

Title I, Part A Guide to Paraeducator Requirements

This guide was produced by staff in the Title I, Part A and Title II, Part A departments at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State, August 2017

Title I, Part A
Guide to Paraeducator Requirements

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Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements

Requirements Apply to Paraeducators and Substitute Paraeducators

The requirements outlined in this document apply to paraeducators and substitute paraeducators who are:

- (1) Assigned to a Title I, Part A targeted assistance program or
- (2) Assigned to a Title I, Part A schoolwide building.

Transition from NCLB to ESSA & New State Law

OSPI and school districts are shifting from NCLB to ESSA. ESSA removed the term “highly qualified” for paraeducators, just as it did for teachers. Instead, ESSA directs states to develop minimum **state standards**. In 2017, the Legislature passed [Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1115](#), which phases-in a new set of paraeducator standards.

- For the 2017-18 school year, OSPI will continue to apply the federal standards used under NCLB and explained in this guide for paraeducators who work in Title I, Part A schoolwide buildings or targeted assistance programs.
- Consistent with [Engrossed Substitute House Bill 1115](#), OSPI is developing standards for 2018-19 school year.
- [Every Student Succeeds Act](#) on the OSPI website

School districts may continue to require additional standards for the paraeducators they employ.

Qualified Paraeducators

Important Members of the Teaching Team in a Title I, Part A Program

Title I, Part A is a federal program that serves the unique needs of children — kindergarten to grade 12 — who struggle to learn. Title I programs and services provide customized instruction and curricula that help these students meet academic standards and take an active, engaged interest in what they learn and can do. As the oldest and largest federal education program, Title I programs build equity of opportunity for children whose struggles often keep them on the academic sidelines.

- [Title I, Part A](#) (U.S. Department of Education)

Educational research tells us that the more knowledge and preparation an instructor brings to the classroom, the more likely children will achieve their learning goals. In schools that operate a Title I, Part A schoolwide or targeted assistance program, paraeducators are an integral part of the instructional team.

This important support for teachers aligns with a mandate of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA) that directs district decision makers to put instructional strategies and interventions into service proven through research to improve student outcomes. The ESEA also directs schools to make sure qualified teachers and paraeducators create these highly effective learning environments.

Qualifications, Duties of Paraeducators: Federal and State Law

Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act

[Section 1119](#) (c) *NEW PARAPROFESSIONALS* and (d) *EXISTING PARAPROFESSIONALS* outlines basic qualifications.

- (A) completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education;
- (B) obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or
- (C) met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment
 - (i) knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; or
 - (ii) knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.
- (2) CLARIFICATION- The receipt of a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) shall be necessary but not sufficient to satisfy the requirements of paragraph (1)(C).

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(d) EXISTING PARAPROFESSIONALS- Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall ensure that all paraprofessionals hired before the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, and working in a program supported with funds under this part shall, not later than 4 years after the date of enactment satisfy the requirements of subsection (c).

[Section 1119](#) (g) *DUTIES OF PARAPROFESSIONALS* lists the types of assignments to which a district can assign a paraeducator:

- (A) to 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;
- (B) to assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials;
- (C) to provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
- (D) to conduct parental involvement activities;
- (E) to provide support in a library or media center;
- (F) to act as a translator; or
- (G) to provide instructional services to students in accordance with paragraph (3).

Washington State Administrative Law (WAC)

State law mandates that "Paraprofessional staff in Title 1 school-wide programs shall meet ESEA standards for paraprofessionals," [WAC 392-172A-02090](#) *Personnel qualifications*.

(f) Paraprofessional staff and aides shall present evidence of skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of students eligible for special education, and shall be under the supervision of a certificated teacher with a special education endorsement or a certificated educational staff associate, as provided in (g) of this subsection. Paraprofessional staff in Title 1 school-wide programs shall meet ESEA standards for paraprofessionals. Districts shall have procedures that ensure that classified staff receive training to meet state recommended core competencies pursuant to RCW [28A.415.310](#).

Title I, Part A: Funding, Other Duties and Substitutes

The [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA) regulates [Title I, Part A](#) programs and places specific requirements on the educational qualifications of paraeducators, who perform duties related to instruction.

- In schoolwide programs, all paraeducators must have these qualifications at hire.
- In targeted assistance programs, the paraeducators who work directly with students identified for Title I, Part A services, must have these qualifications at hire.

Multiple Funding Sources. Paraeducators funded from multiple sources that include Title I, Part A must meet federal requirements if they help with reading, writing or math.

Duties Other Than Instruction. Paraeducators who help students with reading, writing or math for just one period in the school day must meet Title I, Part A requirements.

