



# ELK RAPIDS SCHOOLS

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## *PARAPROFESSIONAL HANDBOOK*

2025-2026

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### *Mission Statement*

The mission of Elk Rapids Schools is Developing Lifelong Learners to  
Excel in a Diverse Global Community.

# ELK RAPIDS SCHOOLS

*“Where Excellence is a Tradition!”*

## *Introduction*

### **Board of Education:**

President	Jennifer Brown
Vice President	Tara Kribs
Secretary	Sherry Steffen
Treasurer	Darryl Antcliff
Trustee	Scott Moore
Trustee	Shana Wojtowicz
Trustee	Jeff Hill

### **Administration – 264-8692**

Superintendent	Bryan McKenna
Executive Assistant	Kortni Huron
Director of Finance	Laurie McCann
Asst. Business Manager	Karen Miller

### **Elk Rapids High School - 264-8108**

Principal	Jack Young
Assistant Principal	Brett Graham
Athletic Director	Brett Graham
Administrative Assistant	Lacey Straight

### **Cherryland Middle School - 264-8991**

Principal	Josh Haggerty
Administrative Assistant	Renee Bradberry

### **Lakeland Elementary – 264-8289**

Principal	Angie Nichols
Administrative Assistant	Beth Veeder

### **Mill Creek Academy – 267-9955**

Principal	Nate Plum
Administrative Assistant	Jenny Pike

## **ERS Paraprofessional Employment Guidelines**

1. Scheduled hours of work are listed in your position assignment. These are based on estimates from your supervisor/principal. These position assignments may be amended during the year as student or district requirements change.
2. When unable to report for work, an employee must call his immediate supervisor prior to the beginning of the work period. Emergency situations will be considered on an individual basis.
3. Smoking is not permitted on school property, including school vehicles.
4. The consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages on school property is forbidden. Employees presenting themselves for work under the influence of alcohol or with the odor of alcohol on their breath will be subject to immediate discharge.
5. The understanding of Board Policy 4362 is mandatory. This policy pertains to "Harassment of Staff or Applicants." Within this two-page policy, the area of sexual harassment is also addressed. Violations of the policy will result in suspension, paid or unpaid, up to and including discharge for any District employee.

## **PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFF BENEFITS**

### **1. Paid Holidays – all paraprofessional employees**

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day
- Christmas Eve
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day

### **2. Sick Leave**

If a staff member becomes ill and cannot work, the employee must call the building's administrative assistant. A substitute will be arranged.

Sick leave shall be granted to paraprofessional employees in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness
- Physical incapacity to work
- When the employee's presence in the school might be detrimental to the welfare or health of the students or fellow workers, as certified by a doctor
- Illness in the immediate family  
Immediate family is defined as spouse, parent(s), children, or for doctor's appointments.
- Accumulation to 200 days
- Sick leave shall be granted on the basis of five (5) sick days in the first semester, and five (5) sick days in the second semester.

3. **Family Medical Leave Act**

Per Federal Law and Board Policy 4430, employees working 1,250 hours or more during any contract year are eligible to elect to leave under the FMLA. An application must be made that shows an employee's eligibility per the FMLA rules (detailed in the Board Policy).

4. **Personal Business**

Employees shall be allowed two days per year for personal business. Requests for this leave shall be submitted to the principal or supervisor in advance for approval. Such leave shall be for business reasons only that cannot be transacted other than on working days, nor shall such leave be granted for recreational purposes. Leave prior to or following vacations shall not be granted except with the approval of the ERS Superintendent. Personal Business days will accumulate and carry over to the next school year, up to five days. Days beyond five will be converted to sick days. Personal days are equal to the average daily hours worked by the employee.

5. **Bereavement**

An employee shall be allowed up to five (5) days off, with pay, for bereavement leave for a death in the immediate family. Immediate family shall be defined as follows: husband, wife, mother, father, brother, sister, children, grandparent, father and mother-in-law, grandparent-in-law, and siblings-in-law. Requests are to be made to the employee's immediate supervisor at least two (2) days in advance of the requested day(s) of leave when possible.

6. **"Act of God Days"**

Employees will be paid for up to six (6) "Act of God" days. Days added to the instructional year because of the "Act of God" days beyond five will be paid to the employee upon completion of the work performed. An "Act of God" day's number of hours paid will be equal to the number of hours that would have been worked that day.

7. **Payroll Deductions**

Paraprofessional employees can be paid through the will-sub vendor. With the will-sub choice, the employee will be paid through the vendor's payroll system and will not be part of the Office of Retirement Services payroll system. If an employee has elected to be part of ORS, they can not change back to will-sub.

If the employee elects to be on the ERS payroll, the Office of Retirement Services deductions are state-mandated and required. Payroll is direct deposit for all employees. Contact the payroll department at the ERS Superintendent's office for payroll set-up paperwork. The Office of Retirement Services handles the district retirement plan. Based on the first time an employee worked in any Michigan School system will determine the ORS retirement plan available. ORS deductions are deducted from your paycheck every pay period. This is computed as a percentage of your biweekly wages. This goes into your ORS retirement account for use when you decide to retire. You can go to <https://www.michigan.gov/ors> to

obtain an MI Account to receive retirement information or update information. You must establish an MI Account to sign up for the retirement system. Please proceed with your online application for retirement as soon as possible. This selection needs to be completed promptly to get your retirement calculation established as soon as possible.

