



ASSISTANT TEACHER/PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. It redefines federal and state roles in K-12 education and is aimed at closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers. It is based on four basic principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. As part of this legislation, the qualifications for teachers and paraprofessionals were redefined.

These federal requirements apply to paraprofessionals with instructional duties in any program supported by Title I funds. For a schoolwide Title I school, this information refers to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties without regard to the source of funding of the positions.

Applicants must have:

- A. Completed at least 2 years of study (48 semester hours) at an institution of higher education;
or
- B. Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; *or*
- C. Met a rigorous standard of quality as determined by a formal assessment. Mississippi uses ACT WorkKeys® assessment scores to measure this standard.
 - a. *Reading for Information* Passing score = 4
 - b. *Applied Mathematics* Passing score = 4
 - c. *Writing or Business Writing* Passing score = 3

- The above requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and non-instructional computer assistants are not considered to be paraprofessional for Title I purposes.
- Just as with the formal Title I law, an assistant teacher/paraprofessional may not provide instructional service unless he/she is working under the direct supervision of a certified teacher.
- Districts may set qualifications above the federal or state regulation.
- For additional information on federal funding or special education paraprofessionals, please contact the Office of Federal Programs at 601-359-3499 or the Office of Special Education at 601-359-3498.
- Additional information and a list of WorkKeys® test sites can be found at www.act.org/workkeys.