3

For example:

Highly qualified paraprofessionals with one to five (1-5) years of service within the bargaining unit may complete the thirty-hour professional development program once during their second to fifth (2nd-5th) years of service period. Upon successful completion of the approved thirty-hour training program, they will move to Pay Tier 2 at the start of the next school year, but years of service will remain the same.

If you take the 30 Hour PD during your **2<sup>nd</sup>** year of service (25-26 next school year) the following school year (26-27) your rate of pay will increase from **\$22.03/hr to \$23.72/hr (instead of 22.69)**

**$\$23.72/\text{hr} - \$22.03/\text{hr} = 1.69/\text{hr} * 6.5 \text{ hrs} * 188 \text{ days} = \$2,065.18$  (instead of 806.52)**  
for your **3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>** years of service

AND you get paid to take the PD so if you complete all 30 hours you will make an additional \$660.90 when you take part in the course

and you take it again during your **6<sup>th</sup>** year of service

and you can keep on taking the PD **every third year after you hit 11+ years of service** to continue increasing your take home pay

# What is a grievance?

A grievance is a claim by an employee that there has been a violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of the terms of this Agreement (AKA the Contract)

Additional items

**If you need to sign up for Health Insurance** you only have 21 calendar days from your first day of service. Contact the benefits office today! (413) 787 – 6055 or [benefits@springfieldcityhall.com](mailto:benefits@springfieldcityhall.com)

**If you have any prior years of experience you need to submit that to HR immediately.**

*“Any Unit D member hired will be paid their contractual hourly rate according to years of service in Springfield, and at the discretion of the Human Resources Department, full years of service as a paraprofessional, teacher, or in another directly related type of position outside of the district. Whatever the credit allowed for experience or training when a staff member enters the system and whatever the salary fixed at that time, such credit and such salary stand as final, subject to adjustment only upon the approval of the Superintendent of Schools.”*

**If you take and pass the WorkKeys test** get the results to your Principal and Human Resources as soon as you get them. You want to get your increase in pay and increase in benefits as soon as possible.

# DARCIA MILNER WATKINS CHIEF SCHOOLS OFFICE ZONE ONE



YOU CAN DO  
ANYTHING.  
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING  
YOU WANT TO BE.  
AS LONG AS YOU  
BELIEVE IN YOURSELF  
AND WORK HARD.

GYMQUOTES.CO



PARA TO  
TEACHER TO  
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL TO  
PRINCIPAL TO  
CSO TO  
???



# Weingarten Rights

Basic Weingarten Right: A member who has a **reasonable belief** that a meeting with a supervisor **may lead to discipline** has the right to have a union representative present at that meeting.

## What situations give rise to Weingarten rights?

- Where the employee has a reasonable expectation that discipline may result; for example, where the meeting is part of the employer's disciplinary procedure.
- Where the purpose of the meeting or interview is to investigate an employee's allegedly inadequate work performance or other misconduct, where discipline of any kind is a possible result.
- Where the purpose of the interview or meeting is to elicit facts, the employee's "side of the story," or obtain admissions or other evidence either to determine whether or not discipline is warranted OR to support a disciplinary decision already made.
- Where the employee is required to explain or defend his/her conduct in a situation which the employee reasonably fears could affect his/her working conditions or job security.

## What situations DO NOT give rise to Weingarten Rights?

- Where the meeting or discussion is merely for the purpose of conveying work instructions, training, or *needed corrections*.
- Where the purpose of the meeting is simply to inform the employee about a disciplinary decision that has already been made and no information is sought from the employee.
- Where the employer **has clearly and overtly assured** the employee in **writing** prior to the interview that **no discipline or adverse consequences** will result from the interview.
- Where any discussion that occurs after the employer has notified the employee of the discipline has been **initiated by the employee** rather than the employer.

Like Miranda rights (where the police officer must tell the suspect "you have the right to remain silent, etc."), the supervisor must inform the employee of his/her Weingarten rights ("you have a right to have a union representative present").

