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Introduction
The new Online Paraeducator Staffing Grid system, which we will refer to as the “Para Grid system”, is an online, interactive tool that replaces the current MCPS Form 425-9a, Paraeducator Staffing Form, to make changes to your school’s paraeducator hours and/or indicate involuntary transfers of paraeducators. To access the Para Grid system, go to the same myMCPS webpage that you use to get to SAE and click on the Online Paraeducator Staffing Grid link:

A Brief Tour of the Para Grid System
The first time you or your delegate accesses the Para Grid system, you will see a screen like the one below. If you would like to see a bar chart that displays your school’s paraeducator job codes that currently have variances between hours assigned and authorized hours, click on the View Variance Chart link:
After you click on the View Variance Chart link, here is an example of what you would see if you have any paraeducator job codes with variances. If your school does not have any variances, the chart will not display:

![Dashboard for Watkins Mill Elementary School (561)](image)

When you are ready to begin working on a new Para Grid for eventual submission to the Department of Certification and Staffing (DCS), click on the blue plus icon in the Start New Form box that you will be working on:

![Dashboard for William B. Gibbs, Jr. ES (337)](image)

Click this blue plus icon to work on your current year’s (FY17) paraeducator staffing

Click this blue plus icon to work on your next year’s (FY18) paraeducator staffing
After you click on the blue plus icon, the Para Grid for your school will be displayed:

The left pane of the screen is a navigation bar and it also shows a **Form History** area that shows on which version you are currently working. The first time you work in the Para Grid system, you will be working on Version 1:

This arrow icon shows you the version of your school’s Para Grid on which you are currently working.
If you have submitted previous versions of your school’s Para Grid, the **Form History** section will show the version history. You can view any previous version by clicking on the version number:

![Form History](image)

This is where you can see version history and you can view a previous version by clicking on it.

When you access your school’s Para Grid, it will already be populated with the staff members at your school who have paraeducator, lunch hour aide, and IDA hours assigned. The staff members will be displayed in seniority order (by hire date), with the most senior staff members at the top. It will also display each staff member’s hire date, race, gender, and highly-qualified status (real employee names and ID numbers are being masked in this training document):

![Staff members](image)

Staff members are listed in seniority order.
If your school has temporary part-time staff assigned temporary lunch hour aide (T6490) or temporary itinerant special education paraeducator (T6450) hours, those temporary staff members will be displayed toward the bottom of your grid, after the permanent staff member with the least seniority. The temporary part-time staff will have “(TPT)” in front of their names:

The “(TPT)” before staff member’s name indicates temporary part-time.

Your school’s Para Grid will also show the hours currently assigned for all permanent staff in the various job codes listed on the grid, including a breakdown of the special education paraeducators (6550) by program:

At the right-side of the grid, there are columns that calculate the “Total Para” hours (paraeducator, lunch hour aide, and IDA hours), total “Other” hours (non-paraeducator hours), and “Total Hours” for each employee in the grid:
At the bottom of the grid, there are three rows that calculate for each job code and program area the “**Total Hours Assigned**”, the “**Allocation In Hours**”, and the “**Variance + Or –**”:

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/2015</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>/2016</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Hours Assigned</strong></td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Allocation In Hours</strong></td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>20.80</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variance + Or –</strong></td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the Hours Assigned are **less** than the Allocated Hours, the Variance is **positive** and shows in **GREEN**

If the Hours Assigned are **more** than the Allocated Hours, the Variance is **negative** and shows in **RED**
Changing a Staff Member’s Assigned Hours

If you will be changing the assigned hours for any of the staff members in your school’s Para Grid, you must first indicate the reason for making the change before the grid will permit you to change the hours. Click in the Change Code column for the staff member whose hours you will be changing and a pop-up window will prompt you to indicate the reason for the change:

After you click on the appropriate Change Code, the letter for that change code will be displayed in the Change Code column cell for that employee:

First, click in the Change Code cell for the staff member whose hours you are changing.
Second, click on the reason for changing the staff member’s hours.

