



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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GOVERNOR

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

DATE: October 8, 2003

SUBJECT: Approval of *ETS ParaPro Assessment* for Purpose of
Conducting Standard Setting Study

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* established new qualifications for Title I paraprofessionals to ensure that they would have the necessary knowledge and skills to assist in instructing students in the areas of reading, writing and mathematics. All Title I paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, are required to meet one of the following qualifications:

- Two years of study at an institution of higher education, or
- An associate's (or higher) degree, or
- Meet rigorous standards through a formal assessment of knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics.

Title I paraprofessionals employed prior to January 8, 2002, must meet one of these requirements by January 8, 2006.

In April 2002, the Basic Skills Test of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification was identified as an assessment that could be used to meet the new requirements. In keeping with the intent to identify other assessments that would be appropriate for this purpose, the State Board of Education approved the ACT WorkKeys assessments on July 24, 2003, after a formal profiling process had been completed to identify the specific tests and passing scores. At that time, Department staff indicated that they would continue to review other assessment options to make additional choices available.

Department staff have reviewed information on the new ParaPro Assessment developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) for the specific purpose of providing an assessment option

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that would meet the requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The ParaPro Assessment was developed with the involvement of a nationally representative committee of paraprofessionals and supervising teachers and has currently been selected by thirty-three states as one way of qualifying Title I paraprofessionals. The assessment covers knowledge and skills in the subject areas of reading, mathematics and writing, as well as application of the knowledge and skills in a classroom context. Free test preparation materials and a reasonably priced study guide are available for the assessment.

Department curriculum consultants have reviewed the sample test questions provided by ETS and determined that they are consistent with and at an appropriate level of difficulty for the Michigan content standards and benchmarks.

The passing score on the *ETS ParaPro Assessment* is established by each state. Upon invitation from a state, ETS conducts a Standard Setting Study designed to ensure that a representative group of paraprofessionals and supervising teachers is involved in recommending a passing score for the state. This study is conducted at no cost to the state, with the understanding that the state will approve the ETS ParaPro Assessment once the study has been completed.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the *ETS ParaPro Assessment* for purposes of conducting the Standard Setting Study as described in the Superintendent's memorandum dated October 8, 2003.