



SCHOOL DISTRICT 54

Ensuring Student Success

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PARAPROFESSIONAL LICENSURE FAQ'S

In order to work as a Paraprofessional you need to have ONE of the following credentials:

- Educator License with Stipulations (ELS) with a Paraprofessional (PARA) endorsement (also known as a Para Educator License or ELS-PARA); or
- Substitute Teaching License (**NOT** a Short Term Substitute License); or
- Professional Educator License (PEL) with any type of endorsement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If I have a bachelor's degree, what license should I apply for?

- Our recommendation is that you apply for a Substitute Teaching License.
 - This will also allow you to work as a substitute teacher when needed.
 - You qualify for a Substitute Teaching License if your degree is from a regionally accredited college/university.
 - If the institution is not regionally accredited you need to meet the requirements for the Paraprofessional License by taking one of the acceptable tests.

If I have an associate's degree, what license should I apply for?

- You qualify for a Paraprofessional License if your degree is from a regionally accredited college/university.
- If the institution is not regionally accredited you need to meet the requirements for the Paraprofessional License by taking one of the acceptable tests.

If I have 60 or more semester hours of college credit but no degree, what license should I apply for?

- You qualify for a Paraprofessional License if your coursework is from a regionally accredited college/university.
- Course work must be at the 100 level or higher. Remedial and developmental course work cannot be counted.
- Grades for all course work must be "C-" or higher.
- If the institution is not regionally accredited you need to meet the requirements for the Paraprofessional License by taking one of the acceptable tests.

I graduated from a college/university outside of the United States (U.S.). What license should I apply for?

- You will need to get your transcripts/diploma evaluated by a professional evaluation company. This company can determine the equivalent semester hours and degree(s) in the U.S. educational system.
- If you have the equivalent of 60 semester hours of coursework from an equivalent of a regionally accredited institution in the U.S. then the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) can issue a Paraprofessional License.
- If you don't have at least 60 semester hours of equivalent course work or the institution outside of the U.S. is not equivalent to a regionally accredited institution in the U.S. then you'll need to take one of the acceptable tests to qualify for a Para Educator License.
- See this list of the foreign evaluation companies that have been approved by ISBE: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/foreign-cred-eval-svcs.pdf>.
- If you have the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree or higher we recommend that you apply for a Substitute Teaching License instead of a Paraprofessional License.

How do I know if my college or university is regionally accredited?

- Check the website of the institution to verify the accreditation.

What are the acceptable regional accrediting bodies?

- ISBE accepts accreditation from these regional accrediting bodies:
 - The Higher Learning Commission (formerly the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools).
 - Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools.
 - New England Association of Colleges and Schools.
 - Northwest Association of Colleges and Schools.
 - Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.
 - Western Association of Colleges and Schools.

Can I use courses taken at a technical or trade school/college?

Probably not because most technical or trade institutions only have national or career/vocational accreditation. But do check the website of the institution to verify the accreditation.

I only have a high school diploma. What do I need to do to obtain a license?

Complete one of the acceptable tests.

I only have a GED. What do I need to do to obtain a license?

Complete one of the acceptable tests.

Is there a minimum age requirement to get a license?

Yes, you need to be at least 19 years old to obtain a license from ISBE.

I did not graduate from high school. Can I still become a Para Educator?

Yes, but you will need to obtain your GED first.

I need to test. What test(s) do I need to take?

You may take the ETS Para Pro Assessment or two specific Work Keys tests.

What material does the ETS Para Pro Assessment cover?

See the ETS Para Pro Assessment website for more information on this exam:
<https://www.ets.org/parapro/about>.

Where can I take the ETS Para Pro Assessment?

The nearest test center is at the Kane County Regional Office of Education (ROE) located at 28 N. 1st St., Geneva, IL 60134. Contact the ROE for more information at 630-208-3143.

How do I register for the ETS Para Pro Assessment?

- Click here to register for the test:
https://register.kaneroe.org/?action=workshops&search_EventNumber=&search_Title=&search_BeginDate=&search_EventType=ParaPro+Assessment+Test.
- Click on the "Number" link to get info on the available testing sessions.
- The next screen shows details about the test.
- Click on the "register" button to register for the test.

What score do I need to pass the ETS Para Pro Assessment?

The passing score is 460.

Is there a study guide to help me prepare for the ETS Para Pro Assessment?

See this website for test preparation materials: https://www.ets.org/parapro/test_prep/materials.

How much does the ETS Para Pro Assessment cost?

The registration fee is \$65.00.

What Work Keys tests do I need to take and what is the passing score?

- Applied Mathematics/Applied Math exam with a score of at least a 4; **AND**
- Reading for Information, **OR**, Workplace Documents with a score of at least a 4.

Where can I take the Work Keys tests?

Many local community colleges offer Work Keys testing. If you live in the Elgin area you may be able to take these tests at Elgin Community College (ECC).

