



To: Superintendents
Minnesota School District Title I Contacts
Directors of Special Education
Indian Education Contacts
Career and Technical Education Contacts
ELL Contacts

From: Jessie Montano, Director
Federal Programs

Karen Carlson, Director
Federal Programs

Norena Hale, Manager
Special Education Programs

Date: December 1, 2003

Re: ParaPro Testing Information

As you have been notified in previous memorandums, the Minnesota definition of a highly qualified paraprofessional allows for a number of options for districts to pursue as they work with paras. The definitions are attached to this document as a reminder of the different options.

This memo is to inform you about a state approved assessment, which is now ready for your use. The ParaPro Assessment, by ETS, is now available and the cut score has been established. A validation study was conducted in September, using volunteers from many districts across the state. From that study a cut score of 460 was finalized by Commissioner Yecke and the Minnesota Paraprofessional Consortium.

How a district can order the ParaPro test to use on site:

<http://www.ets.org/parapro/ippform.html>

Where a district or individual can go to take the ParaPro test in MN:

<http://www.ets.org/parapro/pdfs/TestCenterList0903.pdf>

Questions may be directed to:

*Diane Cirksena, Title I Area Director, 651-582-8759 Diane.cirksena@state.mn.us, or
Barbara Jo Stahl, Special Education, 651-582-8659, Barbara.stahl@state.mn.us*

Information about Minnesota Paraprofessional Competencies:

<http://ici2.umn.edu/para>

Minnesota Paraprofessional Requirements for Meeting NCLB

NCLB requirements for paraprofessionals are met by:

A: Two years of study at an institution of higher education;

Minnesota's standard: A minimum of 60 semester credits or the amount required to complete two years of full time enrollment as determined by the institution attended;

OR

B: An Associate's degree; or

Minnesota's standard: An AA, AS, AAS (or higher) degree;

OR

C: A demonstration, through a formal state or local academic assessment:

- a. knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and math; or
- b. knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading readiness, writing readiness and mathematics readiness as appropriate.

Minnesota's standard can be met one of three ways:

1. A passing score on an assessment from the state approved list;*

OR

2. Demonstrating all Minnesota Paraprofessional Core Competencies (1-8) by local district validation of a portfolio through: transferable work experience, college courses, workshops/conferences, Para eLink and demonstration of skill using Para eLink or a similar curriculum that focuses on recent training addressed in Competency 9 of Reading, Math and Writing.

OR

3. A state approved local assessment.**(criteria listed below)

* The ParaPro test has been approved for statewide use. The cut score for ParaPro is 460

****Criteria for Local Assessments:**

A local assessment must satisfy the following criteria, and be submitted to MDE for approval: Reliable, valid, accessible, objective, comparable to two years of higher education, and able to measure knowledge and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and math (or reading, writing and math readiness) in the language of instruction.

Instructional paraprofessionals working in Title III funded districts must be proficient in written and oral communication skills in English and any other language used for instruction.

12/01/03