Substitutes. Paraeducators who work as substitutes must meet Title I, Part A requirements under these two conditions:

1. Funded by Title I, Part A or in a school that operates a Title 1, Part A schoolwide program
2. Provide instructional support with reading, writing or math

Title I, Part A

Paraeducator Requirements

Paraeducators Work Under the Direct Supervision of a Certificated Teacher

The [Title I Paraprofessionals](#), Non-regulatory Guidance, 2004 describes paraprofessionals as employees who work *under the direct supervision of a teacher*, and whose duties could include helping the teacher with reading, writing and math instruction.

Section D, Programmatic Requirements interprets “under the direct supervision of a teacher” this way: “(1) the teacher prepares the lesson and plans the instructional support activities the paraeducator carries out, and evaluates the achievement of the students with whom the paraprofessional is working, and (2) the paraprofessional works in close and frequent proximity with the teacher.”

Teachers must make sure that the paraeducator follows direction and the lesson plan, and carries out their instructional support duties based on the learning goals set for each unit of study.

Paraeducator Qualifications

- A. All paraeducators must have the first, essential credential —a high school diploma or GED (General Educational Development). Paraeducators can provide a **copy of their high school diploma** — transcripts are not necessary.
- B. With this credential in place, there are three educational pathways and one evaluation option a potential paraeducator can take to meet federal requirements.
 - 1. Two years of study at an institution of higher education. The institution you choose must meet five criteria of the Higher Education Act, Section 101(a). All classes must be at **level 100 or higher**. See **Appendix A** for a **list of public and private institutions OSPI determined meet the five criteria**.
 - 2. Associate degree or higher. All associate degrees are acceptable.
 - 3. Pass the **ETS ParaPro Assessment**. The assessment measures skills, and content knowledge related to reading, writing and math. Contact ETS 800-772-9476 or visit [ETS ParaPro Assessment](#).
 - 4. Washington paraeducator portfolio or apprenticeship program — **completed previously**. Those meeting the apprenticeship requirements must present a journeycard or certificate. The portfolio and apprenticeships are no longer offered for enrollment, however OSPI will continue to honor this pathway.

Non-U.S. High Schools

An international high school transcript is allowable if the document was translated by an agency listed in the [S-275 Personnel Reporting Instructions for 2013-14](#)—Section I, The S-275 Reporting Process, *Where to Go for Help*. Credits must be equivalent to U.S. high school graduation standards.

College Transcripts Can Document a GED or High School Diploma

College transcripts that document a GED or high school diploma suffice as proof that a paraeducator has earned a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Exceptions to a High School Diploma

- (1) In some states, students can enter community college without a high school diploma or its equivalent. Districts are allowed to accept these colleges, if the first criterion is absent. OSPI will waive the high school diploma requirement if the paraeducator has official college transcripts documenting at least two years of study at an institution of higher education. The institution you choose must meet five criteria of the Higher Education Act, Section 101(a). All classes must be at level 100 or higher. See **Appendix A** for a **list of Washington public and private institutions OSPI determined meet the five criteria**.
- (2) There may be extenuating circumstances when a paraeducator is cannot access an official copy of the high school diploma or transcripts. OSPI may grant a waiver on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Title II, A office.

Title I, Part A

Paraeducator Requirements

Qualifications by District and Exceptions

Qualifications Vary By District. Be aware that districts can require more education or higher credentials. Contact [district](#) staff where you plan to work and find out what requirements you must meet. Many districts require all paraeducators to meet Title I, Part A requirements because of the flexibility it affords as they assign paraeducators to different duties.

Exception for Family Involvement Activities. Paraeducators hired as translators, or hired solely to conduct family involvement activities must have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. However, these paraeducators do not need to meet the Title I, Part A requirements.

Documentation that Verifies Higher Education Credentials

1. Paraeducators must provide an **official transcript** or copy of an official transcript to document two years of study at an institution of higher education. There is no time limitation on credits.

- 72 quarter or 48 semester credits = two years of study at an institution of higher education
- Classes — 100 level and higher
- Credits from more than one institution allowable

2. Districts have the institution of higher education complete and sign a special form — **Verification of Section 101(a) of the of the Higher Education Act (HEA) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education** — to verify that the college or university meets the requirements of the Higher Education Act.

- Download [Verification of Section 101\(a\) of the of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education](#) (Form SPI 1581 HEA Verif 03/04)
- See **Appendix A** for a list of Washington public and private institutions OSPI determined meet the five criteria.

3. Districts verify that the paraeducator meets the requirements of Title I, Part A when they complete and sign this form — **Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements**.