8. **Dependent Care and 403(b) Plan**

A 403-B plan and flexible spending for dependent care is available to all paraprofessionals. Contact payroll in the ERS Superintendent's office if you are interested.

9. **Lunch Break**

Non-paid, duty-free lunch break shall be 30 minutes.

10. **Severance Pay**

The employee's severance pay shall be based on one-half (1/2) of the employee's regular daily base pay when they terminate their employment for each day of accumulated sick leave, not to exceed \$1,500. In case of death, accumulated sick leave to a maximum of \$1,500 shall be paid to the employee's beneficiary.

To qualify for severance pay:

- The employee must have been employed in the Elk Rapids Schools for a minimum of 10 consecutive years.
- The employee must resign for the purpose of retirement from the Elk Rapids Schools.
- Employees terminated at the district's direction will not be eligible for severance pay.
- The employee shall notify the ERS Superintendent prior to **March 15** of the year of his/her intention to retire or resign at the end of the school year.

11. **Jury Duty**

A paraprofessional employee called for jury duty shall be compensated for the difference between the employee's pay and the pay received for the performance of such obligations. Time lost is not deducted from any accumulated leave time.

12. **Health Insurance/Health Savings Account (HSA)**

District will provide employee-only (no spouse or dependent coverage) health insurance for any paraprofessional who works 30 or more hours per week.. The employee will be responsible for paying the cost of such coverage that exceeds the annual amount of the State's hard cap. The annual amount will be deducted evenly each pay period.

An HSA is a type of savings account that lets you set aside money on a pre-tax basis to pay for qualified medical expenses. By using untaxed dollars in an HSA to pay for deductibles, copayments, coinsurance, and some other expenses, you may be able to lower your out-of-pocket health care costs. HSA funds generally may not be used to pay premiums. While you can use the funds in an HSA at any

time to pay for qualified medical expenses, you may contribute to an HSA only if you have an HSA-eligible plan (sometimes called a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) — generally a health plan (including a Marketplace plan) that only covers preventive services before the deductible. An HSA may earn interest or other earnings, which are not taxable. Banks, credit unions, and other financial institutions offer HSAs. The district plan deposits your amount to a credit card that is updated with every payroll deduction.

13. **HIPAA**

Board Policy 4419.02 explains the District's commitment to complying with the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) Privacy Rules. The District has created procedures to protect your private health information. See the Central Office for further details and/or to offer suggestions.

14. **Pre-Tax Medical Flexible Spending Plan**

The District has established a Medical FSP for eligible District employees that allows payroll deductions into an account for out-of-pocket medical/dental/vision costs. These payroll deductions are exempt from Federal, State, and Social Security taxes. Other than upon hire, **enrollment may only occur in December** and covers the following: January 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>.

15. **Summer Pay Rates**

Paraprofessionals are typically hired for and assigned to duties that fall within the September to June school cycle. Elective summer assignments do arise with some of the District's programs. An employee who elects to accept a summer assignment will be paid the rate that is offered, not their regular wage rate. These rates follow the step schedule (i.e., a second summer working the same assignment will receive the step 2 rate).

16. **Leaves**

Leaves of absence for not less than one (1) year may be granted by the Board or its designee without loss of seniority. The Board hereby agrees to full compliance with all provisions of the Family Medical Leave Act.

17. **Tuition Assistance**

Paraprofessionals shall receive tuition reimbursement if all of the following conditions are met:

- Current work schedule averages 27.5 hours or more per week.
- Employment with the District has been continuous for at least 36 consecutive months.
- All semester hours for reimbursement must be in an approved program in an education-related field; said program to be on file in the Superintendent's office, or have the prior approval of the Superintendent for coursework outside of the approved program.
- All semester hours for reimbursement must be taken through a college or university accredited by the North Central Association, or a sister agency, or a college or university recognized by them.

- All semester hours for reimbursement must have a grade of “B” or better. ***Report cards and/or transcripts must accompany the reimbursement request.***
- Each course taken must be pre-approved by the superintendent in a documented manner.

This Tuition Assistance Program is limited to a maximum of \$600 per school fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). The reimbursement only applies to tuition costs. Course fees, books, supplies, and other incidental costs are not eligible. There is no prorated assistance available for those with schedules averaging less than 30 hours per week.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Conference days, open house, GSRP requirement, and half-day attendance to be determined by the building principal. Prior approval for additional hours (overtime) must be secured, in writing, from the direct supervisor.

Evaluations are given annually per Board of Education policy/administrative guidelines 4220.

Violation of the following can result in immediate discharge. (This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of reasons for dismissal.)

- Chronic absenteeism or tardiness.
- Use or unlawful possession of narcotics.
- Unlawful possession of a firearm or other legal weapon on school property.
- Unauthorized removal of school district property from the premises.
- Intoxication on duty.
- Willful destruction of school district property.
- Fighting or assaulting another person on school district property.
- Persistent violation of policies, regulations, or laws.
- Neglect of duty.
- Any action that would or could result in an unsafe situation for the students involved.

### **PAY SCHEDULE**

<b>Step</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>
<b>1</b>	15.00
<b>2</b>	15.75
<b>3</b>	16.54
<b>4</b>	17.36
<b>5</b>	18.23
<b>6</b>	19.14



