

Series 2002-2003

Circular Letter: C- 24

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Regional Education Service Center Directors
Charter School Directors
Magnet School Directors

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi, Commissioner of Education

DATE: January 31, 2003

SUBJECT: **Update on No Child Left Behind Act**

This memo and attachments will serve as an update of all previous correspondence regarding implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Since its reauthorization as the No Child Left Behind Act on January 8, 2002, regulations have been promulgated and non-regulatory guidance has been produced for many parts of the law. Highlights of these documents, and their impact on Connecticut's public schools, are summarized under seven categories:

- A. Assessment;
- B. Highly qualified teachers;
- C. Paraprofessionals;
- D. General description of Title programs;
- E. Linguistic assessment of limited English proficient students;
- F. Graduation rates; and
- G. Unsafe school choice options.

The federal legislation, regulations, guidance and questions and answers may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/asst.html#leg>.

Over the next few months, the Department will be consulting with various groups and individuals on Connecticut's accountability design, due to the U.S. Department of Education in its final form in May 2003.

Districts are reminded of their responsibilities in: ensuring that all teachers are or become highly qualified and that all paraprofessionals are appropriately credentialed; meeting reporting and parental notification requirements; ensuring that all students are assessed in 2003-2004; and preparing for the new assessments to begin in 2005-2006.

Please take the time to review this material with your district/school staff. Thank you.

A. ASSESSMENT

The new federal legislation, *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), contains a number of requirements which directly affect the administration and reporting of Connecticut's state assessments.

1. Annual Testing: NCLB requires annual testing of all students in reading and mathematics in Grades 3 through 8 beginning in 2005-2006. In the next 12 years, every state, school district and school has the goal of 100 percent of their students reaching proficiency in reading and mathematics. In addition, there is an additional goal of annually increasing the number of students scoring at the Proficient* level.

2. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): The state is required to annually determine if a district and school is making adequate yearly progress toward reaching the goal, within 12 years, of having 100 percent of its student population scoring at or above the Proficient level in mathematics and reading on the standard state assessments, the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and meets the standard for an additional academic indicator in Grades 3-8 – such as attendance – or meets a standard for high school graduation rates. There is also a requirement of at least 95 percent student participation in the state assessment program.

- 2001-2002 CMT and CAPT results are used to establish the baseline against which AYP will be calculated.
- 2002-2003 } CMT and CAPT results, plus test participation rates plus the
- 2003-2004 } additional academic indicator in Grades 3-8 and high school
- Spring 2004 } Identification of districts and schools not making AYP for two consecutive years on CMT.
- Summer 2004 } Identification of districts and schools not making AYP for two consecutive years on CAPT.

Although all schools will be subject to the AYP analysis and identification, only those identified schools and districts receiving Title I funds will be subject to a specific set of consequences.

3. Achievement: the achievement results and participation rates will be calculated for the following groups in each school and district:

- All students in the school or district
- Students eligible for free or reduced price lunch
- Students in special education
- Students with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Students in each major racial or ethnic group

* On June 12, 2002, the State Board of Education adopted four CMT and CAPT standards which create five levels of performance: Below Basic (Level 1 on CMT3); Basic (Level 2 on CMT3); Proficient (Level 3 on CMT3), Goal (Level 4 on CMT 3); and Advanced (New).

Based on the 2001-2002 CMT data, the federal baseline is established by the performance of the school where the 20th percentile student is enrolled (63 percent proficient in mathematics and 55 percent proficient in reading). Therefore, each district, school and student subgroup that does not have 63 percent of their students Proficient in mathematics and 55 percent of their students Proficient in reading on the CMT would fall below the established baseline. For CAPT, the target level of performance for both mathematics and reading is 53 percent of students at or above the Proficient level. Over time, schools will be required to have an increasing percentage of students in each of the above-mentioned groups (when the groups are of reasonable size) scoring at the Proficient level or higher on the state assessments to meet AYP. By federal law, these percentages must be calculated differently from the traditional way in which CMT and CAPT results have been calculated. **Therefore, the results published in state and district reports will be different than the results published to meet the NCLB accountability requirements.** The differences in the calculation and reporting procedures are summarized in Attachment A.

4. Participation: The participation rate requirement is that no less than 95 percent of all students (except those LEP students exempt by state law from the assessment) in each of the above-mentioned groups take part in the CMT and CAPT or the alternate state assessments: the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist and Out-of-Level (OOL) tests. That means that 95 percent of all students in a school must participate in the testing program. This particularly has implications for assuring the attendance of students during the testing window and providing make-up tests for those students absent from the district's scheduled tests. If a school or district fails to meet the 95 percent student participation standard, it will be identified as not making AYP.

This new participation requirement does not replace Connecticut's established target goals and expectations for the participation of special education students on the standard grade level version of the CMT and CAPT. These target goals and expectations remain as follows:

- At least 80 percent of all special education students will participate in each subtest of the standard grade level version of the CMT/CAPT.
- No more than 15 percent of the special education students will participate in OOL testing.
- No more than 5 percent of the special education students will participate in the CMT/CAPT Skills Checklist.

If a special education student is determined to be unable to take the standard grade level test and takes an OOL test, that student will be counted as performing at the Below Basic level on the standard grade level test for calculating AYP. An exception to this will be made for those students who take the Skills Checklist, those with severe cognitive disabilities. The state will establish a separate set of standards used to determine proficiency on the Skills Checklist.

5. Reporting: The CMT and CAPT data from the 2001-02 school year will be used as the baseline data for setting the starting point for achievement expectations. In the fall of 2002, you received school and district NCLB Federal Reports (as an appendix to your district and school Strategic School Profile) which showed, for NCLB accountability purposes, the performance and participation rate of your school district's students in

mathematics and reading on the 2001 CMT and the 2002 CAPT. Please see Attachment B for an example of this report. There are several differences from the standard CMT and CAPT reports. Of note are the terms used to describe the performance of students according to the achievement levels. On the School and District NCLB Federal Reports, the percentages of students scoring at Basic and above, at Proficient and above, and at Advanced are reported. On all other state reports for CMT and CAPT, the percentages of students scoring in each of the five levels will be reported: Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, State Goal, and Advanced. Because of the many other differences described in Attachment A, the percentages of students across these two types of reports will not be the same.

6. Future Implications of NCLB on CMT and CAPT Administration: A new generation of CMT (CMT-4) and CAPT (CAPT-3) will be administered to students beginning in school year 2005-06. This new generation of the CMT coincides with the implementation of NCLB that expands the test to include students in grades 3 through 8, and moves the administration of the CMT and CAPT to the first two weeks in April, pending state legislation. It is anticipated that the CAPT administration will move to April beginning in 2003-04 and CMT will move in 2005-06. There would be no CMT in the fall of 2005; but April 2006 would be the first spring administration of the CMT.

For the CMT, pending state legislation, students in grades 3 through 8 will be tested in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing starting in 2005-06, which begins a new generation of CMT (CMT-4) which will be very similar to the present generation in format, time and content. Science will be added in grade 5 and grade 8 beginning in school year 2007-08. The new generation of CAPT (CAPT-3) will also begin in the 2005-2006 school year and will be very similar to the present assessment.

In order to prepare test forms for the CMT-4 piloting of grade 3-8 students will begin in the **spring of 2003**. As in the past, we will need all students to be involved in the piloting, but only on one or two sessions, not the full CMT. The pilot is scheduled to be administered from March 31, 2003, to April 11, 2003. Below is a chart with a tentative schedule of CMT Generation 3 and 4 census and pilot testing for school years 2002-03 through 2007-08.

(Pending State Legislation)

School Year	Fall (September/October)		Spring (April) 2003	
	<i>Census</i>	<i>Pilot</i>	<i>Census</i>	<i>Pilot</i>
2002-03	CMT3, Grades 4, 6, and 8	CMT3, Grades 4, 6, and 8 (only some districts will pilot)	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8
2003-04	CMT3, Grades 4, 6, and 8	CMT3, Grades 4, 6, and 8 (only some districts will pilot)	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8
2004-05	CMT3, Grades 4, 6, and 8	None	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8
2005-06	None	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8	CMT4, Grades 3-8
2006-07	None	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8	CMT4, Grades 3-8
2007-08	None	None	CMT4, Grades 3-8	CMT4, Grades 3-8

Attachment B provides a copy of a draft calendar (**pending state legislation**) for the administration of the CAPT for the years 2003-04 through 2007-08 and for the CMT years 2004-05 through 2007-08. The testing window will be approximately two weeks in length with the Science Performance Task occurring the month before regular testing. A list of religious and state holidays that occur during the testing window has been included to assist you with scheduling dates within your district. Fixed sessions must be given on the dates indicated, but all other testing may be scheduled at any time during the two-week testing window.

ATTACHMENT A
CMT AND NCLB COMPARISON OF METHODS OF REPORTING RESULTS

ATTACHMENT 2

CMT and NCLB Comparison of Methods of Reporting Results

Topic	CMT	NCLB
1. In what school are students reported?	The school attended at the time of testing.	The school attended the prior year. Schools serving students below Grade 3 develop own assessment method for math and reading.
2. Are students who are in a school for less than a year included when reporting results for that school?	Yes	No
3. Are grades reported separately?	Yes	No
4. What is the key reporting unit?	Percent at or above Goal (Level 4, including Advanced)	Percent at or above Proficient (Levels III and IV)
5. What size group is reported?	Groups of 10 or more are reported.	Scores will be reported whenever the group result would not reveal an individual student's performance. Only groups of reasonable size (yet to be determined) will be included in determining school performance.
6. What levels are reported?	Advanced Goal Proficient Basic Below basic	Advanced Proficient Basic
7. What denominator is used in calculating performance?	The denominator is the number of valid test scores. It does not include students who take OOL tests or the Skills Checklist, or students who are absent, exempt, use special modifications, leave a test blank, or whose Direct Assessment of Writing tests are unable to be scored.	The denominator for performance levels is all students, except exempt students and students who were absent and did not take a make-up test.

Topic	CMT	NCLB
8. How are performance levels determined for students based on the test taken?	Students taking the standard CMT will be placed in a level based on the score earned. Those taking OOL and Skills Checklist are not put into levels with students taking the grade level test. OOL students are given OOL individual reports with level information. Students who are absent, exempt, use special modifications, leave a test blank, or whose Direct Assessment of Writing tests are unable to be scored are not put into levels.	Students taking the standard CMT will be placed in a level based on the score earned. Those taking OOL, use special modifications, leave the test blank, or are unable to be scored will be placed in below basic. Students judged proficient on the skills checklist will be counted as proficient. Those LEP students who are exempt are not put into levels.
9. Are scale scores reported?	Scale scores are reported for those students taking the standard CMT. Scale scores are not reported for those taking the Skills Checklist or for those students who are absent, exempt, use special modifications, or leave a test blank, or whose Direct Assessment of Writing tests are unable to be scored. OOL students have scale scores reported on OOL reports but not on grade level reports.	No
10. Is non-scorable a reported category?	Non-scorable is reported for the Direct Assessment of Writing test only, as applicable. In that case, a student does not receive total Writing scale score.	Non-scorable students are automatically put in the below basic level for Writing.

Topic	CMT	NCLB
11. How are “Void” students handled?	Students are no longer reported as Voids. When a student becomes ill or cheats on any subtest (these are the only two situations when a Void was previously given), students must be administered a breach form of the test. That student is given the score earned on that breach form.	Voids are not reported. When a student becomes ill or cheats on any subtest, they must be given a breach form of the test. That student is given the score earned on that breach form.
12. How are Limited English Proficient (LEP) students reported?	LEP students are reported as a group.	LEP students are reported as a group.
13. How are special education students who take Out of Level tests reported?	These students are reported as taking OOL tests on the standard rosters and are not reported with scale scores on levels. On the OOL roster, they are reported with scores and levels. OOL students are not included in the denominator when calculating performance on the standard test.	Students taking OOL tests are automatically reported in the below basic level.
14. How are special education students who take the Skills Checklist reported?	These students are reported as taking the Skills Checklist on the standard rosters and are not reported with scale scores or levels. Skills Checklist students are not included in denominators when calculating performance on the standard test.	Students judged proficient on the Skills Checklist (limited to .5% of all students) are reported as proficient.
15. How are students reported who are present but leave a test blank?	These students are not given scores and are reported as leaving a test blank. These students are not included in denominators when calculating performance on the standard test.	These students are not given scores. These students are included in the denominator for participation and performance levels.

Topic	CMT	NCLB
16. How are students who are absent from the test reported?	These students are not given scores and are reported as absent. These students are not included in denominators when calculating performance on the standard test.	These students are reported as absent and are not given scores. These students are included in the denominator for participation but NOT for performance levels.
17. How are LEP students who are exempt reported?	These students are not given scores and are reported as exempt. These students are not included in denominators when calculating performance on the standard test.	These students are not given scores and are reported as exempt. These students are not included in any denominator.
18. What students are considered participants and how is participation reported?	Participation rates are calculated using total enrollment as the denominator. The percent of total enrollment in each category is provided: standard, OOL, Skills Checklist, exempt, absent, and No Valid Score (includes students who leave a test blank, students who use special modifications, and students whose Direct Assessment of Writing tests are unable to be scored.)	One participation rate is calculated. Students who take standard, OOL, Skills Checklist, and students who use special modifications, who leave a test blank, or whose Direct Assessment of Writing tests are unable to be scored are included as participants. Absent students are not included as participants. The denominator includes all but exempt students.

**ATTACHMENT B
CALENDAR OF TEST ADMINISTRATION
PENDING STATE LEGISLATION**

CAPT Calendar 2004-08					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Science Performance Task	February 26 to March 31	February 28 to March 31	February 27 to March 31	February 26 to March 30	February 25 to March 28
CAPT Administration	April 1 to April 16	April 1 to April 15	April 3 to April 13	April 2 to April 13	April 1 to April 11
Interdisciplinary Writing 1	April 1	April 5	April 4	April 5	April 1
Response to Literature	April 2	April 6	April 5	April 10	April 2
Interdisciplinary Writing 2	April 8	April 7	April 6	April 11	April 3

CMT Calendar 2004-08					
	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008
<i>CMT Administration</i>	September 17 – October 3	September 15 – October 1	April 3 to April 13	April 2 to April 13	April 1 to April 11
Direct Assessment of Writing	September 18	September 21	April 4	April 5	April 1
Science Performance Task	NA	NA	NA	A	February 25 to March 28

HOLIDAYS OCCURRING DURING THE TESTING WINDOW

	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Passover	April 6-7	NA	April 13-14	April 3-4	NA
Good Friday	April 9	NA	April 14	April 6	NA
Rosh Hashanah	Sept. 16-17	NA	NA	NA	NA
Yom Kippur	Sept. 25	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sukkot	Sept. 30- Oct.1	NA	NA	NA	NA

ATTACHMENT C
DISTRICT AND SCHOOL REPORT CARD FORMAT

Go to: http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/der/schools/nclb_reports.htm

(On your mouse, right click on link above, then left click on “open hyperlink”)

B. HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

1. Definitions

- a. The term “highly qualified teacher” only applies to those who teach the core academic subjects of English, mathematics, reading/language arts, sciences, world languages, arts (includes music), history, geography, civics and government, and economics. These subjects would include the following Connecticut certification endorsements:
 - All early childhood;
 - All elementary;
 - Middle School 4-8 and Middle School in the content areas identified above;
 - All secondary in content areas identified above;
 - All world languages;
 - Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts;
 - Bilingual Education;
 - TESOL;
 - Special Education; and
 - Reading/Language Arts Consultant who teaches reading.
- b. “A highly qualified teacher holds full state certification as a teacher (including certification through alternative routes) or has passed a state teacher licensing exam and holds state certification.”
- c. Those teachers new to the profession (no public school teaching experience), who are teaching core academic subjects, must
 - Hold at least a bachelor’s degree; **and**
 - At the elementary level, demonstrate by passing a state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading/language arts, writing, mathematics and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum (in Connecticut, this is PRAXIS I in reading, writing and mathematics and PRAXIS II elementary tests);
 - At the middle and high school levels, demonstrate a high level of competency by: passing a state test in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches (PRAXIS II or the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL]); or have successfully completed, in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches an undergraduate major or a graduate degree or coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major or advanced certification or credentials.
- d. By the end of school year 2005-2006, those teachers not new to the profession and teaching core academic subjects must:
 - Hold at least a bachelor’s degree; **and**
 - Meet the applicable requirements in the paragraph above; **or**
 - Another alternative is based on the teacher’s demonstration of competence in all the core academic subjects taught based on a “high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation.” If your district teacher evaluation system is based on the Connecticut teacher evaluation and professional development guidelines, was reviewed and critiqued using the Department’s Peer Review process in 2001, and the evaluation includes subject matter knowledge assessment, then this standard will have been met (pending the United States Department of Education approval).

Districts would particularly need to evaluate the subject matter competence, based on the *Common Core of Teaching*, using both the: 1) foundational skills and competencies; and 2) the discipline-based professional standards, of teachers *teaching core academic subjects* who are working under a 1-8, pre-K-8, 4-8 middle school, TESOL, Bilingual or Special Education endorsement.

- e. “A teacher is not highly qualified if certification requirements were waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis.” Based on Connecticut’s certification rules, teachers teaching the core academic subjects working under the following certificates/permits are not highly qualified according to the federal definitions:
- Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP);
 - Temporary Authorization for Minor Assignment;
 - Nonrenewable Interim Initial Education Certificate;
 - Nonrenewable Interim Provisional Education Certificate;
 - Interim Initial Education Certificate;
 - Interim Provisional Education Certificate;
 - Limited Extended Authorization for Early Childhood;
 - Substitute Teacher Authorization-Long Term; and
 - Any certified teacher not teaching in his/her endorsement area. (Certification regulations require teachers to teach only in their endorsement area(s) unless a temporary authorization for minor assignment has been requested and approved.)

2. Requirements for Newly Hired and Current Teachers

- a. For all newly hired teachers in Title I schools and programs:
- A local educational agency (LEA) must ensure that all teachers hired after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year to teach core academic subjects in a school or program supported with Title I funds are highly qualified.
 - This includes teachers teaching core academic subjects in a “targeted assistance school” who are paid with Title I funds or all teachers teaching core academic subjects in a Title I “schoolwide” program school, regardless of funding.
- b. For all teachers of core academic subjects:
- Not later than the end of the 2005-2006 school year, each state that receives Title I funds must ensure that all teachers in the state who teach core academic subjects are highly qualified. This includes all public school districts and all public schools regardless of receipt of ESEA federal funds.

These requirements also apply to teachers employed by an LEA using Title I funds who provide services to private school students in the core academic subjects.

3. State Requirements To Ensure that All Teachers Are Highly Qualified

A State Plan must be developed to ensure that all teachers in the state teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The State Plan must establish annual, measurable objectives for each LEA and school that include, at a minimum, an annual increase in the percentage of teachers highly qualified and that these teachers are receiving high quality, job-embedded professional development. The ultimate

goal of meeting federal expectations is that 100 percent of all teachers teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year and beyond. An LEA that receives Title I funds is responsible for developing an action plan to annually increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers.

