



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 26, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

SUBJECT: Approval of Guidelines for the Michigan Paraprofessional Portfolio Assessment

During the fall of 2003, Michigan Department of Education staff worked with various groups representing paraprofessionals to develop guidelines for a local paraprofessional portfolio assessment to be used to demonstrate that paraprofessionals meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements of being qualified. The proposed Guidelines for the Michigan Paraprofessional Portfolio Assessment are presented as Attachment A. The framework for the portfolio builds upon the paraprofessional's ability to demonstrate knowledge in reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and mathematics. The guidelines are to be used by districts and public school academies to establish a portfolio process as a local option to qualify paraprofessionals.

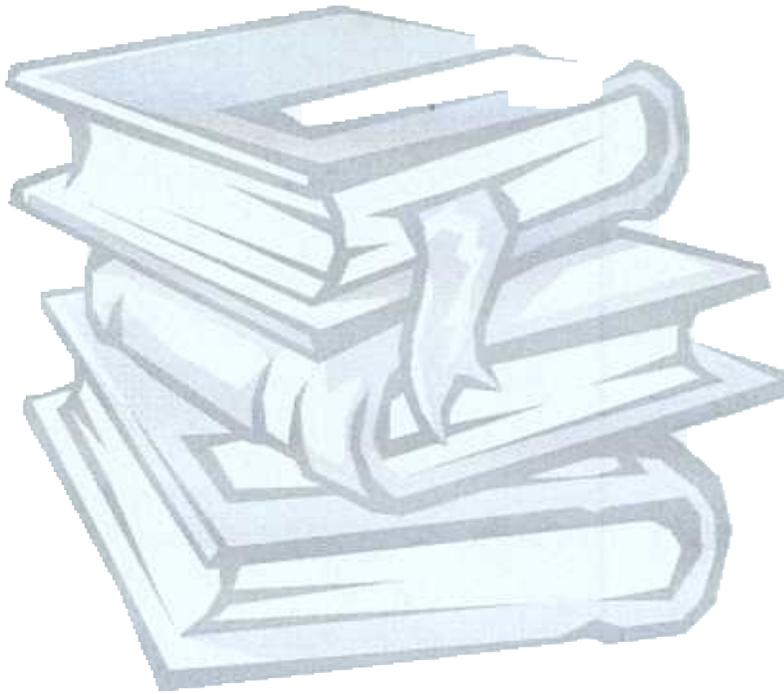
It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Guidelines for the Michigan Paraprofessional Portfolio Assessment as attached to the Superintendent's memorandum dated January 26, 2004.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Guidelines for the Michigan Paraprofessional Portfolio Assessment



Michigan Department of Education
2004

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Introduction

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act*, federal legislation that mandates 100 percent proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics for all students by the 2013 – 2014 school year. To reach this goal, the law requires that teachers and paraprofessionals become highly qualified.

For the purposes of Title I, Part A, a paraprofessional is defined as an employee who provides instructional support in a program supported with Title I, Part A funds. This includes paraprofessionals who do the following:

- 1.) provide one-on-one tutoring if such tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher,
- 2.) assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials,
- 3.) conduct parental involvement activities,
- 4.) provide instructional assistance in a computer laboratory,
- 5.) provide support in a library or media center,
- 6.) act as a translator, or
- 7.) provide instructional support services under the direct supervision of a teacher.

Individuals who work in food services, cafeteria or playground supervisors, personal care services, non-instructional computer assistance, and similar positions are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I. These individuals do not need to become highly qualified.

