

# Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential

Minnesota Rule 8710.9000

## Guidelines and Application Procedures

In compliance with Minnesota Law, the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) is pleased to offer Minnesota paraprofessionals a Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential that recognizes additional training and preparation in working with Minnesota students. We look forward to issuing the Credential to paraprofessionals who are able to demonstrate their commitment to the profession and their service to our students.

### Benefit in Obtaining Paraprofessional Credential

Although this credential is voluntary, the benefit in obtaining this credential is recognition of professional development and portability across districts.

### Who is Eligible?

1. Individuals who have two years of experience as a paraprofessional in the same district and,
2. have passed the ParaPro test and,
3. can provide sufficient evidence in meeting all competencies with a minimum of 60 clock hours.

### Submitting a Paraprofessional Credential Portfolio

First, carefully review the competencies to assess whether you have sufficient training to submit a portfolio for review. **The Credential requires a minimum of 60 clock hours. (In general, one clock hour is equivalent to one hour of training.** For coursework taken, 16 clock hours may be granted for each quarter credit earned, and 24 clock hours for each semester credit earned.)

While each competency must be represented in the documentation, there is no minimum number of clock hours required for each of the competencies. The Credential also requires the passing of the ParaPro test and verification of two consecutive years of service within the same school district as a paraprofessional.

If you believe you are a candidate for the Credential, you may compile a portfolio for review. The record must include:

1. A copy of the passing score report of ParaPro test.
2. A completed competency grid (all categories within each competency must be completed). The grid will serve as a summary document for the Review Panel.
3. Exhibits to demonstrate that all competency areas have been addressed.
  - a. Exhibits may include professional development and training experiences, workshops, work experiences, academic coursework, and other professional activities.
  - b. Exhibits must make clear connections to the competencies where they are cited in the summary grid; for example, a workshop cited within Competency 4 must clearly reflect the specific instructional content and practice competency.
  - c. Supplemental information may be included with any exhibit and is encouraged to help the Review Panel understand how the exhibit relates to the competency/competencies (for example: a syllabus and course description may be submitted along with a transcript for a course taken; an agenda and hand-outs from a workshop may be submitted with a clock hour certificate).
  - d. Exhibits must include copies of official documents showing attendance or participation.

- e. An exhibit may be used for multiple competencies.
- f. Copies of exhibits (e.g.; transcripts, clock hour certificates, supplementary information).
- g. Documents will not be returned upon completion of the review process; **PLEASE DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS!**

### **Submitting Para eLink Coursework in Lieu of Portfolio**

The PELSB will accept a district signed certificate verifying that all Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential competencies have been met through a district staff development process using Para eLink (<http://www.paraelink.org>). Please note that the coursework completed must align to the competencies as cited within the [Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential Rule 8710.9000](#).

Individuals who wish to use their completed Para eLink coursework must submit the following:

1. A copy of their district signed certificate verifying that all Voluntary Paraprofessional Credential competencies have been met.
2. A copy of their passing ParaPro score report.
3. Verification of two years of experience as a paraprofessional in the same district. If all competencies were met through Para eLink with less than 60 clock hours, additional clock hours must be submitted (a minimum of 60 clock hours is needed for the credential).

### **Review Process of Credential Applications**

Completed portfolios will be submitted during a submission window. The submission windows are the months of November and April.

Portfolios can be submitted by mail to:

Heather Ward/PELSB  
Suite 300  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113

After the submission window has closed, the PELSB will convene a Review Panel. The panel will have up to 120 days to review the exhibits for each competency and make a determination whether the competencies have been met.

1. NOT MET: If there are competencies that the panel determines have not been met, the portfolio will be returned to the paraprofessional. The paraprofessional will receive the panel findings and may re-submit the portfolio in any future submission window with additional information or materials and the panel will review the revised portfolio.
2. MET: If the panel determines that all competencies have been met, a credential certificate will be mailed to the individual.

### **Application Process and Fee**

The application process is not yet available and no fee will be charged at this time.

### **Additional Credential Information**

1. The Credential is issued as a one-time recognition of a paraprofessional's training and preparation; it never expires, therefore it is not renewable.
2. The Credential is issued by the state of Minnesota, but is not a state requirement for employment.

**PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.  
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED WILL NOT BE RETURNED.**