

PARAPROFESSIONALS

The requirement that paraprofessionals be highly qualified applies only to instructional paraprofessionals who work in programs supported by Title I funds (school-wide or targeted assistance). However, all Title I paraprofessionals must, at a minimum, have a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Paraprofessionals who provide instructional services must have done **one** of the following to meet the highly qualified requirements—

- completed two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- obtained an associate's or higher degree; or
- passed a test that demonstrates knowledge of and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics.

Timeline for Compliance

- Paraprofessionals newly hired after January 8, 2002 who work in programs supported by Title I funds (school-wide or targeted assistance), must meet these requirements upon employment.
- Paraprofessionals who were hired on or before January 8, 2002 and who work in programs supported by Title I funds (school-wide or targeted assistance), must meet the requirements by January 8, 2006.

Guidelines and Definitions for Highly Qualified Paraprofessional Requirements

- The state equates 48 semester hours (excluding remedial courses), as the equivalent of two years of college. Developmental courses may count toward the 48 hours.
- The state does not require that the coursework or associate's degree be in any specific subject or field. The nature of the coursework or degree is left to the discretion of the school system. However, the coursework must have been obtained from an accredited institution of higher education.
- The SDE has collaborated with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) in the development of an on-line associate's degree program for paraprofessionals. Information about the on-line degree is on the TBR web site at <http://www.tn.regentsdegrees.org>.
- Tennessee has adopted the ParaPro Assessment as the statewide test for paraprofessionals. The ParaPro was developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) to satisfy the test option for paraprofessionals. Information about this test is available on the ETS web site at <http://www.ets.org/parapro>.

- The Tennessee passing score for the ParaPro Assessment is 456.
- All paraprofessionals newly hired after January 8, 2002 who have not completed two years of college or do not hold an associate's degree or higher, must pass the ParaPro test prior to being re-hired in a Title I school or program for the 2003-04 school year.
- Paraprofessionals may take the ParaPro test in two different settings. They can register for the paper and pencil version with ETS, or school districts can order the on-line version for their paraprofessionals to take on site. The cost for either version of the test is \$40 (no registration fee).
- A study guide for the ParaPro is available and can be ordered from the ETS web site above or by calling 800-537-3161. The cost of the study guide is \$25.
- Aides that are working as translators or parent liaisons do not need to meet these requirements. However, all paraprofessionals, including translators and parent liaisons, must now have, at a minimum, earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- The highly qualified status will be portable across school systems.