As partners in the instructional process, paraprofessionals who work in programs supported with Title I funds must meet one of the following requirements:

- Complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher education; or
- Obtain an associate's degree (or higher); or
- Meet a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment,
 - ~ Knowledge of, and the ability to assist in, instructing reading, writing, and mathematics; or
 - ~ Knowledge of, and the ability to assist in, instructing reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

All paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, must already meet *NCLB* requirements as a condition of employment, while those paraprofessionals hired prior to January 8, 2002, have four years, or until January 8, 2006, to meet *NCLB* requirements. As this deadline approaches, the options of earning an associate's degree or completing two years of college (60 college credits) are becoming less realistic for those paraprofessionals who are employed full-time and do not have the time and resources to pursue a college education. Therefore, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is focusing on the local, rigorous assessment option as the path for many paraprofessionals to meet the *NCLB* deadline of January 8, 2006.

At this time, several commercial tests have been developed to address the areas in which paraprofessionals must be assessed. Most of these assessments are taken in one sitting under timed conditions, which introduces an element of test anxiety for some test takers, since their continued employment may depend on the outcome. With this in mind, the MDE has developed this framework for a portfolio assessment that can be used as a rigorous, local assessment to meet *NCLB* paraprofessional requirements.

The portfolio assessment for currently employed paraprofessionals will focus on a paraprofessional's ability to assist the Title I students. The paraprofessional should construct a

portfolio around their needs, the needs of the students they assist and the district and teachers they support. The focus should be on the content areas defined in the *NCLB* legislation: reading, writing and mathematics.

A district review committee should be established to affirm that individuals submitting completed portfolios have met the necessary requirements. Examples may be:

- Continuing Education Committee
- Paraprofessional Education Committee

The MDE strongly recommends that the approved completion of the portfolio assessment be portable to other schools and districts within the state of Michigan.

Framework

The *NCLB* legislation seeks to strengthen paraprofessionals' reading/writing skills and understanding of mathematics. Therefore, paraprofessionals will develop a portfolio that will demonstrate their content area knowledge. A point system is used to satisfy the *NCLB* requirements. Using the elements of the portfolio listed below, the paraprofessional must accumulate 60 portfolio points.

Elements

- ***Demonstration of Content Area Knowledge:*** The *No Child Left Behind Act* focuses on three areas for the basis of assessment: reading, writing and mathematics. Therefore, the portfolio assessment focuses on assisting with the instruction of the above-mentioned content areas and activities completed for the portfolio should be distributed throughout these content areas.
- ***Professional Development:*** Paraprofessionals may participate in professional development activities to accumulate the required sixty (60) portfolio points. To assist paraprofessionals with meeting this professional development requirement, the MDE encourages districts to develop a professional development plan based on the reading and writing subject areas. Expanding the number of professional development activities open to paraprofessionals can accomplish this. Paraprofessionals may also seek out professional development through Community Colleges, Community Adult Education Programs, Intermediate School Districts (ISD), State Organizations/Associations and other relevant opportunities.
- ***Qualified Colleague:*** The participating paraprofessionals will work with qualified colleague(s) who will assist them with the assessment process. Here, the paraprofessional and Qualified Colleague will establish a formative relationship that is collaborative, collegial and confidential in nature, with the primary goal that the Qualified Colleague will provide support and guidance throughout the assessment process. A Qualified Colleague may be a teacher, *NCLB* qualified paraprofessional, or administrator. Knowledge of the reflective thinking process can be a benefit.
- ***Professional Dialogue/Observation:*** Through conferences, collaborative sessions, and observations paraprofessionals will demonstrate the completion of the portfolio process and how it enhances their understanding of instructional support. The paraprofessional will meet periodically with a Qualified Colleague to review the contents of the portfolio, discuss progress to date and other relevant issues. Another forum for discussion are collaborative sessions.

