



Issue Brief

Instructional Paraprofessional Statistics and Trends

Education Commission of the States • 700 Broadway, Suite 1200 • Denver, CO 80203-3460 • 303.299.3600 • Fax: 303.296.8332 • www.ecs.org

Paraprofessional Database Research Navigator

By Angela Baber
September 2005

Since the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), the quality of paraprofessionals has become an important issue for states. The act outlined a set of federal standards for paraprofessionals with instructional duties in the nation's highest-poverty schools. All 50 states are working toward meeting, and some states are even exceeding, the federal qualification requirements for paraprofessionals. The intended result of this effort is to increase the overall quality of education across the nation.

The Education Commission of the States has compiled a large amount of research from each of the 50 states regarding paraprofessional certification and qualification requirements, professional development for paraprofessionals and assessment tests and passing scores for those tests, which are accepted and designated by states. This paper is intended to highlight and streamline the data that was collected and to make it easily accessible to our constituents.

NCLB Title I Paraprofessional Requirements

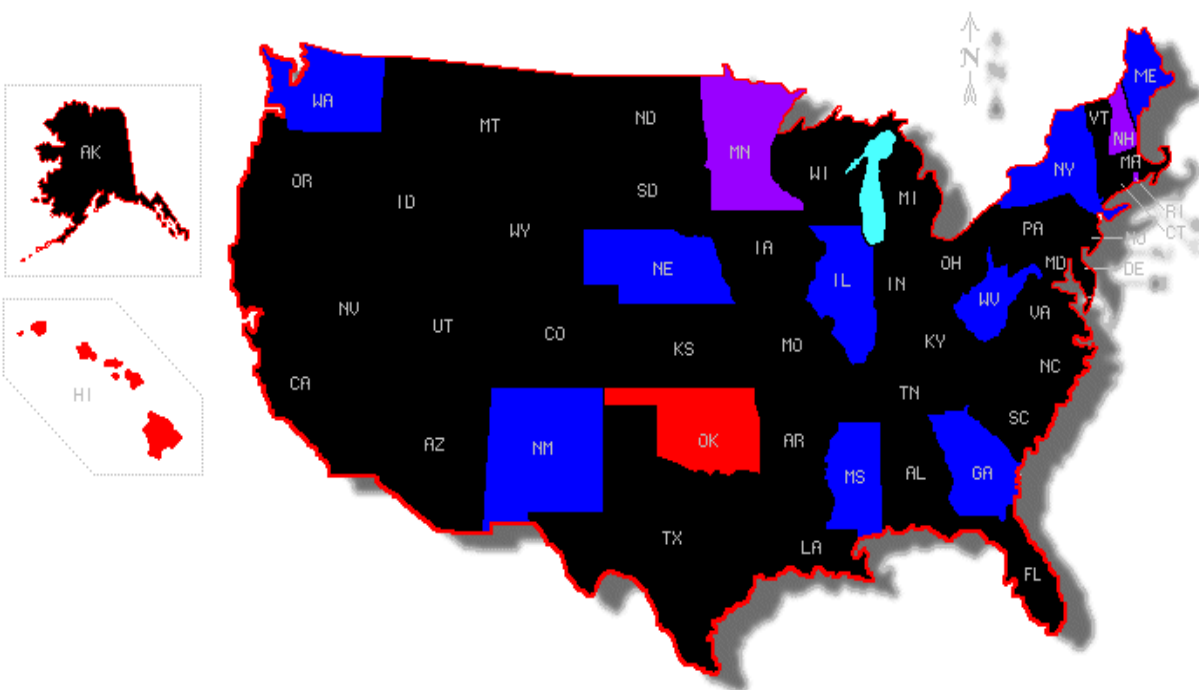
NEW PARAPROFESSIONALS	EXISTING PARAPROFESSIONALS
<p>(1) IN GENERAL- Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall ensure that all paraprofessionals hired after the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and working in a program supported with funds under this part shall have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; ▪ Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or ▪ Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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. 	<p>Each local educational agency receiving Title I, Part A, assistance shall ensure that all paraprofessionals hired before the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 meet the following requirements no later than the end of the 2005-06 school year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education; ▪ Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or ▪ Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (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.
GENERAL REQUIREMENT FOR ALL PARAPROFESSIONALS	
<p>Each local educational agency receiving assistance under this part shall ensure that all paraprofessionals working in a program supported with funds under this part, regardless of the paraprofessionals' hiring date, have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.</p>	