- Download the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#) (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

Districts Keep Transcripts on File

District must keep on file a copy of the official transcripts at the district office. A photocopy of the diploma does not meet the documentation requirements for Title I, Part A. Photocopies of a diploma do not meet the documentation requirements for Title I, Part A.

Transcripts, Continuing Education Units and Clock Hours

Official Transcripts Only. No Copies of a College Diploma. Compliance with federal law obligates districts to keep official transcripts, or copies of official transcripts, on file at the district. Copies of a college diploma do not comply.

Continuing Education Units. The issuing institution must convert continuing education units (CEU) into semester or quarter units. Potential paraeducators should contact the registrar.

Clock Hours. Only clock hours converted by a college or university are allowable. Generally, clock hours converted by a college or university are listed on official transcripts.

4 Pathways to Meet Paraeducator Requirements

1. Two Years of Study at an Institution of Higher Education

- Institution must meet the five criteria of Section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act
- Classes at 100 level or above | 72 quarter or 48 semester credits
- Credits from more than one institution are allowable
- No time limit on credits
- Documented by official transcripts or copies of official transcripts

2. Associate Degree Or Higher

- All associate degrees are allowable
- Documented by official transcripts or copies of official transcripts

3. ETS ParaPro Assessment

- 90 multiple choice items – 30 questions in each subject—reading, writing, mathematics
- 2.5 hours | Passing score = 461
- Contact the [educational service district](#) closest to you

4. Paraeducator Portfolio or Apprenticeship Program

Washington paraeducator portfolio or apprenticeship program — **completed previously**. Those meeting the apprenticeship requirements must present a journeycard or certificate. The portfolio and apprenticeships are no longer offered for enrollment, however OSPI will continue to honor this pathway.

Learn More about Pathways 1, 2 and 3

Two Years of Study at an Institution of Higher Education — Pathway 1

Five criteria define an institution of higher education in the Higher Education Act.

[Title I, Section 101](#). GENERAL DEFINITION OF INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Post-secondary Education in Washington State

Find [accredited colleges and universities](#) on this look-up hosted by the [Washington Student Achievement Council](#).

Associate Degree or Higher — Pathway 2

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Four-year and two-year institutions of higher education grant different types of associate degrees. All associate degrees meet the requirements of the Title I, Part A program.

Colleges and Universities

- Institution completes and signs [Verification of Section 101\(a\) of the of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education](#) (Form SPI 1581 HEA Verif 03/04)
- District verifies credits from official transcript(s) or a copy of official transcript(s)
- District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

Foreign Colleges and Universities

Foreign transcripts must be translated and evaluated for equivalency to U.S. standards on a course-by-course basis. Washington State accepts courses approved by the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#) approved courses. Here is a list of organizations that provide [regional accreditation](#).

- Districts verify credits provided by the credit evaluation agency and determine whether or not the job applicant earned an associate degree or higher educational credential.
- District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

Out-of-State, Private and Other Institutions

Out-of-State Public Four-Year Colleges, Universities and Community Colleges

These colleges and universities meet the [five criteria of the Higher Education Act](#) and operate as public state institutions, not private institutions that use the word "state" in a title.

1. Institution completes and signs [Verification of Section 101\(a\) of the of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education](#) (Form SPI 1581 HEA Verif 03/04)
2. District verifies credits from official transcript(s) or a copy of official transcript(s)
3. District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), SPI 1581 1/04

Other Private Four-Year and Two-Year Colleges/Universities

These colleges and universities must meet the [five criteria of the Higher Education Act](#).

1. Institution completes and signs [Verification of Section 101\(a\) of the of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education](#) (Form SPI 1581 HEA Verif 03/04)
2. District verifies credits from official transcript(s) or a copy of official transcript(s)
3. District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

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Private Vocational-Career Schools in Washington State, and Out-of-State Technical or Private Vocational-Career Colleges

Districts must make sure these institutions meet the [five criteria of the Higher Education Act](#).

1. Institution completes and signs [Verification of Section 101\(a\) of the of the Higher Education Act \(HEA\) Criteria Defining Institution of Higher Education](#) (Form SPI 1581 HEA Verif 03/04)
2. District verifies credits from official transcript(s) or a copy of official transcript(s)
3. District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

Many private vocational-career schools are classified as *for profit* and do not meet the fourth criterion of the Higher Education Act — (4) *is a public or other nonprofit institution*. As well, many institutions could be licensed in Washington State but not accredited.

Post-secondary Education in Washington State. Find [accredited colleges and universities](#) on this look-up hosted by the [Washington Student Achievement Council](#).