Documentation

Professional Readings:

Paraprofessionals may read professional literature in the areas of reading, writing and math. Completed readings must be distributed between these content areas. The portfolio is used as a tool to document completed readings and must include summaries of any professional readings completed by the paraprofessional. Upon completing a professional reading, the paraprofessional will add the reading to the *Professional Reading Record* (Form A). For every reading assignment, the paraprofessional may reflect on the reading in one of three ways: a) an observation of behavior with students, showing an assimilation of knowledge, b) dialogue with a Qualified Colleague about the content or c) a written summary. A written summary of the content of the reading is to be documented on the *Professional Reading Reflection* (Form B). The summary (as well as a dialogue assessment) should include a brief description of the reading and how information from the reading can be used in the paraprofessional's everyday practice, i.e. it affirms prior knowledge or introduces new concepts that will inform future practice. It is left to the discretion of the paraprofessional as to which form of reflection will be entered into the portfolio. The *Professional Reading Reflection* (Form B) should be entered into the completed portfolio for each reading regardless of the way in which it is reflected upon. A maximum of thirty (30) portfolio points can be accumulated from Professional Readings.

Readings for the portfolio can be found in professional education journals or publications of professional education organizations. Based on the needs established by the paraprofessional, it may be advantageous to read a portion of a teacher's manual (i.e. *Open Court Training Manual*). If a lengthier piece is chosen, such as a book for a class, more points may be received than the point value assigned for reading a shorter article. Also, each chapter of a large publication may be considered as a separate reading. For example, a journal article would be assigned one (1) portfolio point, whereas two chapters of a textbook would be worth two (2) points.

Professional Development/Workshop Participation:

Professional development/workshop activities completed by the paraprofessional should be distributed between the content areas. The paraprofessional will maintain a record of any professional development activity on the *Professional Development/Workshop Participation Record* (Form C). Additionally, for each activity, there must be a corresponding reflection that highlights the new practices, new insights and new knowledge gained from the experience. As with the professional reading, for every professional development activity, the paraprofessional may reflect on their experience in one of three ways: a) observation of behavior with students, showing an assimilation of knowledge, b) dialogue with a Qualified Colleague about the content, or c) a written summary of the content of the activity, which is documented on the *Professional Development/Workshop Reflection* (Form D). It is left to the discretion of the paraprofessional as to which form of reflection will be entered into the portfolio. The *Professional Development/Workshop Reflection* (Form D) should be entered into the completed portfolio for each activity regardless of the way in which it is reflected upon. A maximum of thirty (30) portfolio points can be accumulated from Professional Development/Workshops.

Paraprofessionals currently enrolled in professional development activities, or who have completed workshops within the last five (5) years, may use these classes as professional development/workshop participation. The professional development activity must, however, lead to a deeper understanding of the content areas and/or the ability to assist in the content areas. Each class meeting can be used to meet the hourly requirement for professional development/workshop participation, provided that the paraprofessional records each class meeting on the proper form and completes a reflection for each meeting. For every five (5) contact hours, a paraprofessional will earn one (1) portfolio point in professional development.

For example, five (5) contact hours in a class on children's literature can be entered in the portfolio as one (1) portfolio point.

College coursework, where credit is assigned, does not count as professional development/workshop points. Those credits should be accumulated under the college credit area only.

Math Objectives Knowledge: Given the list of math objectives, the paraprofessional must provide evidence of knowledge, competency and ability to assist. This can be accomplished in one of two ways: a) observation or b) dialogue with the Qualified Colleague. To assist with establishing competency, the *Math Objectives Knowledge Checklist* (Form E) should be used. It is left to the discretion of the paraprofessional as to whether a math observation or dialogue will be entered into the portfolio.

College Credit: College credit may be applied to the portfolio assessment process. With the inclusion of a transcript detailing course work, a paraprofessional may count one (1) portfolio point for every college credit. For example, any 3-credit college course would count for three (3) portfolio points. A Child Development Associate (CDA) Certificate received with twenty-nine (29) college credits would count as twenty-nine (29) professional development points. Thus, a paraprofessional may only need to accumulate thirty-one (31) additional portfolio points. The number of college credits earned and applied toward the portfolio process can be recorded on the *Portfolio Summary* (Form F).

