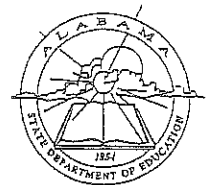




STATE OF ALABAMA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Michael Sentance, J.D., LL.M.  
State Superintendent of Education

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August 25, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: City and County Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance *MS*  
State Superintendent of Education

RE: Paraprofessional Qualifications for those Working with Students Receiving Special Education Services

Section 1111(g)(2)(M) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA), as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), requires each State to have “professional standards for paraprofessionals working in a program supported with funds under [Title I, Part A].” In addition, the Federal Register §300.156(a)(b)(1)(iii) states that “the State Education Agency (SEA) must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills necessary to serve children with disabilities.” It also “allows paraprofessionals and assistants who are appropriately trained and supervised, in accordance with State law, regulation, or written policy, in meeting the requirements of this part, to be used to assist in the provision of special education and related services under this part to children with disabilities.” In order to be consistent with the requirements of these laws, the Special Education Services Section has established the following requirements for all paraprofessionals working with students who are *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) eligible:

In order to be employed as an Instructional Paraprofessional, an individual must obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and one of the following qualifications:

*60 qtr. hrs.*

- Successful completion of at least two years (48 semester hours) of study at an institution of higher education, or
- An Associate’s Degree documented on an official transcript from an accredited institution of higher education, or
- Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in, instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

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In 2004, the Alabama State Department of Education approved the *WorkKeys Assessment* to meet the requirement outlined in bullet 3 on the previous page. Currently, the requirements are a minimum of Level 3 scores on the following tests: Applied Math, Work Place Documents, and Business Writing. Previously, the required tests were Applied Mathematics, Reading, and Writing.

In order to be employed as a Personal Care Paraprofessional (those not providing any instructional support), an individual must meet the following qualifications: Secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

If a person provides both instructional support and non-instructional support, the higher of the options must apply.

For further information regarding paraprofessionals, please contact Mrs. Cindy Augustine at [caugustine@alsde.edu](mailto:caugustine@alsde.edu) or Mrs. Susan Goldthwaite at [sgoldthwaite@alsde.edu](mailto:sgoldthwaite@alsde.edu) or you may reach them at 334-242-8114.

MS/CA/BJ

cc: High School Principals  
Special Education Coordinators  
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Ms. Crystal Richardson

FY17-2077