The Change Code letter you selected displays here.
Now that the **Change Code** letter is displaying, you can modify the staff member’s hours. For example, if you wanted to give the first employe listed in your grid one hour of Lunch Hour Aide (6490) work that he/she did not previously have, you would click in the blank cell and type in “1.00”. Notice that the cell will turn a light green color to indicate that you have made a change to that cell:

![Cell modification example](image)

The Para Grid will **not** permit you to enter **more than 7 hours** into a cell. In addition, the Para Grid will not permit you to enter a number into a cell that will give the staff member **more than 7 Total Para Hours** or **more than 8 Total Hours**. If the number you are entering trips any of these limits, you will see either of these messages:

![Message examples](image)

If you are working in the **current** year Para Grid, after entering a change of hours, click in the **Effective Change Date** cell and use the pop-up calendar to select the date on which the change should become effective:

![Calendar selection](image)
Adding Temporary Part-Time Hours for a Staff Member

If you have temporary part-time staff members displayed in your grid, you will notice that their assigned hours are not populated in the Para Grid when you access it. This is because temporary hours (assigned and allocated) are not maintained in the systems from which Para Grid gets the hours information. You may use the Para Grid’s functionality to enter the hours into the grid, using the same method described in the previous section on how to change hours for a staff member. For example, in the screen shot below, if you know that Employee Number 20 has 1 hour of TPT Lunch Hour Aide (T6490) work, you would click on the Change Code for that staff member, select “T – Temp Part-Time”, and then enter “1.00” in the T6490 cell for that staff member:

You can repeat this process for each staff member in your school who has (or will have) temporary part-time hours.
Recommending Involuntary Transfer of a Staff Member

If you need to indicate in your Para Grid a staff member you are recommending for involuntary transfer, then you should click in the **Involuntary Transfer** checkbox in the row containing that staff member:

Note: If the staff member you recommend for involuntary transfer has more seniority than another staff member, you will need to provide the rationale for the recommendation in the box at the bottom of the Para Grid:

In order to “zero-out” the assigned hours for the staff member you are recommending for involuntary transfer, remember to select a **Change Code** so that you can remove the hours for that staff member:
Saving Your Para Grid Prior to Submission

If you are working on your Para Grid and need to stop working on it to attend to other matters, you can save the changes you have made and resume working on it at a later time. When you are ready to save your Para Grid, click on **Save** in the navigation bar on the left of the screen:

Another option for saving your Para Grid is to click on the red “button” icon that always sits in the bottom right corner of your screen, and then click the **Save** icon:

After you have saved your Para Grid, you can exit the Para Grid System by clicking on **Exit** in the left-side navigation bar:
Upon accessing the Para Grid System again, the grid that you saved will be displayed as the **Active** version of your grid, with the choice to **Edit** or **View** it. If you plan to make any changes or if you will be submitting your Para Grid to DCS, then click on the **Edit** icon. If you simply want to view your Para Grid, click on the **View** icon:

**Click Edit if you plan to make changes and to submit your Para Grid**

**Click View to just review your Para Grid**
Submitting Your Para Grid to the Dept. of Certification and Staffing (DCS)

When you have finished working on your Para Grid and are ready to submit it to the Department of Certification and Staffing (DCS) for review, there are two options in the system for submitting your grid. The first option is to click on **Submit** in the navigation bar on the left of the screen:

![Submit option](image1)

The second option is to click on the “button” icon at the bottom right corner of your screen and then click on the Submit icon:

![Submit button](image2)

After you click on **Submit**, either in the navigation bar or from the button icon’s choices, you will see a pop-up window that prompts you to confirm that you wish to submit your grid. If you do want to submit it, click on the **Submit** button:

![Submit confirmation](image3)
After you have submitted your grid, you will see a confirmation message at the top of your grid indicating the date and time of the submission, and the MCPS username of the person who submitted the grid. In addition, the navigation bar’s **Form History** will show that the version you were working on is now in a “Submitted” status:

![Image](image-url)

**Shows status of current version as “Submitted”**

**Message confirming date, time, and who submitted the grid**

Upon submission of your Para Grid, an email will be sent to DCS indicating that your school’s grid has been submitted and is ready for review. In addition, a copy of the email will be sent to the principal of the school and the principal’s delegates, if he/she has identified delegates in the SAE system:

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**Image of email notification**

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**Message confirming date, time, and who submitted the grid**

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**NOTE: Once a grid has been submitted, it cannot be edited by anyone – it can only be viewed.**
What Happens after Your School’s Para Grid has been Submitted?