**FALSE**

When an employee requests the presence of a union representative at an investigative meeting, the supervisor can follow any of these courses of action:

a. Grant the request and wait for the union representative to arrive;

OR

b. Deny the request and immediately end the meeting:

OR

c. Give the employee the choice of ending the meeting or continuing without union representation.

**All of the above**

When an employee requests that a union representative be present, the supervisor can select which union representative is called in.

**FALSE**

If an employee requests a particular union representative, and that union representative is on sick leave or on vacation, the supervisor must postpone and investigative interview until the union representative returns to work.

**FALSE**

If a supervisor denies a request for a union representative, the employee must continue to answer the supervisor's questions.

**FALSE\***

Upon arrival at the meeting, the union representative should ask the purpose of the meeting and has the right to meet privately with the employee before questioning begins.

**TRUE**

The union representative is not allowed to take notes during the meeting.

**FALSE**

The union representative has the right to a) ask the supervisor to clarify confusing questions; and b) to object to harassing questions.

**TRUE**

If an employer has provided all the necessary Weingarten rights, may an employee refuse to answer questions?

No, unless the matter under discussion has **criminal implications**. Generally, an employee generally does not have the right to remain silent, as long as his/her representational rights have been honored, nor may the union representative direct the employee to remain silent.

# Tracy Thibert

## *Employee Assistance Program*

### ESI



TotalCare EAP  
Public Safety EAP  
Educators' EAP  
Higher Ed EAP  
HealthCare EAP  
Union AP



# KRISTIN REARDON

## Assistant Chief of Human Resources



# Social Media and Boundaries

# Internet Use, Social Media, and Email

## Social Media

- Use of social media during district time is prohibited. This includes personal blogs, chats, posts, tweets, etc. Use extreme caution with information that you post as it is never truly private. The line between professional and personal relationships can be blurred within social media context. When employees choose to join or engage with District students, families, or coworkers you are advised to maintain professionalism as an SPS employee.
- Employees are responsible for what they post on their own site and on the site by others. You may be held liable for commentary deemed libelous, defamatory, obscene or inappropriate.

## Internet Use and Email

- All messages and information created, sent, or retrieved on an SPS computer or network are the property of the SPS. Electronic mail messages and other use of electronic resources by students and staff, including accessing web pages, should not be considered confidential. Copies of all information created, sent, or retrieved are stored on the computer network's back-up and archive files. Under the Massachusetts Public Records Law, electronic mail transmissions and other uses of electronic resources by SPS employees may be considered public records
- No expectation of privacy

# Professionalism and Boundaries

## Professionalism

- Be polite and courteous
- Respect cultural differences
- Do not engage in gossip
- Remember boundaries with colleagues

## Boundaries

Boundaries encompass a wide variety of areas. In this day, boundaries are becoming more difficult to define, manage and maintain

A few examples are: Emotional, Financial, and Communication.

# Professionalism and Boundaries, cont.

## Emotional

- Showing preferential treatment to students
- Intimate relationships with students: engaging in a romantic and/or sexual relationship with a student (current or former)
- Flirtatious behavior/ intimate gestures directed towards a student
- Expressing romantic feelings towards a student in written or other form

# Professionalism and Boundaries, cont.

## Financial and Communication

- Meeting the student alone outside of school or taking the student for an unauthorized outing
- Privately giving a student money or a gift
- Talking with a student about highly personal and/or sexually inappropriate matters
- Using social media to interact with student about personal /sexual matters
- Distribution or sale of prescription or non prescription drugs constitutes a danger to the students
- Be as transparent as possible and with the knowledge and consent of the Principal or Supervisor.

# Professional Boundaries, cont.

If you become concerned about relationships you are developing, ask yourself the following:

- Am I dealing in a different manner with a particular student than with other students?
- Am I sharing information with a student because I think it will help the student or because I need/want to be liked?
- Am I interacting with the student in an 'online environment' consistently with how I would act with that student in class or at school?
- Would I modify my behavior with a student if a colleague/ Administrator were present?

Roberto Ortiz  
*Senior Administrator of Talent  
Acquisition & Diversity  
Development*



## **Membership Meetings**

October 1, 2025 4:15pm Meline Kasparian Professional  
Development Center

January 28, 2026 4:15 pm Virtual

June 3, 2026 Elections

Check your bulletin board regularly

Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals





DOCUMENTS, FORMS & LINKS



GET INVOLVED



NEW

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



BUILDING REP RESOURCES



HOME

ABOUT

New Members

P D

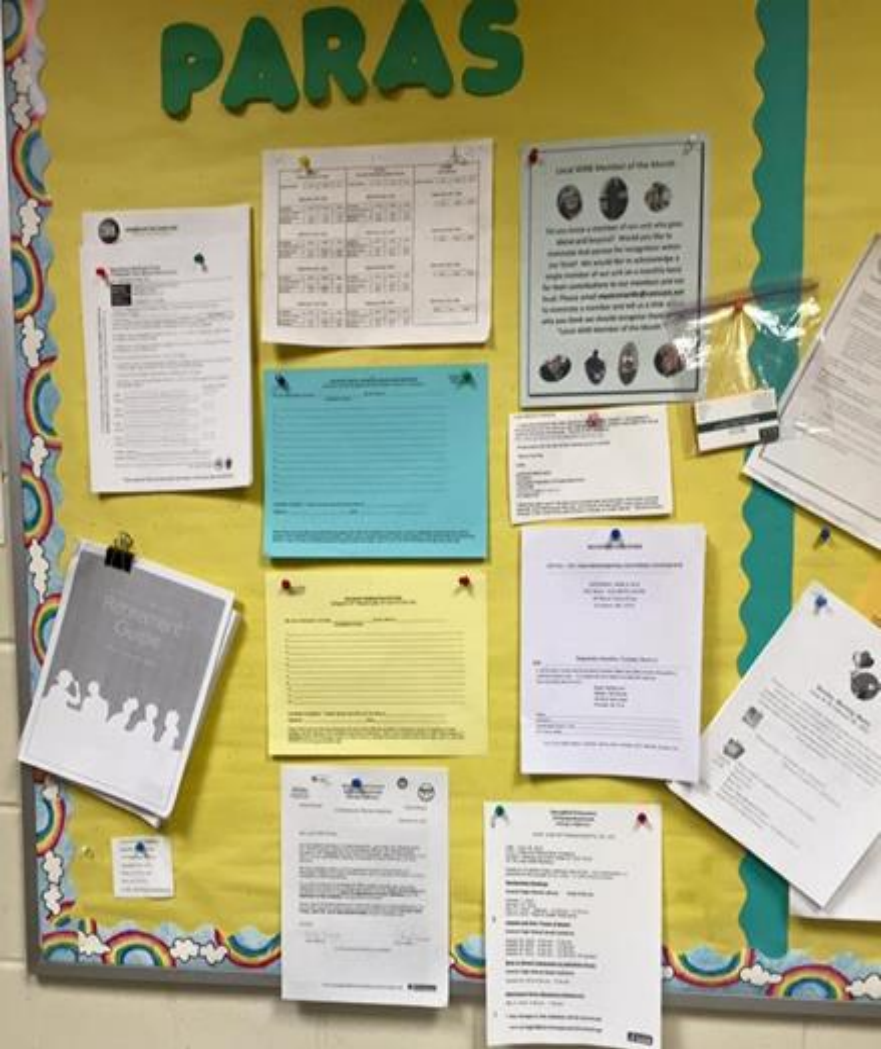
PARA to TEACHER PIPELINE

CONTACT

Members of the Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals

Please join us at the SPS Back to School Celebration at Blunt Park where we will be giving away books to the students in the Springfield Public Schools! We need your help to make this distribution run smoothly To volunteer to help with set-up (9am-11 am) distribution (11 am-1 pm) and/or clean up (1pm-1:30 pm) please email [mastronardic@comcast.net](mailto:mastronardic@comcast.net) or call 413-949-9165.





Follow us on  
Threads

# PARAPROFESSIONAL



What my friends think I do.



What my mom thinks I do.



What society thinks I do.



What my administration  
thinks I do.



What I think I do.



What I actually do.

Questions?