Source: This data was collected from the federal Title I Paraprofessional Requirements; NCLB, [Sec. 1119](#), 2001, [NCLB Guidance](#), (2004), and the letter outlining the deadline extension for paraprofessionals to become highly qualified, which is posted on the National Education Association, [NEA](#) Web site.

Meeting the Federal Requirements: No States Left Behind

All 50 states have, in one way or another, incorporated the federal NCLB requirements into their state requirements. Not only has every state made progress toward meeting these requirements before the end of the 2005-06 school year, some states are instituting requirements that exceed the federal standards. To see a list of the qualification requirements for Title I paraprofessionals by state, visit the ECS report, [Title I Qualification Requirements for Instructional Paraprofessionals](#). States that require all instructional paraprofessionals, not just Title I paraprofessionals, to meet the federal requirements have been highlighted below. In addition, the states that have implemented requirements that exceed those of NCLB also are shown.

Twelve states have requirements for paraprofessionals that exceed federal requirements. Five states have the same qualification requirements for ALL instructional paraprofessionals.



- Hawaii and Oklahoma have the same qualification requirements for all paraprofessionals with instructional duties.
- States that have implemented requirements for paraprofessionals that exceed NCLB requirements are Georgia, Illinois, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Washington and West Virginia.
- States that have the same qualification requirements for all instructional paraprofessionals AND have implemented state requirements for paraprofessionals that exceed NCLB requirements include Minnesota, New Hampshire and Rhode Island

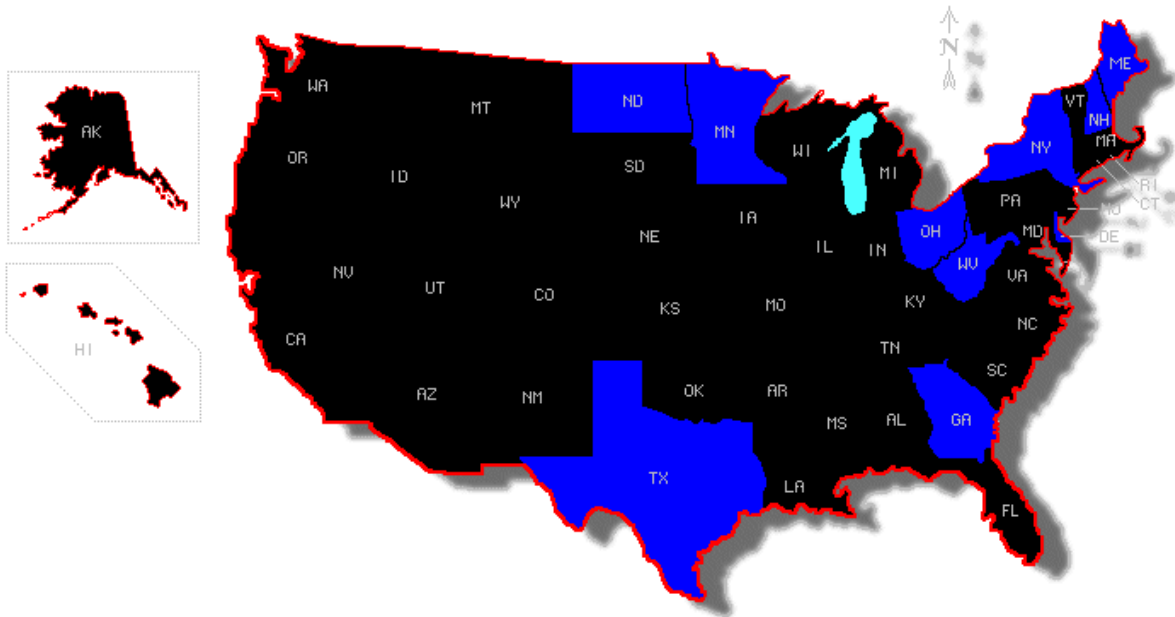
Source: This data was collected directly from DOE Web sites, local Administrative Code, General State Statutes, etc., at the state level and verified by the appropriate paraprofessional, Title I or certification expert from each state. To review the data, or find links to the data source, go to the ECS [Online Interactive Paraprofessional Database](#).*

