

# CCSU Standard for Highly Qualified Paraeducators

Revised 3/12/08

## I. General Statement

In order to maintain (1) an equal education opportunity for all our students, (2) consistency of expectation within our workforce, and (3) flexibility of assignment, the Chittenden Central Supervisory Union shall hold the same minimum qualification standard for all paraeducators of its member school districts, whether or not the school or position receives Title I funds. Paraeducators who meet the minimum qualifications standards of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) shall meet the CCSU adopted definition of Highly Qualified Paraeducator (HQP).

The NCLBA establishes minimum qualification standards for paraeducators as outlined below:

- "(A) Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or,
- "(B) Obtained an associate's (or higher) degree; or,
- "(C) Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment -
  - "(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."

Two Years of Study - Since an individual is considered a full-time student provided s/he takes a minimum of 12 credits per semester, the CCSU shall accept a minimum of 48 credit hours at an institute of higher education as equivalent to two years of study.

## II. Requirements for Paraeducators hired prior to 7/1/04

All paraeducators within the CCSU hired prior to 7/1/04 must achieve HQP status by **April 1, 2006**. If the paraeducator is working in a program funded by Title I funds, the deadline may be sooner. A paraeducator hired prior to 7/1/04 will have achieved HQP status if they meet one of the following qualifications outlined below:

1. Hold an associate's degree; or,
2. Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education (48 credits, including credits earned through *Assessment of Prior Learning* offered through CCV); or,
3. Received a passing score on the Praxis I exam as adopted by the Vermont Board of Education, or other approved state or local assessment that demonstrates the individuals knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing and math; or,
4. Received a total score of 1100 or more on their SAT with a minimum score of 500 in Verbal/English and a minimum score of 500 in Math/Quantitative; or,
5. Received a passing grade on the *ParaPro Assessment* for the state of Vermont (score of 458 or higher); or,
6. Received a passing grade on the *Paraeducator Learning Network* offered through the CCSU; or,
7. Successfully met the requirements of a rigorous Portfolio Assessment. The portfolio assessment is only available to employees hired prior to 7/1/04.

## III. Requirements for Paraeducators hired on or after 7/1/04

Paraeducators hired after 7/1/04 must meet the HQP status prior to the commencement of duties unless approved by exception by the Superintendent or designee in advance. A paraeducator hired on or after 7/1/04 will have achieved HQP status if they meet one of the following qualifications outlined below:

1. Holds an associate's degree; or,
2. Completed two years of study at an institution of higher education (48 credits, including credits earned through *Assessment of Prior Learning* offered through CCV); or,
3. Received a passing score on the Praxis I exam as adopted by the Vermont Board of Education, or other approved state or local assessment that demonstrates the individuals knowledge of and ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing and math; or,
4. Received a total score of 1100 or more on their SAT with a minimum score of 500 in Verbal/English and a minimum score of 500 in Math/Quantitative; or,
5. Received a passing grade on the *ParaPro Assessment* for the state of Vermont (score of 458 or higher).

Due to the difference of standards related to the administration of the *Paraeducator Learning Network* assessment and the Portfolio Assessment, we do not accept passing grades or certificates of successful completion from other school districts.

The hiring supervisor may only consider and recommend a candidate who has not achieved HQP status in the following circumstances:

- The individual demonstrates knowledge of and ability to assist in the teaching of reading, writing, and math through a combination of professional development activities, training, experience, and performance during the screening process (i.e. interview, observations, testing, references); and,
- The individual is being recommend for a position that is not funded by Title I; and,
- There are no candidates for the position that meet the qualifications outlined above, or those individual(s) who meet the qualifications outlined above are not qualified to perform the duties as outlined in the job description.

Individuals hired under this exception must meet the HQP status by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in which s/he was hired. In addition to the routes to achieve HQP status outlined above, the individual hired under this exception will also have the option of taking the *Parareducator Learning Network* assessment offered through SkillTech in order to achieve HQP status.

#### **IV. Consequences for failing to achieve HQP status**

Unless specified otherwise herein, paraeducators hired prior to 7/1/04 who meet the HQ paraeducator definition by 4/1/06 shall be eligible for continued employment, notwithstanding reduction in force or dismissal as consistent with the in force Master Agreement. Paraeducators not satisfying the above requirement shall be subject to non-renewal of individual employment contracts following FY'06.

Likewise, paraeducators hired on or after 7/1/04 who meet the HQ paraeducator definition by April 1<sup>st</sup> of the year they were hired shall be eligible for continued employment, notwithstanding reduction in force or dismissal as consistent with the in force Master Agreement. Paraeducators not satisfying the above requirement shall be subject to non-renewal of individual employment contracts the subsequent contract year.

#### **V. Professional Development Time**

Similar to teacher licensure, it is the responsibility of each paraeducator to achieve HQ status as a condition of employment. The training and assessment involved in meeting HQP status shall be done on the paraeducator's own time and will not be compensated. An exception shall be made for district-wide or school-wide in-service activities that paraeducators are directed to attend, or other Professional Release activities approved consistent with our Professional Leave operating practice.

## VI. Documentation of HQP Status

As evidence of achieving HQP status, the following documentation shall be accepted:

- Copies of transcripts or grade reports confirming the attainment of 48 or more credits at an institution of higher learning.
- Copies of transcripts/diploma confirming receipt of an associates degree (or higher).
- Copy of SAT Assessment results showing a total score of 1100 or higher, and a minimum score of 500 on the Verbal/English and 500 on the Math/Quantitative.
- Letter from Linda Keating indicating the individual successfully met the portfolio assessment requirements – only available to paraeducators hired prior to 7/1/04.
- Copy of the Assessment Results from the *ParaEducator Learning Network* taken through SkillTech with the exam proctor's signature.
- Copy of the *ParaPro Assessment* results from ETS.