

Bulletin No. 02.03

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Topic: Requirements for Paraprofessionals

The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the "No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001 (NCLB) had a significant impact on duties, training, and qualifications of paraprofessionals working in Title I programs across the state. Section 1119 of the ESEA requires each local education agency receiving assistance to ensure that all paraprofessionals **hired** after the date of the reauthorization, January 8, 2002, of the NCLB have:

- At least two years of higher education which is equivalent to at least 48 semester hours from an accredited higher education institution, **or**
- Obtained an associate (or higher) degree, **or**
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and be able to demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment, knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics (or, as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness).

All paraprofessionals in Title I schools must meet the hiring requirement prior to employment in these schools. **All paraprofessionals in school-wide schools and all Title I paraprofessionals in targeted assistance schools must work under the close supervision of highly qualified teachers.**

NCLB legislation will apply according to the table below:

JOB DUTIES	DOES ESEA APPLY?
English/ESL Translator	NO
School-wide Title I, Parent Involvement Activities	NO
School-wide Title I, All Other Paraprofessionals	YES
Title I Targeted Assistance Program Funded by Title I	YES
Title I Targeted Assistance Program not Funded by Title I	NO

NCLB does not require a paper and pencil test for assessing paraprofessional quality. However, there must be evidence that the assessment utilized is valid and reliable. Also, the

assessment results must be documented - i.e., there needs to be a record of the assessment and the individual's performance on that assessment. The paraprofessional assessment is expected to evaluate paraprofessional candidates at a level equivalent to the second year of post-secondary education.

Under NCLB, a paraprofessional is an individual with education support duties working under the supervision of a highly qualified teacher. The teacher prepares the lessons and plans the instructional support activities, and the paraprofessional carries out the plans and evaluates the work of students. Individuals who work solely in non-regular education roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, clerical personal care services, and non-regular education computer assistance are not considered to be paraprofessionals for Title I purposes, and are not required to meet the requirements.

The responsibilities of paraprofessionals are also listed in NCLB. According to NCLB, a paraprofessional assisting in instruction may be assigned:

- to provide one-on-one tutoring for eligible students, if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
- to assist with classroom management, small work groups of students as well as organizing instructional and other materials;
- to provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
- to conduct parental involvement activities;
- to provide support in a library or media center;
- to act as a translator; or
- to provide instructional services to students under direct supervision of a teacher.

The requirements apply to all paraprofessionals who assist with education or instructional support duties in a school-wide Title I program, regardless of funding source. In a Title I targeted assistance program, the requirements apply to all paraprofessionals who assist with instructional duties whose funding is Title I funds. If an LEA does not receive Title I funds, the requirements do not apply. Similarly, if an LEA receives Title I funds, but a school does not receive Title I funds, the requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working in that school.

A paraprofessional who is proficient in English and another language whose only responsibility is to serve as a translator to enhance the participation of limited English proficient children must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other requirements. Similarly, a paraprofessional with duties that consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities must have a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but does not have to meet the other requirements.

NCLB also specifies, under Section 1119 (i), that the principal of each school operating a program under Section 1114 (SWP) or Section 1115 (TAS) attest annually in writing as to whether such school is in compliance with the requirements of this section and that all affected paraprofessionals are qualified.

Specific questions related to this bulletin should be directed to:

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