*These findings represent 48 of the 50 states. ECS is still awaiting verification from two states. Once verification has been received, the data will be appropriately adjusted.

Certification Requirements: A State's Choice

The No Child Left Behind Act does not require that states have certification standards for paraprofessionals; however, some states have implemented certification requirements on their own. The individual state requirements are detailed in the ECS report: [Instructional Paraprofessional Certification Requirements](#).

Ten states currently have policy that requires paraprofessionals with instructional duties to be certified.



The states shaded in blue have implemented certification requirements for paraprofessionals with instructional duties.

- Delaware
- Georgia
- Maine
- Minnesota
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Texas
- West Virginia

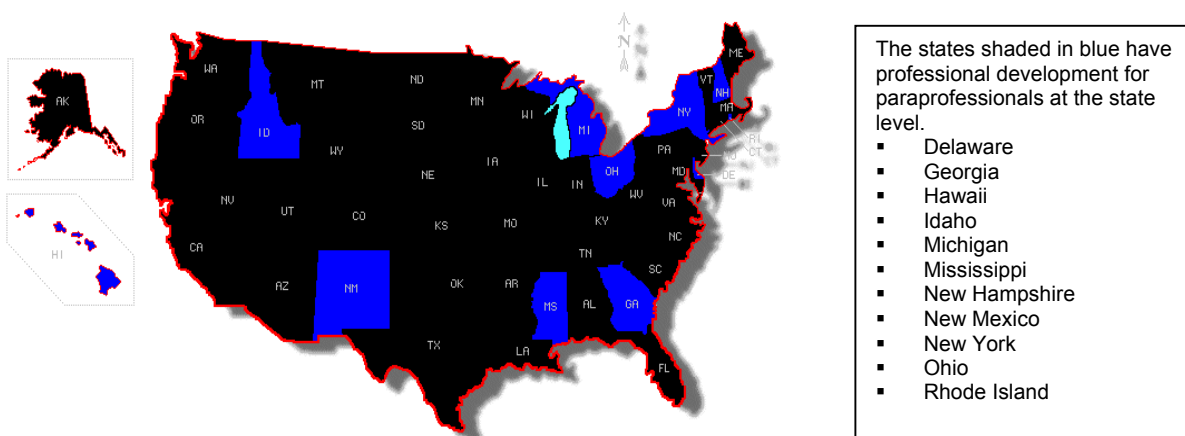
Source: This data was collected directly from DOE Web sites, local Administrative Code, General State Statutes, etc., at the state level and verified by the appropriate paraprofessional, Title I or certification expert from each state. To review the data, or find links to the data source, go to the ECS [Online Interactive Paraprofessional Database](#).*

*These findings represent 48 of the 50 states. ECS is still awaiting verification from two states. Once verification has been received, the data will be appropriately adjusted.

Professional Development for Paraprofessionals Across the States

Eleven states have professional development programs to assist paraprofessionals in their efforts to attain highly qualified status, while many others are in the process of initiating these types of programs. To learn more about higher education and state partnerships, multi-tiered certification, the path for paraprofessionals to attain their teaching licensure and online professional development for paraprofessionals across the states, see the ECS [Professional Development for Paraprofessionals Across the States](#) paper. For a state-by-state description of professional development programs, visit the ECS [Paraprofessional Professional Development](#) site.

Eleven states have some form of professional development for paraprofessionals.

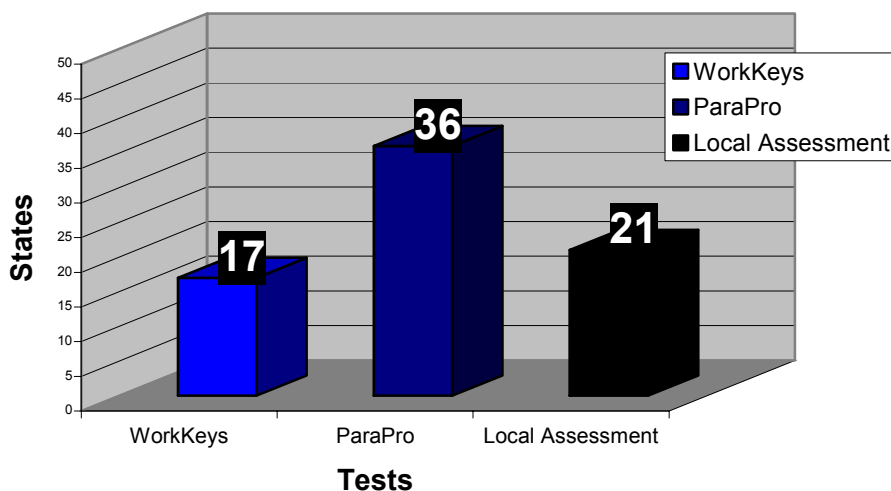


Source: This data was collected directly from DOE Web sites, local Administrative Code, General State Statutes, etc., at the state level and verified by the appropriate paraprofessional, Title I or certification expert from each state. To review the data, or find links to the data source, go to the ECS [Online Interactive Paraprofessional Database](#).*

*These findings represent 48 of the 50 states. ECS is still awaiting verification from two states. Once verification has been received, the data will be appropriately adjusted.

State and Local Assessment for Paraprofessionals

State Assessment Tests for Paraprofessionals



Source: This data was collected directly from DOE Web sites and from the testing service centers. The data has not been verified directly with a representative from each of the states. Links to the testing services Web sites have been included at the end of this paper and also are included in the ECS [Online Interactive Paraprofessional Database](#).

State or locally approved assessment tests are one way in which Title I paraprofessionals with instructional duties can meet the NCLB highly qualified requirement. The Educational Testing Services' (ETS) ParaPro Assessment is the most widely used by the states, with local assessments and the ACT WorkKeys Assessment the second and third most commonly used. To find which assessments that individual states accept, and the state-designated passing score for these assessments, see the ECS report, [State Assessment Tests for Paraprofessionals](#).

Final Remarks

The collection and analysis of this interactive database, and the resulting findings and trends, is supported by the National Center for Teacher Transformation based at St. Petersburg College, Florida. The collection and verification of this data would not have been possible without the help of local paraprofessional experts at the state level. ECS thanks you all for your efforts in helping us to establish this interactive and innovative tool. We will continue to add and update information as it becomes available.

Useful Links

I. General Information

- Federal Title I Paraprofessional Requirements; NCLB, [Sec. 1119](#), 2001
- [NCLB Guidance](#), (2004)

II. Assessment and Testing Information

- ACT, [WorkKeys](#)
- Educational Testing Service (ETS), [ParaPro Assessment](#)
- Educational Resource, Inc “*Higher Education Learning Profile*”, [HELP](#)
- Master Teacher, Inc, [Para Educator Learning Network](#)
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln, [Para Project](#)
- The College Board “*College Level Examination Program*”, [CLEP](#)

Angela Baber is a researcher for the ECS Teaching Quality and Leadership Institute.

© 2005 by the Education Commission of the States (ECS). All rights reserved. ECS is a nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps state leaders shape education policy.

ECS encourages its readers to share our information with others. To request permission to reprint or excerpt some of our material, please contact the ECS Communications Department at 303.299.3628 or e-mail ecs@ecs.org.

Helping State Leaders Shape Education Policy