

## Education/Employment Standards for Title I Paraprofessionals

### 1. What are the new education requirements for paraprofessionals?

A: If you were employed as a Title I paraprofessional prior to enactment of the law on January 8, 2002, you have until the end of the 2005/2006 school year to meet **one** of three options (the original deadline January 8, 2006 was extended by the Department of Education in June, 2005):

- Pass a state or local assessment designed to demonstrate knowledge of and the ability to assist in instruction of reading, writing and math or reading readiness; writing readiness and math readiness; or
- Complete the equivalent of two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- Hold a two-year (or higher) degree

### 2. Does this apply to all paraprofessionals?

A: It applies to all paraprofessionals who provide instructional support and who work in a program that receives Title I funds. In the case of schoolwide projects where Title I funds are combined with other federal funds and used for various school efforts; the new education requirements apply to all paraprofessionals providing instructional support. This could include special education paraprofessionals but not those whose only responsibility is personal care. There are two groups of paraprofessionals exempted from the educational standard: First, paraprofessionals who are proficient in English and a language other than English and who provide services primarily to enhance the participation of children in programs by acting as a translator. Second, paraprofessionals whose duties consist solely of conducting parental involvement activities.

### 3. Do paraprofessionals need a high school diploma to work in Title I programs?

A: Yes. As a baseline requirement, all paraprofessionals who work in programs funded by Title I, regardless of whether they provide bilingual assistance or work in parent involvement programs, must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent. Paraprofessionals working in "Get Set" programs (a special reading program) must have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent by Dec. 21, 2004.

### 4. Will new Title I paraprofessionals have to meet the same standards?

A: Yes. All Title I paraprofessionals employed after January 8, 2002, will have to meet the same criteria upon hiring.

### 5. Is it the paraprofessional's responsibility to provide documentation that he or she has met the standard, or is the employer required to assist in this process?

A: The law requires that school districts make sure school principals attest that their school is in compliance with the educational standards. Copies of these attestations must be available both at the school and at the central office. In addition, Title II, which addresses training and preparation of staff, mandates that state plans include a description of how the state will use Title II funds to meet the teacher and paraprofessional education/employment standards.

### 6. What is meant by the "equivalent of two years of study at an institution of higher education?"

A The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has provided guidance that this may mean 48 credit hours or 60 credit hours and that determination is up to the discretion of the state agency. The USED has also defined an institution of higher education as one that:

- admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- is a public or other non-profit institution; and
- is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary (for the state?) for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is a satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

### 7. What will the assessment look like?

The U.S. Department of Education has provided guidance to states on the various kinds of options for assessments and has stated that it doesn't necessarily mean a paper and pencil test; but the level of rigor of the assessment must be equivalent to a 2 year college education. States are at varying degrees of progress on choosing or developing assessments. For a summary visit the AFT's web site: [www.aft.org/psrp/statetitleonestatus.html](http://www.aft.org/psrp/statetitleonestatus.html).

### 8. How will I know when the assessment will be available?

A: State education agencies can decide to pursue one of a number of actions. The state can prepare a test or choose a test from a variety of commercially-prepared options. The state can require every district in the state to use the same test or can allow districts to develop their own or choose from the options. Finally, the state can determine that the assessment isn't an option.

Questions and Answers for  
Paraprofessionals  
about the  
No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

For additional information on  
paraprofessional/education assistant  
issues, contact:

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO  
PSRP Department  
555 New Jersey Ave. N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001

[www.aft.org/psrp](http://www.aft.org/psrp)

---

Education & Employment  
Standards

---



*A Union of Professionals*

**AFT PSRP**

Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel