

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, what does a parent have the right to know?

Under this act, parents of children in schools that receive Title I dollars have the right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers including, at a minimum, the following:

- Whether the teacher has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject area in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher, any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Timely notice that the parents' child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher of a core academic subject who is not highly qualified.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

How do I know if my child is being served by a paraprofessional?

A paraprofessional, sometimes referred to as an instructional assistant, is a person that is employed by the district and assigned to a classroom or classrooms to provide instructional support consistent with the instruction provided by the classroom teacher or teachers.

Paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, must have:

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 exam or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing either of the following:
 - a. Reading/language arts, writing, and mathematics; or
 - b. Reading readiness, writing readiness, and mathematics readiness.

Paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002, must meet these requirements no later than January 8, 2006.

Certain exceptions may apply. Consult your district or this agency for clarification.

What do I have the right to know in regards to school improvement?

At each stage of school improvement -initial identification, corrective action, and restructuring- the school district must furnish parents with a detailed explanation of the causes and consequences of the school's performance, and how they can be involved. The notice must contain the following:

- An explanation of what identification means, and how the school compares in terms of academic achievement with other schools in the district and the state.
- The reason for the identification.
- An explanation of what the school is doing to address the problem. An explanation of what the school district or state is doing to help the school address the problem.
- An explanation of how the parents can become involved in addressing the academic issues that caused the school to be identified.
- An explanation of the parents' option to transfer their child to another public school (with transportation paid for or provided by the LEA), and, if applicable, the opportunity to access supplemental educational services.

On January 8, 2002, President Bush signed his education plan, *No Child Left Behind*, into law. The law united both political parties behind the principle that schools must be held accountable for their results and that every child must learn. As part of that law, low-performing schools are required to provide parents with specific information.



How is a school determined to be low-performing?

Under *No Child Left Behind*, every state must set the goals that each school must meet. If a school does not make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years that school becomes identified for school improvement.

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A Parents' Guide

The Right to Be Informed



Mississippi Department of Education
Office of Innovative Support