



## Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2009-2010

NUMBER:  
HRS – L2

DATE:  
September 1, 2009

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS UNDER NCLB

The US Department of Education No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that all instructional paraprofessionals meet specific employment requirements in order to be designated "Highly Qualified". These requirements apply to all school-wide programs without regard to whether the positions are funded with federal, state, or local funds. In order to be considered Highly Qualified, paraprofessionals will need to possess specific skills in reading, writing, math and instruction (as outlined in Attachment A of this Superintendent's Circular).

#### I. Data Collection and Tracking Procedures

Paraprofessionals who have not already proven that they met Highly Qualified requirements should collect and submit all supporting documents to their principals no later than October 31, 2009. The principal/headmaster will keep one copy at the building and give a copy to the paraprofessional.

To collect and track data about the Highly Qualified status of BPS paraprofessionals, the BPS Office of Human Resources (OHR) will distribute lists to principals/headmasters of their relevant staff along with an indication of which qualifications are already recorded by OHR. Principals and headmasters must verify the pathway that their paraprofessionals have completed to become Highly Qualified, and update/correct any inaccuracies.

#### II. NCLB Requirements for Paraprofessionals

There are currently two available options for paraprofessionals to be deemed Highly Qualified:

- Pathway 1: Associate's Degree or 48 Credit Hours of Coursework  
The paraprofessional obtained an Associate's (or higher) degree OR completed at least 48 credit hours of coursework at an institution of higher education (IHE). If this pathway was selected the paraprofessional should submit to the Principal/Headmaster all relevant transcripts.
- Pathway 2: Formal Standardized Assessment  
The paraprofessional passed a formal standardized assessment. The Massachusetts DOE has selected both the *ParaPro Assessment* and the *WorkKeys Certificate of Proficiency for Teacher Assistants* as the formal state-endorsed assessments. Either of these assessments will enable instructional paraprofessionals to meet this requirement. If this pathway is selected the paraprofessional should submit to the Principal/Headmaster an official score report confirming a passing score.

#### III. Resources for "Pathway 2"

Information about the ParaPro Assessment, including content overview, and registration can be accessed on-line here: <http://www.ets.org/parapro>. The test is generally offered as a paper/pencil test held four times per year at Roxbury Community College; BPS does not currently administer the Internet-based ParaPro test. A scaled **score of 464** must be achieved in order to pass, and be deemed "Highly Qualified".

Information about the WorkKeys Proficiency Certificate for Teacher Assistants can be accessed on-line here: <http://www.act.org/workkeys/>. It consists of a three part assessment as well as an observation-based tool known as the Instructional Support Inventory (ISI) and is administered by WorkSource Partners, Inc. located at One Harvard Street, Ste 200, Brookline, MA 02445 (Phone: 617-232-0330). In order to meet the requirements of NCLB, paraprofessionals must achieve at the following skill levels on the three part assessment:

- Reading for Information: Skill Level 5
- Applied Mathematics: Skill Level 4

- Business Writing: Skill Level 3

#### **IV. Federal Definitions**

##### Definition of Instructional Paraprofessional:

An instructional paraprofessional is an individual who provides instruction and support for classroom teachers. Aides, assistants or tutors who engage in instructional support are considered to be instructional paraprofessionals as defined by NCLB.

Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services and non-instructional computer assistance are not considered to be instructional paraprofessionals.

##### Responsibilities of Instructional Paraprofessionals:

ESEA specifies that instructional paraprofessionals may engage in the following activities:

- 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
- Assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials
- Provide assistance in a computer laboratory
- Provide instructional support in a library or media center
- Provide instructional services to students under the direct supervision of a teacher

All instructional paraprofessionals must be supervised directly by teachers; instructional paraprofessionals cannot be supervised by a peer or group of peers.

The following two categories of paraprofessionals need only to possess a high school diploma or equivalent and are not required to meet the additional requirements listed above:

- Paraprofessionals in Title I programs who serve primarily as translators (as long as these paraprofessionals are proficient in English and a language other than English); and
- Paraprofessionals working solely on parental involvement activities.

Visit the MA DESE's web site at [www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/hq/paraprof\\_policy.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/nclb/hq/paraprof_policy.pdf) for additional details. For more information about this circular, contact:

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**Attachment A**

**Massachusetts Department of Education  
Learning Guidelines for Title I Instructional Paraprofessionals**

***The Department of Education strongly encourages districts and charter schools to use these guidelines as a model for all paraprofessionals who provide instructional support to students.***

**Basic Assumptions**

- Instructional paraprofessionals are respected team members responsible for assisting in the delivery of instruction and other student-related activities. As valued members of the faculty, they are essential partners in the work of Title I programs.
- Given their responsibilities, instructional paraprofessionals must be skilled in reading, writing and mathematics, and familiar with instructional practices that ensure and support the achievement of all students.
- To enhance the continuity and quality of services for students, paraprofessionals must be encouraged and supported in their efforts to participate in ongoing professional development programs.
- Programs for instructional paraprofessionals are best when they are comprehensive, acknowledge the diverse roles paraprofessionals play in schools and provide pathways to further education and teacher licensure, if desired.

