



Did You Know...?

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What *No Child Left Behind* Says About Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications

No Child Left Behind says that schools and districts must provide parents in Title I schools with certain information about the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals who work with your child. Ask your school principal if your child's school receives Title I funds!

Parents have a Right to Know!

At the beginning of each school year, the district must notify all parents of students in Title I schools that they may request information about their child's teachers. Parents have the right to know:

- Whether the teacher meets state qualifications for the grade or subject that he or she teaches
- Whether the teacher has been certified under an alternate or provisional (temporary) program, rather than through a regular college or university teacher certification process
- The teacher's major in college; what degrees he/she has earned and in what subject area(s).
- Whether paraprofessionals provide any services to their child and if so, their qualifications
- In addition, every Title I school must notify parents if their child has been assigned or has been taught for more than 4 weeks in a row by a teacher who has not met "highly qualified" standards.

Teacher Qualifications

The law says that starting in the 2002-2003 school year all teachers who teach academic subjects; hired in Title I programs must be highly qualified. This means they must have the following:

- A bachelor's degree
- Be certified to teach in New Mexico.
- Have passed a state test on their knowledge of the subjects they teach and their teaching skills (reading, writing, mathematics at elementary school levels)
- Middle and high school teachers must either
 - Pass a state test in the subject they teach or
 - Have either college or graduate-level course work equal to a college degree in the subject or advanced certification
- Teachers who teach academic subjects who were hired before the 2002-2003 school year must be highly qualified by June 2006.



Paraprofessional Qualifications.

Under No Child Left Behind, paraprofessionals also must be highly qualified. This means that any paraprofessionals (also called “educational assistants”) who help teachers by working directly with students in academic subject areas, such as reading, writing or mathematics, must meet certain standards.

Paraprofessionals in Title I schools who were hired after January 8, 2002 must have the following

- A high school diploma or GED and completed two years of college or community college or
- An Associate’s degree or higher or
- Passed difficult tests given by the state or the school district that shows their knowledge of and ability to teach reading, writing and mathematics.
- Paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002 must meet these requirements by January 8, 2006.

If your child attends a Title I school and you do not receive this information at the beginning of the school year, you can also request information about the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals in your child’s school from the superintendent’s office. If your family moves to a new community or different school area during the school year, you should ask for this information when you are enrolling your child in his/her new school.

The Right Question

The best way to get information about the teacher and paraprofessional qualifications in your child’s school is to ask questions. Listen to the answers. Ask for the information to be given to you in writing so you have it for future reference.

If you don’t understand something, ask the person you are speaking with to explain it in a way that helps you understand. You may also request an interpreter to translate the information into the language you use in your home.

Asking “the right question” will help get specific information and may help to open discussions about possibilities.

Closed-Ended Questions get a yes or no answer. (Is my child’s teacher qualified to teach in NM?)

Open-Ended Questions get more details and also can be used to explore information. (What training has my child’s teacher had in reading?)



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