



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**Division of Federal Programs**

**Title I Paraprofessional Standards of Quality  
For Local Assessment Programs**

**November, 2004**

Section 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 established new criteria for Title I instructional paraprofessionals. These new requirements require school districts to ensure that Title I instructional paraprofessionals be properly qualified to assist teachers in instructing Reading, Mathematics and Writing.

Title I instructional paraprofessionals meet new NCLB requirements if they hold an Associate's Degree or higher or have earned at least 48 college-level credits. Affected paraprofessionals who do not have the required degree/credits can meet NCLB requirements by taking and passing a local assessment that measure their knowledge and ability to assist in the instruction of Reading, Mathematics and Writing.

Local assessments developed for the purpose of meeting NCLB requirements in Pennsylvania must be of high quality and must accurately measure the abilities of instructional paraprofessionals. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, in conjunction with a paraprofessional standards committee of practitioners, has developed standards of quality that all local paraprofessional assessments are to be measured against.

These standards of quality are not law or regulation; rather they are guidelines to be used by local educational agencies, intermediate units, colleges & universities and other agencies when developing local paraprofessional assessments intended to address NCLB requirements. Agencies interested in developing assessments or updating current assessments to meet these standards of quality should use the attached checklist to ensure that all standards are addressed.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education does NOT approve local paraprofessional assessments. However, if local educational agencies, intermediate units, etc., wish to submit assessments to the Division of Federal Programs for review to ensure compliance with federal legislation, they may do so.

Any questions regarding the standards of quality for local paraprofessional assessments should be directed to the Division of Federal Programs, 333 Market Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333, (717) 783-2193.

## **Standards of Quality**

## Local Paraprofessional Assessment Checklist\*\*

\_\_\_\_\_, the local paraprofessional assessment  
(Assessment Name)  
developed by the \_\_\_\_\_ and utilized by the  
(SD/IU/College/Agency)  
\_\_\_\_\_ contains the following:  
(SD to Use Assessment)

- ❑ Components that assess knowledge and skills described by the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Mathematics;
- ❑ Components that assess knowledge and skills described by the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening;
- ❑ Components that assess the knowledge and skills that reflect the professional standards developed for paraprofessionals and para-educators by such groups as the Council of Exceptional Children;
- ❑ A sufficient number of components necessary to measure the knowledge and skills needed to provide affective instructional assistance in the classroom (see Appendix B for examples); and,
- ❑ Multiple methods of assessment that allow a variety of opportunities for instructional paraprofessionals to demonstrate their skills and abilities (i.e. written tests, oral tests, demonstrations, performance assessments, portfolios, etc.).

The above referenced local assessment should also meet criteria and/or standards that reflect those that have been collaboratively developed by professional associations—for example, the Code of Fair Testing Practices in Education and The Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. (See the following web sites for information about these criteria and standards: <https://www.apa.org/science/fairtestcode.html> and <https://www.apa.org/science/standards.html>).

\*\*This form should be completed during a review of the local assessment and maintained in local educational agency files to document that standards of quality have been met.

## Appendix B

### EXAMPLES OF CONTENT STANDARDS FOR “ABILITIES TO ASSIST IN INSTRUCTING”

#### Criteria # 1 – Characteristics of Learners

##### Essential Knowledge (K):

- K1 - Impact of differential characteristics on the student's life and family in the home, school, and community.
- K2 - Indicators of abuse and neglect that put students at risk.
- K3 – Knowledge of basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.

##### Essential Skills (S):

- S1 - Demonstrate sensitivity to the diversity of individuals and families.

#### Criteria # 2 – Assessment and Evaluation

##### Essential Knowledge: (K)

- K1 - Rationale for assessment.

##### Essential Skills (S):

- S1 - Demonstrate basic data collection techniques.
- S2- With direction from a professional, make and document objective observations appropriate to the student.

#### Criteria # 3– Instructional Content and Practice

##### Essential Knowledge: (K)

- K1 - Demands of various learning environments on students' learning needs.
- K2 - Basic instructional and remedial methods, techniques, and materials.
- K3 - Basic technologies appropriate to learning needs.

##### Essential Skills (S):

- S1 - Establish and maintain rapport with students.
- S2 - Use developmentally and age-appropriate strategies, equipment, materials, and technologies, as directed, to accomplish instructional objectives.
- S3 - Assist in adapting instructional strategies and materials according to the needs of the student.
- S4 - Follow written plans, seeking clarification as needed.

#### Criteria # 4 – Supporting the Teaching and Learning Environment

##### Essential Skills (S):

- S1 - Assist in maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment that includes following prescribed policy and procedures.
- S2 - Use basic strategies and techniques for facilitating the integration of students in various settings.
- S3 - Prepare and organize materials to support teaching and learning, as directed by a certified/licensed professional,
- S4 - Use strategies that promote the students' independence.

## **Criteria # 5 – Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills**

### **Essential Knowledge (K):**

- K1 - Rules and procedural safeguards regarding the management of behaviors.

### **Essential Skills (S):**

- S1 - Demonstrate effective strategies for the management of behavior.
- S2 - Use appropriate strategies and techniques to increase the student's self-esteem, self-awareness, self-control, self-reliance, and self-advocacy.
- S3 - Assist in modifying the learning environment to manage behavior.
- S4 - Collect and provide objective, accurate information to professionals, as appropriate.
- S5 - Use appropriate strategies and techniques in a variety of settings to assist in the development of social skills.

## **Criteria # 6 – Communication and Collaborative Partnerships**

### **Essential knowledge (K):**

- K1 - Characteristics of effective communication with children, youth, families, and school and community personnel.
- K2 - Common concerns of parents.
- K3 - Roles of students, parents, teachers, paraeducators, and other school and community personnel in planning programs.
- K4 -Ethical practices for confidential communication.

### **Essential skills (S):**

- S1 - Use constructive strategies in working with students, parents, and school and community personnel in various learning environments, under the direction of a certified/licensed professional
- S2 - Follow the instructions of the professional.
- S3 - Foster respectful and beneficial relationships between families and other school and community personnel.
- S4 - Use appropriate basic educational terminology regarding students, programs, roles, and instructional activities.
- S5 - Demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in cultural heritages, lifestyles, and value systems among children, youth, and families.
- S6 - Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to use effective problem solving, engage in flexible thinking, employ appropriate conflict management techniques, and analyze one's own personal strengths and preferences.

## **Criteria # 7 – Professionalism and Ethical Practices**

### **Essential Knowledge (K):**

- K1 - Personal cultural biases and differences that affect one's ability to work effectively with children, youth, families, and other team members.
- K2 - The paraeducator as a role model.

### **Essential Skills (S):**

- S1 - Demonstrate commitment to assisting students in achieving their highest potential.
- S2 - Function in a manner that demonstrates a positive regard for the distinctions among roles and responsibilities of paraeducators, professionals, and other support personnel.
- S3 - Function in a manner that demonstrates the ability to separate personal issues from one's responsibilities as a paraeducator.
- S4 - Demonstrate respect for the culture, religion, gender, and sexual orientation of individuals.
- S5 - Promote and maintain a high level of competence and integrity.
- S6 - Exercise objective and prudent judgment.
- S7 - Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication skills.
- S8 - Engage in activities that promote paraeducators' knowledge and skill development.
- S9 - Accept and use constructive feedback.
- S10 - Practice within the context of the code of ethics and other written standards and policies of the school or agency where they are employed.