**1. Literacy Domain**

**01 Language**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
- Pose questions, listen to the ideas of others and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.
- Understand new vocabulary and use it correctly in reading and writing.
- Analyze and use Standard English grammar.
- Describe, analyze and use appropriately formal and informal English.
- Identify and use the correct meaning of words and phrases.
- Recognize and use words with multiple meanings.
- Use a paragraph or passage as the context for determining the meaning of an unfamiliar or uncommon word or phrase.
- Use dictionaries, thesauruses and other related references.

**02 Literature**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Identify the basic facts and main ideas in a text and use them as the basis for interpretation.
- Identify and paraphrase the main idea of a passage.
- Identify supporting evidence.
- Identify, organize and draw conclusions using the relationship(s) among the ideas in written material.
- Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the theme, structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the purposes, structure and elements of nonfiction or informational materials and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the themes, structure and elements of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

- Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the themes, structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- Identify and analyze how an author's words appeal to the senses, create imagery, suggest mood and set tone and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.

### **03 Composition**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Write with a clear focus, coherent organization and sufficient detail.
- Write for different audiences and purposes.
- Demonstrate adequate paragraph development and appropriate style, tone and word choice in their compositions.
- Use Standard English conventions in their writing, revising and editing.
- Organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.
- Gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.
- Outline, summarize and take notes.
- Interpret information presented in graphic form.

## **2. Numeracy Domain**

### **01 Number Sense**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Understand numbers, ways of representing numbers, relationships among numbers and number systems.
- Understand principles and operations related to integers, fractions, decimals, percents, ratios and proportions.
- Understand and solve problems involving integers, fractions, decimals, percents, ratios and proportions.
- Understand meanings of mathematical operations and how they relate to one another.
- Compute fluently and make reasonable estimates.
- Know how to use standard arithmetical algorithms.

### **02 Algebra**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Understand and use patterns to model and solve problems.
- Understand how to manipulate and simplify algebraic expressions and translate problems into algebraic notation.
- Understand the properties of different types of functions and relations.

### **03 Geometry**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Analyze characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes.
- Specify locations and describe spatial relationships using coordinate geometry and other representational systems.
- Understand the principles and properties of coordinate and transformational geometry; apply transformations and use symmetry to analyze mathematical situations.
- Use visualization, spatial reasoning and geometric modeling to solve problems.

### **04 Measurement and Data Analysis**

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Identify measurable attributes of objects and use the standard units, systems and processes of measurement.
- Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize and display relevant data to answer them.

- Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data.
- Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data.

### 3. Instruction Domain

#### 01 Curriculum Planning

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Assist with activities addressing standards that will advance students' level of content knowledge.
- Assist with activities appropriate for the full range of students within a classroom and appropriate to the specific discipline, age and level of proficiency with the English language and Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

#### 02 Effective Instruction

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Communicate lesson objectives clearly.
- Build on students' prior knowledge and experience.
- Provide support under the guidance of a classroom teacher to address student needs.
- Help students use appropriate instructional resources to support learning in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Help students use a variety of approaches to understand what they read.
- Help students focus their writing.
- Help students relate mathematics to everyday situations.
- Employ a variety and range of instructional techniques from direct instruction to cooperative learning groups.
- Use instructional technology appropriately.
- Provide regular feedback to students on their progress.
- Provide formal and informal assessment of student progress.

#### 03 Classroom Climate and Equity

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Maintain appropriate standards of behavior, mutual respect and safety in classroom.
- Promote achievement for all students including those with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and those who are gifted and talented, without exception.
- Promote civic and self-responsibility in the classroom, school and community.

#### 04 Professional Responsibilities

*A paraprofessional will know how and be able to:*

- Carry out his/her legal and ethical responsibilities.
- Carry out health, safety and emergency procedures of the learning environment.
- Maintain high standards and expectations for all students.

#### 05 Professional Skills

*A paraprofessional will understand how and be able to:*

- Accept supervision to reflect critically upon his or her classroom experience and identify areas for further skill and professional development.
- Work collaboratively with school personnel.
- Confer with supervisor(s) and/or content specialist(s) when assistance is needed in supporting students' learning process