Previous Relevant Work Experience: Up to thirty (30) portfolio points may be applied to the portfolio based upon previous, relevant work experience as a paraprofessional assisting Title I students. For every year of successful employment, the paraprofessional may receive one (1) point. Successful employment is defined as continuous employment in a paraprofessional position. The number of years experience applied toward the portfolio process can be recorded on the *Portfolio Summary* (Form F).

Supportive Instruction Activities: Portfolio points can be awarded for additions to the portfolio assessment documenting special projects, individualized study, work with students, committee participation or other activities showing independent work and knowledge in the content areas. The documentation for any activity or experience must be completed using the *Supportive Instruction Activity Reflection* (Form G).

Portfolio Conference/Collaboration: Paraprofessionals and a Qualified Colleague should meet on a regular basis to discuss the assessment process. During a conference, the paraprofessional and colleague may discuss the contents of the portfolio, ideas presented in professional readings and/or professional development/workshop participation. At this time, the paraprofessional should seek clarification, ask for assistance and discuss reflections to complete the portfolio assessment process. The Qualified Colleague may discuss the paraprofessional's progress and collaborate with the paraprofessional by providing suggestions or recommendations for professional growth. By meeting regularly, paraprofessionals have periodic interaction with a colleague, thereby receiving more timely recommendations and assistance.

Collaborative session(s) with other paraprofessionals may also be offered. Paraprofessionals participating in the portfolio process may meet to discuss the portfolio assessment process. This may include talking about professional readings and workshops attended and exchanging instructional assistance strategies and approaches. Similar to a book club format, a leader should provide structure to these sessions.

Round-table discussions/sessions and one-on-one conferences can take place during school-wide (or district) designated professional development days. These conferences are documented using the *Portfolio Conference/Collaboration Record* (Form H).

Portfolio Maintenance

A *Portfolio Assessment Participant Checklist* (Form I) is provided to allow the paraprofessional to work through the portfolio process. They are responsible for collection of all portfolio information until the requirements have been met. When the portfolio is complete, the employing district is responsible for maintaining a record in the employee's personnel file. The district approval committee must complete the required *Paraprofessional Portfolio Final Recommendation* (Form J) attesting that the paraprofessional has met *NCLB* requirements through the path of a rigorous, local assessment. The portfolio with the final recommendation should be kept in the paraprofessional's personnel file at the district level. The paraprofessional should maintain a copy of the completed portfolio for their personal records as well.

Portfolio Record-Keeping

To maintain records of assessment progress, paraprofessionals should complete several forms, all of which document their work and are submitted with the final portfolio.

- **Form A- Professional Reading Record**

This form is used as a record of the paraprofessional's professional readings for the portfolio. This completed form must be included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form B- Professional Reading Reflection**

This form is used to guide the paraprofessional's reflection required for each professional reading. For every reading title recorded on Form A, there must be a corresponding *Professional Reading Reflection* included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form C - Professional Development/Workshop Participation Record**

The completed portfolio must include a record of the professional development and workshop activities used to meet the portfolio point requirements. All professional development and workshop activities should be entered using this form. It must be included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form D - Professional Development/Workshop Reflection**

After participating in any professional development activity or workshop, the paraprofessional must complete this form for reflection of the activity. For every activity recorded on Form C, there must be a corresponding *Professional Development/Workshop Reflection* included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form E - Math Objectives Knowledge Checklist**

The completed portfolio must include evidence of the paraprofessionals knowledge, competency and ability to assist in the area of math. The way by which the paraprofessional has chosen to evaluate must be documented on this form. The objectives listed on this form are to assist the Qualified Colleague in the assessment of the paraprofessional's math knowledge using the dialogue or observation method. It must be included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form F – Portfolio Summary**

Successful completion of the portfolio assessment is contingent upon the paraprofessional accumulating 60 portfolio points. This form is a matrix of each area in which points may be accumulated. Here the paraprofessional documents the points earned for each area. During a conference between the Qualified Colleague and paraprofessional, this form should be used as

a reference to gauge the paraprofessional's progress in the assessment process. It must be included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form G – Supportive Instruction Activity Reflection**

After completing a supportive instruction project, experience or activity, the paraprofessional must complete this form and include it in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form H - Portfolio Conference/Collaboration Record**

After every conference or collaborative session, the paraprofessional and a Qualified Colleague should sign and date this form. It must be included in the final portfolio submission.

