

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:
December 4, 2002

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education adopts the ParaPro Assessment to meet the requirements of federal HR1, No Child Left Behind, beginning January 1, 2003; establishes the following standard:

ParaPro 457

and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____ this fourth day of December, Two Thousand Two.

Signed:

Theodore S. Sergi, Secretary

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: Adoption of ParaPro Assessment

Background

The federal No Child Left Behind legislation applies in part to (1) paraprofessionals providing instructional support and paid with Title I funds in a Title I targeted assistance school and (2) all paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a Title I schoolwide program (regardless of funding source).

Any paraprofessional described above who is newly hired after January 8, 2002, must have the following:

A high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) diploma **AND**

- Two years of college credit, **OR**
- An associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
- Pass a State Board of Education adopted paraprofessional assessment, which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics.

Currently employed paraprofessionals described above must have earned a high school diploma or GED diploma to maintain their employment. In addition, by January 8, 2006, they must meet one of the following requirements:

- Have two years of college credit, **OR**
- Hold an associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
- Pass a State Board of Education adopted paraprofessional assessment, which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics.

NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option for existing and newly hired paraprofessionals.

Currently, Connecticut has not adopted an assessment to meet this requirement.

Paraprofessional Assessment Development

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has worked collaboratively with 16 other states and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the development of a state assessment for paraprofessionals which meets the federal requirements. ETS worked with a team of paraprofessionals and teachers who supervise paraprofessionals to identify the critical sets of skills and understandings required by paraprofessionals. Those were then validated based on a national job skills survey. A number of Connecticut paraprofessionals participated in the job skills survey and other Connecticut paraprofessionals participated in the piloting of the new ETS ParaPro assessment on September 21, 2002.

ParaPro

The ParaPro Assessment consists of 90 multiple-choice questions and takes two and one-half hours to complete. The assessment is designed to be taken at a school site through the Internet with the cost of \$40 to be charged to the district; results are provided to the candidates immediately upon conclusion of the assessment. There will also be a pencil and paper version available six times a year at sites throughout the state with individual registrations and payment; results for the paper and pencil version will be provided to the candidate within four weeks of administration.

Currently, a Test at a Glance booklet is available which describes assessment content and sample questions (see attached). This is available on-line at the ETS website, www.ets.org/parapro/index.html. ETS is working to develop materials and a Study Guide, which will be available for purchase in January 2003. Also, the State Department of Education has made arrangements for Educational Testing Service to provide training for our Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), who, in turn, will offer workshops to paraprofessionals in their service areas.

Assessment Validation and Standard Setting

CSDE, along with 11 Connecticut paraprofessionals and 2 teachers who supervise paraprofessionals, participated in a joint validation and standard setting study with Rhode Island on October 29, 2002. The group was representative of Connecticut's geographic regions, grade levels and racial/ethnic groups. The full-day validation process included training on validation, thorough test review, and bias review.

Proposed Standards

As a result of the validation, study value standards were proposed. These standards were reviewed with national pilot test data, and the resulting proposed standards are within two standard errors of measurement (SEM) of the study values. This same procedure of using both study values adjusted by SEM(s) and pass rate information to set standards is used with the Connecticut Mastery Test, the Connecticut Academic Performance Test and Praxis Tests.

Connecticut's proposed standard is 457. Based on the pilot assessment on September 21, 2002, the national pass rate at this standard was 79.1. This pass rate is consistent with first time pass rates for most Praxis examinations.

Assessment Options

At the present time, we are not contemplating the use of assessments other than the ETS ParaPro Assessment. Should alternative tests - which could be validated for comparability to the ParaPro content and standards - become available in the future, we will consider them for adoption.

As with other assessments, these standards will be monitored. The test standards will be reviewed after we have one year of Connecticut test data.

Prepared by: _____
Judith Thompson
Director of Evaluation
Bureau of Evaluation and Educator Standards

Approved by: _____
Abigail L. Hughes
Associate Commissioner
Division of Evaluation and Research

December 4, 2002

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Title I Directors

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: December 9, 2002

SUBJECT: Adoption of ParaPro Assessment

At its December 4, 2002, meeting, the State Board of Education adopted the Educational Testing Service's ParaPro Assessment beginning January 1, 2003, and established 457 as the standard.

Background

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation applies to paraprofessionals providing instructional support and paid with Title I funds in a Title I targeted assistance school and all paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a Title I schoolwide program (regardless of funding source). Further information on this requirement is available in Circular Letter C-15, 2002-2003 at www.state.ct.us/sde/circ/circ02-03/c-15.pdf.

Any paraprofessional described above who is newly hired after January 8, 2002, must have the following:

A high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) diploma **AND**

- Two years of college credit, **OR**
- An associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
- Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assess content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics.

Currently employed paraprofessionals described above must have earned a high school diploma or GED diploma to maintain their employment. In addition, by January 8, 2006, they must meet one of the following requirements:

- Have two years of college credit, **OR**
- Hold an associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
- Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assess content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics.

NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option for existing and newly hired paraprofessionals.

Paraprofessional Assessment Development

The Connecticut State Department of Education has worked collaboratively with 16 other states and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the development of a state assessment for paraprofessionals which meets the federal requirements. ETS worked with a team of paraprofessionals and teachers who supervise paraprofessionals to identify the critical sets of skills and understandings required by paraprofessionals. Those were then validated based on a national job skills survey. A number of Connecticut paraprofessionals participated in the job skills survey; other Connecticut paraprofessionals participated in the piloting of the new ETS ParaPro Assessment on September 21, 2002; and other paraprofessionals and teachers supervising paraprofessionals participated in the validation/standard setting study on October 29, 2002.

ParaPro

The ParaPro Assessment consists of 90 multiple-choice questions and takes two and one-half hours to complete. Currently, a Test at a Glance booklet is available which describes assessment content and sample questions. This is available on-line at the ETS website, www.ets.org/parapro/index.html.

The assessment is designed to be taken at a school site through the Internet with the cost of \$40 to be charged to the district; results are provided to the candidates upon conclusion of the assessment. **ETS will contact districts directly to make arrangements for interested districts to offer the internet version of the assessment within their district.**

There will also be a pencil and paper version available six times a year at sites throughout the state with individual registrations and payment; results for the paper and pencil version will be provided to the candidate within four weeks of administration. Registration materials for the paper and pencil version of the assessment are now available through ETS as well. **The first paper and pencil assessment will be given on January 11, 2003.**

Local education agencies (LEAs) receiving Title I funds may use such funds to pay for the assessment and to support ongoing training and professional development to paraprofessionals to assist them in meeting this requirement.

ETS is working to develop materials and a Study Guide, which will be available for purchase in January, 2003. Also, the State Department of Education has made arrangements for Educational Testing Service to provide training for our RESCs in February, who, in turn, will offer workshops to paraprofessionals in their service areas. **We recommend that existing paraprofessionals who need to fulfill this requirement**

wait to take the assessment until after they have had a chance to review the test specifications, sample questions and participate in training opportunities.

Assessment Options

At the present time, we are not contemplating the use of assessments other than the ETS ParaPro assessment. Should alternative assessments, which could be validated for comparability to the ParaPro content and standards, become available in the future, we will consider them for adoption.

As with other assessments, these standards will be monitored. The test standards will be reviewed after we have one year of Connecticut test data.

If you have any questions about this assessment, feel free to contact Judith Thompson, Director of Evaluation, at (860) 713-6825 or via e-mail at Judith.Thompson@po.state.ct.us.

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