4. Verification of Compliance: Effective for the 2002-03 school year, the principals of each Title I school (targeted assistance or schoolwide program) must provide an annual written attestation of compliance with these requirements. Specifically, the attestation must assess compliance with the highly qualified teachers in core academic areas requirements for: newly-hired teachers in Title I schools hired after the first day of the 2002-03 school year; and for all existing teachers by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Copies of the attestation should be maintained at each Title I school and at each school district's office and be made available to the general public upon request. (Please see the attached Sample A).

5. Notification of Parents: Effective 2002-2003 School Year

a. Parental Requests: Parents of each student attending any school receiving Title I funds shall be notified at the beginning of each school year, that they may request, and the district will provide, in a timely manner, information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers. The information must include, at a minimum:

- if the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
- if the teacher is teaching under an interim certificate, a durational shortage area permit, a minor assignment, or as a substitute teacher;
- the baccalaureate degree major and any other graduate certification degree held by the teacher; and the field of discipline of the certification or degree;
- and information on whether the student is provided services by a paraprofessional and, if so, their qualifications.

(Please see the attached Sample B form for your use at your discretion—but, you must meet the requirements above.)

b. Parental Right to Know: A school district receiving Title I funds must provide to each individual parent whose children are attending a Title I school:

- Information on the level of achievement of their child on the CMT or CAPT (Individual Student Reports for CMT or CAPT [provided by Harcourt Educational Measurement] given to parents fulfills this requirement); and
- Timely notice that their child has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. (Please see the attached Sample C.)

**SAMPLE A
 VERIFICATION OF TITLE I COMPLIANCE
 WITH P.L. 107-110, SECTION 1119 - QUALIFICATION FOR TEACHERS AND
 PARAPROFESSIONALS**

LEA:		Town Code:	
Name of School:		School Code:	
Address:			

I, _____ do hereby attest that _____,
 (name of principal) (name of school)

located in _____ and operating either a targeted assistance or
 district/town
 schoolwide Title I program, is in compliance with the requirements of Section 1119 -

Qualifications for Teachers and Paraprofessionals of the No Child Left Behind Act of
 2001, Public Law 107-110, as follows:

- compliance with the highly qualified teachers in core academic areas requirements for:
 - newly-hired teachers in Title I schools hired after the first day of the 2002-03 school year; and
 - for all existing teachers by the end of the 2005-06 school year.
- compliance with the paraprofessional requirements for:
 - newly-hired paraprofessionals, as of 1/8/02;
 - existing paraprofessionals by 1/8/06;
 - all paraprofessionals holding a high school diploma or equivalent; and
 - paraprofessional duties.

Copies of this attestation shall be maintained at this school and at the main office of
 the school district and shall be available to any member of the general public on request.

 (signature of principal)

 Date

SAMPLE B
PARENTAL NOTICE REGARDING TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

DISTRICT: _____ **SCHOOL YEAR:** _____

SCHOOL: _____

TEACHER NAME: _____

CERTIFICATION STATUS:

- Full state certification for grade level and subject taught.
- Durational Shortage Area Permit: (minimum of a Bachelor's degree, 12 semester hours of credit in subject taught, passed basic skills test; must complete all certification requirements within three years).
- Minor Assignment: Holds full certification in a different—but often related—subject and may teach no more than two periods a day in non-certified subject (holds state certification in another subject, minimum of 12 semester hours of credit in subject taught; must complete all certification requirements within two years).
- Non-Renewable Interim Certificate: Valid one year (meets all certification requirements except for state tests).
- Interim Certificate: Valid one year, renewable one year (meets all certification requirements except for required course in special education).
- Limited Extended Authorization for Early Childhood: (minimum of 10 months teaching experience under Early Childhood certificate [nursery to Grade 3]; may teach in Grades 4-6, minimum 12 semester hours of credit in elementary education; must complete all certification requirements within two years.)
- Holds Connecticut certification but not for grade level or subject taught.
- Long-Term Substitute Permit: Valid for one year (holds a bachelor's degree and has 12 semester hours of credit in the subject taught).
- Regular Substitute Teacher: May not teach in the same classroom more than 40 days (holds a Bachelor's degree).

DEGREES HELD: Baccalaureate degree major: _____

Graduate degrees: _____
(identify field of discipline) _____

PARAPROFESSIONAL: Your child is receiving services by a paraprofessional.
(Please check one box) Qualifications:

Highest Level of Education: _____

Years of Experience: _____

Other: _____

Your child is not receiving services by a paraprofessional.

SAMPLE C
PARENTAL NOTICE REGARDING TEACHERS NOT FULLY CERTIFIED OR
FOR LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES

DATE

INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 1)

INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 2)

INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 3)

Dear Parent:

In fulfillment of new federal legislation, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, we are required to inform you if your child has been assigned a teacher who, by federal definition, is not highly qualified or who has been taught by a teacher for more than four consecutive weeks who, by federal definition, is not highly qualified. This definition states that “a highly qualified teacher holds full state certification as a teacher (including certification through alternate routes) or has passed a state teacher licensing exam and holds state certification”.