- **Form I - Portfolio Assessment Participant Checklist**

This form is to assist the paraprofessional with the steps necessary for completion of the portfolio and does not need to be submitted with the final, complete portfolio assessment.

- **Form J – Paraprofessional Portfolio Final Recommendation**

When the portfolio is complete, it is to be submitted, along with all other forms and documentation, to be approved by the district review committee. The committee established by the district must authorize this recommendation. This final recommendation confirms that the paraprofessional has successfully met *NCLB* requirements. A copy of this completed form must be given to the paraprofessional for their personal records.

Conclusion

Paraprofessionals who complete this process will have demonstrated the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed to assist in the instruction of reading, writing and mathematics and increase the proficiency levels of the students with whom they work.

Contact Information

For questions or comments, contact:

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Professional Development/Workshop Participation Record (Form C)

Paraprofessional's Name: _____

CONTENT AREA: <i>READING</i>					
Workshop Title	Presenter(s)	Location	Date (s)	Hours	Points
CONTENT AREA: <i>WRITING</i>					
Workshop Title	Presenter(s)	Location	Date(s)	Hours	Points
CONTENT AREA: <i>MATHEMATICS</i>					
Workshop Title	Presenter(s)	Location	Date(s)	Hours	Points

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Attach additional pages as necessary. It is recommended that hours/points be distributed as evenly as possible over the 3 content areas.

**Professional Development/Workshop Reflection
(Form D)**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Workshop/Course Title: _____

Presenter(s): _____

Location: _____

Points:

Content Area: *Reading* *Writing* *Mathematics*

Assessment Style: *Observation* *Dialogue* *Written Summary*

Complete Summary Below:

- *Describe or summarize the training session (include main topic/theme and main learning points).*

- *Discuss the implications for instructional support.*

Submission Reviewed and Verified By:

Qualified Colleague's Name: _____

Qualified Colleague's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Math Objectives Knowledge Checklist
(Form E)

Concepts	What It Might Look Like	Demonstrates Competency
I. Using number concepts and computation skills	$1+1$, 4×3 , $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4}$, $\$2.00 / 10$, $2+ \times 3 \times 4-5$ If a portion of a pie is eaten, what percent is left? If you have a room that is 12 foot square, what is its area in square feet? You have \$5, how many candy bars might you be able to buy?	
II. Solves word problems involving integers, fractions or decimals	Recognize meaning of operations when words like difference, sum, product, quotient are used.	
III. Interpret information from a graph, table or chart	Was there an increase or decrease? Which month had the highest sales? What portion of a company's product was clothing? In what month were the most bananas eaten? Locate the cost of an item in a particular month on a table. If car sales for GMC, Ford and Toyota are graphed on the same line graph, determine which had the most sales on any given day?	
IV. Graphing numbers or number relationships	Locate items on a graph; Write coordinates; Determine location of points on a series of graphs or given a series of graphs, be able to identify which has the specified ordered pair; Determine the increase/decrease of a line; Recognize a slope and locate an interception of lines.	

V. Solving one- and two-variable equations	The wholesale cost of an item is x . The mark-up is 10%. What is the final cost? $x = y+2$ given a two-variable equation, solve for either of the unknowns. $-x+y = 2$ and $x+y=2$ find any one point that would be a solution to either equation by graphing, trial and error, algebraically or with a calculator	
VI. Solving word problems involving one- and two-variables	4 lawnmowers and 5 rakes = \$100 and 2 lawnmowers and 15 rakes = \$80. What is the value of the lawnmowers and the rakes?	
VII. Understanding operations with algebraic expressions	$3(x^2 + 1)$ or $2x^2 + 3x - 2$ add $x^2 + 2x + 1 = 3x^2 + 5x + 1$	
VIII. Solving problems involving geometric figures		
IX. Applying reasoning skills		

Paraprofessional's Name:	Date:	1 Point
Assessment Style: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Observation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Dialogue</i>		
Math Competency Reviewed and Verified By:		
Qualified Colleague's Name: _____		
Qualified Colleague's Signature: _____		
Date: _____		

Portfolio Summary (Form F)

CONTENT AREA - <i>READING</i>		<i>Points</i>
Professional Readings		
Professional Development		
Supportive Instruction Activities		
CONTENT AREA - <i>WRITING</i>		<i>Points</i>
Professional Readings		
Professional Development		
Supportive Instruction Activities		
CONTENT AREA - <i>MATHEMATICS</i>		<i>Points</i>
Math Objectives Knowledge	<i>1 point for evidence of knowledge and competency: observation or dialogue</i>	
Professional Development		
Supportive Instruction Activities		
NON-CONTENT SPECIFIC		<i>Points</i>
College Credit		
Previous Relevant Work Experience	<i>30 point maximum 1 year of successful employment = 1 point</i>	
TOTAL PORTFOLIO POINTS ACCUMULATED (60 Required for completion)		POINTS =

Paraprofessional's Name: _____ Date: _____

Supportive Instruction Activity Reflection
(Form G)

Name: _____	Date: _____	Points: _____
Content Area: <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reading</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Writing</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Mathematics</i>		
Activity/Project Description: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Describe your supportive instruction activity or project. Feel free to attach pictures or copies of actual project and/or components.</i>		
Summary: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Discuss the implications for instructional support and/or your professional development.</i>		
Submission Reviewed and Verified By:		
Qualified Colleague's Name: _____		
Qualified Colleague's Signature: _____		
Date: _____		

Portfolio Conference/Collaboration Record
(Form H)

•
Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

•
Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

•
Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

•
Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

•
Conference Date: _____
Qualified Colleague: _____
Conference Collaborative Session

Portfolio Assessment Participant Checklist (Form I)

As an assessment participant:

- ❑ Working with a Qualified Colleague, identify professional development or workshops to meet your needs and the needs of the students, teachers and school(s) you support.
- ❑ Attend workshops and/or professional development activities. Complete a reflection for each.
- ❑ Read articles from professional education journals, publications from professional education organizations, on-line articles or books regarding education. Complete a reflection for each.
- ❑ Meet periodically with a Qualified Colleague to discuss the portfolio, your goals/achievements and to complete reflections (as needed).
- ❑ Meet with other paraprofessionals in collaborative sessions to discuss the portfolio and your goals/achievements.
- ❑ Document Supportive Instruction Activities. Complete a reflection for each.
- ❑ Continue to meet with a Qualified Colleague, and in collaborative sessions, to review goals and progress.
- ❑ Keep completed forms and all Portfolio Assessment documentation in a safe place.
- ❑ Once your Portfolio Assessment has been completed and 60 portfolio points have been accumulated, retain a copy for your records and submit all documentation to your school district's review committee. Also include transcripts for college credit used in the portfolio.

Paraprofessional Portfolio Final Recommendation
(Form J)

Based on the submitted portfolio:	Meets Expectations	Below Expectations
The paraprofessional demonstrates knowledge in reading to appropriately meet the learning needs of the students.		
The paraprofessional demonstrates knowledge in writing to appropriately meet the learning needs of the students.		
The paraprofessional demonstrates knowledge in math to appropriately meet the learning standards of the students.		
The paraprofessional assists with activities consistent with the goal and objectives as designed by the teacher		

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Therefore, _____ has met / not met the portfolio requirements that affirm he/she is a qualified paraprofessional.

Review Committee Representative: _____

Date: _____

School District: _____