When a DCS staff member reviews your submitted Para Grid, he/she will make a decision to either “Accept” or “Return” the Para Grid. If the decision is to accept the grid, an email will be sent back to the principal and delegates indicating the grid has been accepted:

************** OPSG NOTIFICATION **************

The paraeducator staffing grid for Stephen Knolls School (562) has been accepted by Human Resources. Please log into OPSG to see the status of your grid.

************** OPSG NOTIFICATION **************

If the DCS staff member’s decision is to return the grid, the email will indicate that the grid has been returned with a note explaining the issue that needs to be resolved:

************** OPSG NOTIFICATION **************

The paraeducator staffing grid for Rock Terrace School (442) has been returned by Human Resources for the following reason:
Please enter change code "T" to manually enter TPT hours assigned to temps under the T6450 column. Thank you, Carolina

Please log into OPSG to see the status of your grid.

************** OPSG NOTIFICATION **************

When you come back into the Para Grid system, your school’s dashboard will show you all of your school’s previous submissions along with the status of those submissions. If you would like to review a previously submitted Para Grid, click on its View icon:

Click on the view icon to review a previously submitted Para Grid
If you have been working on your next year’s Para Grid and it has been returned by DCS, you have two options: (1) you can start a new grid that will not have any of the changes you made on your submitted grid or (2) you can start from a previously submitted grid. If you want to start from a new grid, click on the blue plus icon in the Start New Form box. If you want to start from a previously submitted grid, in the Start From Previous box, click on the drop-down arrow to select the version, then click the blue plus icon:

Next Year’s Grids

![Next Year’s Grids](image)

If you have been working on your current year’s Para Grid and it has been returned by DCS, you will only have one option – to start a new grid. This is to assure that if any staffing or allocation changes have occurred at your school since you last worked on your Para Grid, that when you start working on a Para Grid again, it will reflect those staff and/or allocation changes:

Current Year’s Grids

![Current Year’s Grids](image)
Tips for using the Para Grid System
The following items are tips on how to use various features of the Para Grid System.

How to see more of your Para Grid on your screen
If the navigation bar is displayed on the left-side of your screen, you can minimize it by clicking on the “line” icon at the top left corner of your grid screen:

This is what you will see after minimizing the navigation bar:

Also, depending on what web browser you are using to view the Para Grid System, you can use the “zoom-out” feature to see more of your grid on your screen. For example, with Internet Explorer, you can change the zoom level by clicking the drop-down arrow at the bottom right corner of the browser window and selecting a lower zoom percentage, such as 75%:
How to export your grid to an Excel worksheet

If you need to download your Para Grid to an Microsoft Excel worksheet, you can do that by using the Export function that is available in two places on your grid screen: (1) the navigation bar or (2) the button icon at the bottom right corner of your grid screen:

The exported Excel worksheet will not have the nice formatting of the grid on your screen, but it will permit you to print out the information in the grid:

Can more than one person work on the Para Grid for a school?

Yes, the Para Grid System does permit the principal and his/her approved delegates to work on a school’s Para Grid. It is important to understand that the Para Grid System does not have a lock-out feature, which means that it is possible for two individuals to be working on a school’s Para Grid at the same time. It is not recommended that two individuals work on the Para Grid at the same time because of the possibility that one person’s grid changes will be over-written by the other person’s grid changes.
Can I refresh my Para Grid if I want to discard my changes and start over again? Yes, if you are working on your Para Grid and would like to discard changes you have made and want to start from a fresh grid, you can click on Refresh in the navigation bar on the left-side of your screen: