

ESEA Paraprofessional Requirements for Iowa Schools
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1. Definition of paraprofessional:

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds.

This includes paraprofessionals who (1) provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher, (2) assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials, (3) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory, (4) conduct parental involvement activities, (5) provide support in a library or media center, (6) act as a translator, or (7) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher [Title I, section 1119(g)(2)].

Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I.

2. Requirements:

Title I paraprofessionals whose duties include instructional support must have (1) completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or (2) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or (3) 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); or (4) obtain a voluntary certification course offered through the Board of Educational Examiners.

Title I paraprofessionals must meet the requirements by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

All Title I paraprofessionals must have a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. This includes paraprofessionals who serve as translators or who conduct parental involvement activities.

3. Paraprofessional Assessment:

- LEAs should carefully choose an assessment that will measure the knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics (or as appropriate, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness). The criterion established for approval as a paraprofessional under No Child Left Behind Act must be rigorous and defensible. Examples of measures available to LEAs include Work Keys (which has been normed for paraprofessionals), Parapro Assessment from ETS, and COMPASS from ACT. Many Iowa LEAs have established a COMPASS score cut-off at 150. The score of 150 was obtained by determining a Reading score of 57, a Writing score of 50 and a Math score of 43 were appropriate subscores for passing the COMPASS. **The assessment chosen must ensure that more than just basic skills are being assessed.**

4. Recommendation:

- All LEAs should encourage their paraprofessionals to go through the voluntary certification course offered through the Board of Educational Examiners, even those who have already been approved using an assessment. Federal funds, including Title I funds, can be used to assist paraprofessionals complete this coursework.

- ▶ No good faith extensions. **All paras must be qualified at the time of employment.**