Non-U.S. Colleges and Universities. Foreign transcripts must be translated and evaluated for equivalency to U.S. standards on a course-by-course basis. Washington State accepts courses approved by the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services](#). Here is a list of organizations that provide [regional accreditation](#).

1. Districts verify credits provided by the credit evaluation agency.
2. District completes and signs the [Record of Verification of ESEA Title I, Part A Paraeducator Requirements](#), (Form SPI 1581 04/04)

Out-of-Business Institutions. Districts can accept only an associate degree or higher.

ETS ParaPro Assessment — **Pathway 3**

The [ParaPro Assessment](#) qualifies a paraeducator who has not completed two years of study at an institution of higher education or possess an associate degree.

Developed and hosted by [ETS](#) (Educational Testing Service), the ParaPro Assessment measures the reading, writing and basic math competencies of practicing and prospective paraeducators.

The assessment meets the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act — [Title I, Part A](#) and is based on a job analysis of the day-to-day responsibilities of paraeducators.

ETS ParaPro Basics

Take the ETS ParaPro Assessment at Your ESD. Staff in Washington’s educational service districts(ESD) administer the ETS ParaPro Assessment. Contact the ESD closest to you and ask about the ETS ParaPro Assessment.

- On the OSPI website — [Educational Service Districts](#) for location and contact information.

Passing Score. 461 is the qualifying score in Washington state for in-state and out-of-state paraeducators.

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Cost. The test fee is \$50.00. However, applicants should check with ESD staff to find out if there are any extra local surcharges.

- [Fees and Payment Policies](#) (ETS.org)

Subjects, Length and Language. The ETS ParaPro Assessment is an online test taken by appointment at all nine ESDs.

- Reading, writing, math — 90 multiple-choice questions: two-thirds evaluate basic skills and knowledge, one-third evaluate classroom skills.
- 2.5 hours
- All test questions are in English.

Preparation. ETS publishes a study guide (25 USD) and practice test (\$15 USD) as e-books and as print versions. The study guide is a targeted review of all exam material and comes with a full-length practice test. The practice test addresses the structure, topics and kinds of questions that occur on the ParaPro Assessment.

- [Study Guide and Practice Test](#) (ETS.org)
- Free [Study Companion](#) | [Tips for Taking the ParaPro Assessment](#)

Frequency. There is no limit on the number of times an applicant can take the ETS ParaPro Assessment. However, ETS recommends a 30-day break between re-takes.

Recordkeeping. Districts must keep on file the official results, or copies of the official results, for all ETS ParaPro Assessments.

files.

Lost ETS ParaPro Assessment Results. Contact ETS: 1-800-772-9476 or <http://www.ets.org/parapro/>. ETS charges a fee to re-send the test results to the paraeducator.

Title I, Part A
Paraeducator Requirements

Contact Us

Title II, A Qualifications

Contact title2quality@k12.wa.us | (360) 725-6340

Title I, Part A Requirements

[Larry Fazzari](#), 360-725-6189

Title I, Part A

Paraeducator Requirements

Appendix A: List of Washington public and private institutions OSPI determined meet the five criteria of the Higher Education Act, Section 101(a).

OSPI has verified that the following list of area institutions meet the five criteria of the Higher Education Act, Section 101(a). If an institution is not on the list, contact the institution and ensure they verify that they meet the five criteria.

Washington Public Four-year Colleges and Universities

Central Washington University
Eastern Washington University
The Evergreen State College

University of Washington
Washington State University
Western Washington University

Washington Public Community and Technical Colleges

Bates Technical College
Bellevue College
Bellingham Technical College
Big Bend Community College
Cascadia College
Centralia College
Clark College
Clover Park Technical College
Columbia Basin College
Edmonds Community College
Everett Community College
Grays Harbor College
Green River College
Highline College
Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Lower Columbia College
North Seattle College

Olympic College
Peninsula College
Pierce College
Renton Technical College
Seattle Central College
Shoreline Community College
Skagit Valley College
South Puget Sound Community College
South Seattle College
Spokane Community College
Spokane Falls Community College
Tacoma Community College
Walla Walla Community College
Wenatchee Valley College
Whatcom Community College
Yakima Valley College

Washington Private Institutions

Antioch University Seattle
Bastyr University
City University
Cornish College of the Arts
DeVry University
Digipen Institute of Technology
Gonzaga University
Heritage University
Mars Hill Graduate School
Moody Bible Institute
Northwest Baptist Seminary
Northwest College of Art
Northwest College of the Assemblies of God
Northwest Graduate School of the Ministry
Northwest Indian College
Northwest University
Pacific Lutheran University

Saint Martin's University
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University
Trinity College
University of Puget Sound
Walla Walla College
Whitman College
Whitworth College