

Series 2002-2003
Circular Letter: C-15

Revised: October 1, 2002

TO: Superintendents
Principals

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: September 27, 2002

SUBJECT: **TITLE I PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS: *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001***

In the May 31 and August 15, 2002, Circular Letters (see C-26 [Series 2001-2002] and C-9 [Series 2002-2003]), an overview was provided of the requirements for paraprofessionals who are funded by Title I funds. A number of districts have asked for further clarification of the new requirements and of the role of the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

The following requirements only apply to paraprofessionals engaged in instructional support who are paid with Title I funds in a Title I targeted assistance school and to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a Title I schoolwide program school (regardless of funding source). Those paraprofessionals who do not provide instructional support to teachers, such as translators and parent liaisons, are exempt from these requirements.

NCLB Requirements: "Title I" Paraprofessionals Providing Instructional Assistance (Title I Funded in Title I Targeted Assistance Schools and Paraprofessionals, Regardless of Funding Source, in Title I Schoolwide Program Schools)

1. Any "Title I" paraprofessional described above providing instructional assistance who is newly hired after January 8, 2002, must have the following:
 - A high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) test, **AND**
 - Two years of college credit, **OR**
 - An associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
 - Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option.)
2. Currently employed "Title I" paraprofessionals described above providing instructional assistance – Each paraprofessional must have earned a high school diploma or GED to maintain current employment. By January 8, 2006, each Connecticut Title I funded paraprofessional in a Title I targeted assistance school or any paraprofessional providing instructional assistance in a Title I schoolwide program school must meet **one** of the following requirements:
 - Have two years of college credit; **OR**
 - Hold an associate's (or higher degree); **OR**
 - Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option.)

CSDE has worked collaboratively with 16 other states and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the development of a state assessment for paraprofessionals which meets the federal requirements. ETS worked with a representative team of paraprofessionals and teachers to identify the critical sets of skills and understandings required by paraprofessionals. Those were then validated based on a national job skills survey. A number of Connecticut paraprofessionals will participate in piloting the new ETS **ParaPro** assessment on September 21, 2002, and the Department will participate in a joint validation and standard setting study with Rhode Island. Our intention is to bring those results to the State Board of Education for adoption in December.

A description of the assessment, including sample items, can be found at www.ets.org/parapro/index.html. The assessment takes two and one-half hours and will include 90 multiple-choice questions. The assessment is designed to be taken on a school site through the Internet with the cost of \$40 to be charged to the district; results are provided to the candidates at the conclusion of the assessment. There will also be a pencil-and-paper version available six times a year with individual registration and payment; results will be provided to the candidate within four weeks of administration.

At the present time, we are not contemplating other than the ETS ParaPro assessment – unless, over time, there are alternative tests which could be validated for comparability to the ParaPro content and standards, and approved by the State Board of Education.

Duties of Title I Paraprofessionals

A Title I paraprofessional 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, such 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. (A Title I paraprofessional may not provide any instructional assistance to a student unless he/she is working under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher.)*

Use of Funds

A local education agency (LEA) receiving Title I funds may use such funds to pay for the test and to support ongoing training and professional development of paraprofessionals to assist them in meeting the requirements.

Verification of Compliance

The principal of each Title I school (targeted assistance or schoolwide program) must provide an annual written attestation of compliance with these requirements. Copies of the attestation should be maintained at each Title I school and at each school district's office and be made available to the general public upon request.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Abigail L. Hughes, Associate Commissioner, Division of Evaluation and Research at abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us.

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