How do I register for the Work Keys tests?

- To register for the Work Keys tests at ECC, see this website:
<https://www.elgin.edu/admissions/testing-services/proctored-exams/>.
- Scroll down to the section on Work Keys to register.
- If you live in another area outside of Elgin, contact your local community college for information on these tests.

Is there a study guide to help me prepare for the Work Keys tests?

Yes, contact the ECC Career Development Services office at 847-214-7150 for more information.

How much does the Work Keys tests cost?

The total fee that ECC charges is \$49.00; which includes:

- A \$12.00 fee for each exam. The total fee for both exams is \$24.00. ECC charges an additional \$25.00 administrative fee.
- The fees may differ at other community colleges.

What if I don't pass the Work Keys test(s)?

You will need to wait 30 days before testing again. After the 30-day period you may register and test again.

How do I apply for a Paraprofessional License?

You'll need to create an account in the ISBE Educator Licensure Information System (ELIS) website; which can be accessed here: <https://sec3.isbe.net/IWASNET/login.aspx>.

NOTE: This system is best viewed with Internet Explorer (9.0 or above) or Firefox (18.0 or above).

- See this ISBE video for instructions on how to create your ELIS account: <https://vimeo.com/180601205>.
- See this ISBE video for instructions on how to apply for a Para Educator License: <https://vimeo.com/172960970>.
- **NOTE:** The ISBE website has been updated and is now displayed differently than shown on the videos.
- There is an application fee of \$100.00 that is paid online.

I am having problems with the ISBE website. Who can I contact for help?

- ISBE Technical Support at 217-558-3600.
- North Cook ISC, Region 5 at 847-824-8300 [select option 1](#).
- Human Resources, at 847-357-5035, humanresources@sd54.org.

Where do I send my transcript(s) for the license?

Have an official transcript sent to the North Cook ISC. The ROE can get your transcript scanned into your ELIS account much faster than if they are sent to ISBE in Springfield.

My college/university mails official transcripts. Where should they be sent?

North Cook ISC, 1001 E Touhy Ave, Suite #200, Des Plaines, IL 60018.

How should I submit my foreign credentials for review?

- Take your original professional evaluation report to the North Cook ISC.
- Contact the ROE before you go to be sure that someone will be available when you arrive. They can be reached at 847-824-8300 and select 1 for licensure.

I completed the Para Pro Assessment or the Work Keys tests. What materials need to be sent to the ROE to support my Para Educator License application?

- A copy of your high school diploma/transcript or GED; and
- A copy of the official score report from the testing session(s).
- You can bring this info to the ROE, or mail it.

I don't have a copy of my high school diploma or transcript. What can I do?

Contact your high school registrar/school district records office to request your transcript. An unofficial transcript or copy is acceptable.

I graduated from high school outside the U.S. What do I need to provide?

You will need to get your high school studies evaluated by a professional evaluation company to determine if they are equivalent to a high school diploma in the U.S. See page 2 for details on the acceptable evaluation companies.

How do I know if all the required documents have been scanned into my ELIS account?

- Hover over the "educator" tab near the top left of the screen in your ELIS account and click on the "images" link.
- You will then see a list of all the documents that have been scanned into your ELIS account.
- Follow up with the North Cook ISC if you have any questions regarding this. See the ROE contact info on pages 4 and 6.

How long will it take for the license to be issued?

- It could take up to a few weeks for the license to be issued.
- If an administrator in the District is interested in hiring you the District can request a RUSH for your evaluation.
- You need to have applied for the license and all the required documentation needs to be scanned into your ELIS account before a RUSH request can be sent.
- Once your license is issued you will receive an email from ISBE letting you know that your file has been updated and you should log back into your ELIS account.

Do I need to do anything else once my Paraprofessional License is issued?

- Yes, the license needs to be registered in North Cook (region 05) for it to be considered valid for employment in our district.
 - You'll register your license in your ELIS account.
 - Click on the "registration" link in the "action center" box on your home page.
 - There is an additional \$30.00 registration fee that is due.
 - See this ISBE video for instructions on how to register your license: <https://vimeo.com/180604307>. This video references a Professional Educator License (PEL) but the steps are essentially the same for the Para Educator License.

- **NOTE:** The ISBE website has been updated and is now displayed differently than shown on the video.
- Click on the “My Credentials” tab near the top left part of the screen to see your license. Print this screen for an official copy of your license. ISBE no longer issues paper credentials.
- Your Paraprofessional License will need to be renewed in 5 or 6 years by paying the registration fees. You should receive an email from ISBE reminding you to renew at the appropriate time. Be sure to keep your email address up to date in ELIS.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this process?

Contact Human Resources at humanresources@sd54.org or 847-357-5035

Contact North Cook ISC at 847-824-8300 and select option 1.

Contact the Illinois State Board of Education at licensure@isbe.net or 217-557-6763.