

November 4, 2003

Office of Human Resources
Marjorie H. Adler, Chief Personnel Officer

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE TO PROVIDE THE COMPUTER-BASED VERSION OF THE PARAPRO ASSESSMENT TO PARAPROFESSIONAL I EMPLOYEES FROM NOVEMBER 20, 2003 THROUGH JANUARY 8, 2006, AND TO ADOPT THE FLORIDA CONSORTIA PASSING SCORE FOR THE PARAPRO ASSESSMENT

COMMITTEE: LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PERSONNEL SERVICES

Pursuant to requirements in Section 1119, H.R. 1/P.L. 107-110, also referred to as the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001," paraprofessional personnel hired after January 8, 2002 must have completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education or possess an Associate's (or higher) degree. Paraprofessional I personnel hired prior to January 8, 2002 must meet educational requirements by January 8, 2006, through one of three mechanisms:

1. Completed at least two years of study at an institution of higher education;
2. Obtained an Associate's (or higher) degree; or
3. Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a formal State or local academic assessment:
 - a. Knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; or
 - b. Knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

Paraprofessional I employees who fail to meet educational requirements by January 8, 2006 will not be permitted to retain employment in their current capacity. Affected individuals may be eligible for non-instructional positions for which they are qualified, as available.

In a memorandum, dated February 26, 2003, the Florida Department of Education identified several assessments which met the requirements of the law. The ParaPro Assessment, developed and copy-written by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), was identified as one of the acceptable options.

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The ParaPro Assessment is designed to measure skills and knowledge in reading, mathematics, and writing, as well as the ability to apply those skills and knowledge to assist in classroom instruction. The ParaPro Assessment consists of 90 multiple-choice questions across three subject areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. Approximately two-thirds of the questions in each subject area focus on basic skills and knowledge, and the remaining questions focus on the application of those skills and knowledge in a classroom setting. The assessment has a 2½ hour duration.

The highest possible score on the assessment is 480 points. A standard-setting study conducted by ETS and a consortia of Florida public school districts (the Florida Consortia) led to the recommendation that a minimum passing score of 464 points be used for the assessment. Subsequently, Florida districts using the ParaPro Assessment are applying the 464-point Florida Consortia passing score.

As of September 8, 2003, a total of 2,536 individuals are working as Paraprofessional I employees in M-DCPS. In order to provide opportunities for these individuals to attain compliance with educational requirements, a collaboration between the Office of Human Resources and Title I Administration was established. This collaboration has yielded the following recommendations regarding the administration of the computer-based version of the ParaPro Assessment, as well as providing test preparation sessions and materials:

1. Provide opportunity, through funding under Title II, Part A of the "No Child Left Behind Act," for every Paraprofessional I employee to take the ParaPro Assessment one time at no additional cost to them;
2. Provide, through funding under Title II, Part A and Title I, a ParaPro Assessment Study Guide for each Paraprofessional I employees at no cost to them;
3. Provide test preparation and review sessions to prepare Paraprofessional I employees to undergo the assessment at no cost to them; and
4. Use existing technology to facilitate test and review session registrations as well as to document paraprofessionals' compliance with education requirements.

The Professional Services Contract Committee, established by School Board Rule 6Gx13-3F-1.021, Contract and Documents, determined on October 29, 2003 that the ParaPro Assessment is copyrighted and is therefore exempt from Committee review. Additionally, the Committee determined that a selection process had been used. Therefore, no Committee action was needed on this item pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.012(7), Purchasing Policies and School Board Rule 6Gx13-3C-1.10, Purchase Approval.

The ParaPro Assessment registration fee is \$40. ETS allows districts to purchase "session keys" (i.e., registrations) in blocks of 250. Authorization is requested to purchase up to 2,500 session keys at a cost not to exceed \$100,000. Funding for test

preparation instructors, test session proctors, and additional local delivery costs will be funded through the Title II, Part A grant. No additional local funds are required.

RECOMMENDED: That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida:

1. authorize the Superintendent to enter into a contractual agreement with Educational Testing Service to provide the computer-based version of the ParaPro Assessment to Paraprofessional I employees from November 20, 2003 through January 8, 2006, at a cost not to exceed \$100,000; and
2. adopt the Florida Consortia ParaPro Assessment passing score of 464 points or higher as established by the standard-setting study conducted by the Educational Testing Service and a consortia of Florida public school districts.

The appropriations for this item are included in the 2003-2004 Title II, Part A grant budgets. No additional local funds are required.

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