



Every Student Succeeds Act FACT SHEET

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced No Child Left Behind (NCLB). OSPI has created a series of fact sheets to help guide the transition.

Paraeducators

OSPI and school districts are shifting from NCLB to ESSA. We will complete the transition by the 2017–18 school year. Here is a summary of how OSPI expects districts to use Title I, Part A funds for paraeducator services.

Development of State Standards for Paras

ESSA removed the term “highly qualified” for paraeducators, just as it did for teachers. Instead, it says we are to develop our own minimum state standards.

Until ESSA is fully implemented, we will continue to use the federal standards we used under NCLB. See OSPI’s Guidelines for Paraeducators for details.

Our state has begun developing our new standards. By 2017–18, paraeducators who work in a Title I, Part A program must meet those standards.

As they do now, school districts may continue to choose to require *additional* standards for the paraeducators they employ.

Current Paraeducator Requirements

Paraeducators who currently work in a Title I, Part A program must follow NCLB’s federal standards. Until ESSA is fully implemented, we will continue to use those standards.

Paraeducators must have a high school diploma or GED. They must also have completed one of the following:

1. Two years of study at an institution of higher education. The institution must have met five criteria of the Higher Education Act, Section 101(a). All classes must be at level 100 or higher.

2. Associate degree or higher. All associate degrees are acceptable.
3. Passing score on the ETS ParaPro Assessment. This test measures skills and content knowledge in reading, writing, and math.
4. Washington paraeducator portfolio or apprenticeship program. (The Department of Labor and Industries used to provide this program, but it has been discontinued.)

Paraeducators in Special Education

Under ESSA, special education paraeducator requirements will remain the same under WAC 392-172A-02090. Paraeducators who work in special education within a Title I, Part A program must meet the requirements for both special education *and* Title I.

No More Hiring Limits

Starting with the 2016–17 school year, all districts may hire as many paraeducators as they need within the allowable uses of Title I, Part A.

For some districts, this is no different from past years.

This is a change, however, for schools that did not meet both Adequate Yearly Progress and sufficient progress toward all teachers being “Highly Qualified” in the 2015–16 school year.

For more information

ESSA at OSPI www.k12.wa.us/ESEA/ESSA

Paraeducators www.k12.wa.us/paraeducators

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is the primary agency charged with overseeing K–12 education in Washington. Led by State School Superintendent **Randy Dorn**, OSPI works with the state’s 295 school districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students. www.k12.wa.us

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