In Connecticut, we consider teachers with a durational shortage area permit, a non-renewable interim certificate, an interim certificate, a temporary authorization for a minor assignment, and a long-term substitute permit to be qualified to teach in the public school system. However, by federal definition, teachers with these qualifications are not considered to be “highly qualified”.

Your child, _____, is being taught by a qualified teacher, hired by the _____ Public School System, who has one of the above-named permits or certificates; while the teacher does not hold full Connecticut certification, he/she holds, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree and has met minimum semester hours of coursework in the subject being taught and needs to complete tests and/or additional coursework to become fully certified.

At this time, the _____ Public School System is unable to find and hire a fully certified teacher to fill this position, but will continue to seek a person who meets the federal definition.

Sincerely,

AUTHOR
TITLE

XXX:xxx

***PLEASE NOTE: This letter would not be applicable for a regular substitute teacher for a certified teacher providing instruction in an area in which he/she is not certified.**

C. PARAPROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements only apply to paraprofessionals engaged in instructional support who are paid with Title I funds in a Title I targeted assistance school and to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties in a Title I schoolwide program school (regardless of funding source). Paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities must have a high school diploma or GED, but do not have to meet the other requirements. Individuals who provide personal care services or clerical duties are not considered paraprofessionals under Title I requirements.

1. Education Requirements

The following requirements apply to all paraprofessionals who are either: funded by Title I funds and providing instructional assistance in Title I targeted assistance schools; or funded from any source and providing instruction in Title I schoolwide programs:

- a. Any "Title I" paraprofessional described above providing instructional assistance who is newly hired after January 8, 2002, must have the following:
 - A high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) test, **AND**
 - Two years of college credit, **OR**
 - An associate's (or higher) degree, **OR**
 - Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option.)
- b. Currently employed "Title I" paraprofessionals described above providing instructional assistance – **Each paraprofessional must have earned a high school diploma or GED to maintain current employment.** This means that no paraprofessional currently employed should be paid with Title I funds if they do not meet this requirement.
- c. By January 8, 2006, each Connecticut Title I funded paraprofessional in a Title I targeted assistance school or any paraprofessional providing instructional assistance in a Title I schoolwide program school must meet **one** of the following requirements:
 - Have two years of college credit; **OR**
 - Hold an associate's (or higher degree); **OR**
 - Pass a State Board of Education adopted Paraprofessional Assessment which assesses content knowledge in mathematics, reading and writing and an understanding of how to assist in the instruction of these topics. (NCLB requires a rigorous state or local assessment as one option.)

The Connecticut State Board of Education adopted the Educational Testing Services *ParaPro Assessment* at the December 2002 Board meeting and established a passing score of 457. This test fulfills the option of passing a rigorous state assessment. A description of the assessment, including sample items, can be found at

www.ets.org/parapro/index.html. The assessment takes two and one-half hours and will include 90 multiple-choice questions which assess skills in mathematics, reading and writing and in assisting instruction. The assessment is designed to be taken on a school site through the Internet with the cost of \$40 to be charged to the district; results are provided to the candidates at the conclusion of the assessment. There will also be a pencil-and-paper version available six times a year with individual registration and payment; results will be provided to the candidate within four weeks of administration.

At the present time, the Department is not contemplating other than the ETS ParaPro assessment – unless, over time, there are alternative tests which could be validated for comparability to the ParaPro content and standards, and approved by the State Board of Education.

2. Duties

A Title I paraprofessional may be assigned:

- To provide one-on-one tutoring for eligible students, if the tutoring is scheduled at a time when a student would not otherwise receive instruction from a teacher;
- To assist with classroom management, such as organizing instructional and other materials;
- To provide assistance in a computer laboratory;
- To conduct parental involvement activities;
- To provide support in a library or media center;
- To act as a translator; or
- To provide instructional support services to students. (A Title I paraprofessional may not provide any instructional support to a student unless he/she is working under the direct supervision of a classroom teacher who meets the NCLB requirements of highly qualified as outlined in Section B.)

3. Use of Funds

A local education agency (LEA) receiving Title I funds may use such funds to pay for the test and to support ongoing training and professional development of paraprofessionals to assist them in meeting the requirements.

4. Verification of Compliance

Effective for the 2002-03 school year, the principal of each Title I school (targeted assistance or schoolwide program) must provide an annual written attestation of compliance with these requirements. Specifically, the attestation must assess compliance with the Title I paraprofessional requirements for: newly-hired paraprofessionals, as of 1-8-02; existing paraprofessionals by 1/8/06; all paraprofessionals holding a high school diploma or equivalent; and, paraprofessional duties. Copies of the attestation should be maintained at each Title I school and at each school district's office and be made available to the general public upon request. (Please see the attached Sample A).

D. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF TITLE PROGRAMS

1. Title I, Part A-Improving Basic Programs Operated By Local Educational Agencies: provides assistance to improve the teaching and learning of children in high-poverty schools to enable those children to meet challenging State academic content and performance standards.

- a. **Parental Involvement:** Parental Involvement is defined as “the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning; that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s education at school and that parents are full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.” Districts receiving at least \$500,000 of Title I funds shall reserve at least 1 percent to carry out parental involvement activities, including promoting family literacy and parenting skills. Not less than 95% of the funds reserved for parent involvement shall be distributed to the school district’s Title I schools, as identified in the consolidated application.
- b. **Early Childhood:** Title I funds may be used as a foundation to build preschool capacity by expanding the availability of high-quality full-day preschool programs. LEAs may use Title I funds to coordinate and support transitional services for pre-kindergarten children from early childhood development programs to the local educational agency. Districts receiving Title I funds shall, in conjunction with local Head Start agencies, and, if feasible, other early educational (Early Childhood) agencies, coordinate services between the LEAs and Early Childhood agencies; and link LEA educational services with services provided by local Head Start agencies, and entities carrying out Early Reading First programs.
- c. **LEA Reporting:** Districts receiving Title I funds shall prepare and disseminate an annual Federal Report, which presents information on the district as a whole and on each school within the LEA, and which must be disseminated by the LEA to all its schools and all its students’ parents no later than the beginning of the 2002-03 school year; ensure that the Federal Report is made widely available through such means as the internet or distribution to the media; and ensure that the report contains the required elements of student performance on the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, in the aggregate and disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, enrollment in special education, English proficiency, eligibility for free/reduced-price meals, migrant status and teachers’ qualifications.

For each school year, the required Federal Reports will be attached to the Strategic School and District Profiles (SSP), which will be issued as usual in the fall by the State Department of Education; and by State law, the SSPs will be available and discussed at the first local Board meeting of November.

- d. **Participation of Children Enrolled in Private Schools:** For the purposes of allocating Title I funds for services to eligible private school children, school districts receiving Title I funds have the option of determining either each year or every 2 years the number of private school children from low-income families. Districts receiving Title I funds shall ensure timely and meaningful consultation with appropriate private

school officials during the design and development of such district's Title I programs on issues such as: how the children's needs will be identified; what services will be offered; how, where, and by whom the services will be provided; how the services will be academically assessed and how the results of that assessment will be used to improve those services; the size and scope of the equitable services to be provided; the proportion of the LEA's funds allocated to private school students; the method or sources of poverty data that are used to derive the allocation for private school students; and how and when the LEA will make decisions about the delivery of services to eligible private school students, including a thorough consideration and analysis of the views of the private school officials on the provision of services through a contract with potential third-party providers; and how, if the district disagrees with the views of the private school officials on the provision of services through a contract, the school district will provide in writing to such private school officials an analysis of the reasons why the school district has chosen not to use a contractor.

Consultations shall include meetings of school district and private school officials and occur before the school district makes any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible private school children to participate in programs under Title I. Such meetings shall continue throughout implementation and assessment of services.

Districts shall retain in their records and provide to the State Department of Education, a written affirmation signed by officials of each participating private school that the consultation required has occurred. If such private school officials do not provide such affirmation within a reasonable period of time, districts shall forward the documentation that such consultation has taken place to the State Department of Education.

2. Title II, Part A-Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund: combines the Eisenhower Professional Development and the Class-Size Reduction programs into one program that focuses on preparing, training and recruiting high-quality teachers. It allows LEAs increased flexibility to allocate funds among professional development, class-size reduction, and other teacher quality activities, and eliminates the Eisenhower priority for professional development in mathematics and science. Districts may choose from among these new local activities, which include, among others: teacher and principal retention and retention initiatives; signing bonuses and other financial incentives; teacher and principal mentoring; reforming tenure system; merit pay; teacher testing; and pay differentiation initiatives. Districts are encouraged to allocate a portion of their new and increased Title II subgrant funds to cover expenses related to supporting beginning teachers in the BEST Program. Examples of allowable uses of these funds include (1) providing stipends and other financial incentives to mentor teachers or "master mentors;" (2) expanding the support of beginning teachers into their second or third year of teaching; (3) providing workshops of other professional development for beginning teachers and their mentors as well as principals around effective teaching practices and the portfolio process; and (4) providing release time for collaboration between beginning teachers and their mentors and/or content colleagues. If you spend any of these funds on professional development activities, you are required to include training on how to involve and work with parents in their child's education.

3. Title II, Part D, Subpart 1-Enhancing Education Through Technology:

consolidates the current Technology Literacy Challenge Fund (TLCF) Program and the Technology Innovative Challenge Grant Program into a single State formula grant program. Fifty percent of the funds will be allocated to districts on a formula basis to districts receiving Title I funds. Fifty percent of the funds will be distributed on a competitive basis. The primary goal of the Ed Tech program is to improve student academic achievement through the use of technology in schools. It is also designed to assist every student in crossing the digital divide by ensuring that every student is technologically literate by the end of eighth grade, and to encourage the effective integration of technology with teacher training and curriculum development to establish successful research-based instructional methods. Districts are to ensure that education technology will be used to connect schools and families.

4. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 3 – Gun-Free Requirements:

The law now clarifies that students must be expelled for possessing a gun in school, even if they didn't bring it to school, as well as for bringing it to school. Districts are still able to modify student expulsions on a case-by-case basis, but the modification must now be in writing. Exceptions to the expulsion requirement are now expressly allowed in two cases: firearms that are lawfully stored inside a locked vehicle on school property, and firearms that are brought to school or possessed in school for activities approved and authorized by the district, if the district adopts appropriate safeguards to ensure student safety. The Department must collect from districts information on any expulsions that are made under the law, and must report that information to the U.S. Department of Education annually, including the name of the school concerned, the number of students expelled from each school, and the type of firearms involved.

5. Title V, Part A-Innovative Programs:

retains, with a few changes, the previous Title VI, Innovative Education Program Strategies that provides flexible funds to LEAs for innovative educational programs. New allowable activities include, among others: professional development and class-size reduction activities; charter schools; community service programs; consumer, economic, and personal finance education; public school choice; programs to hire and support school nurses; school-based mental health services; alternative education programs; pre-kindergarten programs; academic intervention programs; programs for CPR training in schools; smaller learning communities programs; activities to advance student achievement; programs and activities that use best practice models; same-gender schools and classrooms; service-learning activities; school safety programs; programs that use research-based cognitive and perceptual development approaches and rely on a "diagnostic-prescriptive model" to improve students' learning; magnet schools; dropout prevention; gifted and talented education; and parental and community involvement.

E. LINGUISTIC ASSESSMENT OF LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS

Title III is a new entitlement program and all school districts receiving these funds must achieve the goals by implementing programs that conduct activities in the following five areas:

- English language development;
- content area instruction;
- professional development for all administrative and teaching staff serving LEP students;
- parental notification and involvement (see paragraph below); and
- student assessment and program evaluation (see Sections 3121-Evaluations, and Section 3122-Achievement Objectives and Accountability).

All school districts conducting educational programs for LEP students with Title III funds must ensure that the students attain English proficiency, achieve to high levels in core academic areas, and attain the same content and academic achievement standards as all children.

1. Assessment

- a. All districts providing services to LEP students shall annually assess the English proficiency of those in grades K-12 in speaking, reading, writing and listening and comprehending, beginning in the 2002-2003 school year;
- b. In 2000, the SDE adopted the Language Assessment Scales (LAS) in Oral, Reading and Writing, which has been used by school districts providing bilingual education in fulfillment of Section 10-17f (c) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Since all districts will now have to annually assess their K-12 LEP students, all districts will use the same linguistic assessment with LEP students. The annual linguistic assessment must take place during a three-week period in April or May of each year. The Department has provided information on ordering the appropriate tests from the vendor, CTB McGraw-Hill. The vendor will also offer a series of workshops in March 2003, on the administration and scoring of these tests. The Department will collect the students' test results through an LEP data collection in June of the 2002-2003 school year, and annually thereafter, through the Public School Information System. Since the ESEA requires the linguistic assessment to include oral, reading and writing in all grades, from kindergarten to 12, each year, this will change the current requirements of linguistic assessment for districts with bilingual programs. (Currently, the LAS, Oral, is used in grades kindergarten, 1 and 2, and the LAS, Reading and Writing, is used in grades 3 through 12).

2. Notification of Parents

- a. All school districts awarded Title III grants will inform the parent(s) of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students who are provided language instruction using Title I and/or Title III funds, not later than 30 days after the beginning of school, of the following:
 - reason for identification as LEP and need for a language program;

- level of English proficiency, how this was assessed and the status of the student's academic achievement;
 - methods of instruction to be used in the program and in other available programs;
 - the differences among programs including the use of English and native language instruction;
 - how the program will meet their child's educational strengths and needs;
 - how the program will specifically help their child learn English and meet age appropriate academic achievement standards and eventually meet graduation requirements;
 - exit requirements and the expected rate of transition from the program into mainstream classes, the expected rate of graduation from secondary school for students in such a program, if Title III funds are used for LEP students in secondary schools;
 - how, for a student with a disability, the program meets the objectives of the IEP; and
 - written guidance detailing parents' rights to have their child immediately removed from the program, the options that parents have for declining enrollment of their child in the program and for choosing another program of instruction and written guidance for assisting parents in selecting other available programs.
- b. Each school district using Title III funds to provide a program and that has failed to make progress on the annual measurable achievement objectives (described in Section 3122) shall separately inform a parent or the parents of a student identified for participation in such a program, or participating in such a program, of such a failure not later than 30 days after such failure has occurred. All information to parents shall be provided in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent possible, in a language that the parent can understand.
- c. Each school district operating programs with Title III funds shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of LEP students regarding parental involvement in the education of their child, including how parents may be active participants in assisting their child in learning English, in achieving to high standards in core academic subjects and in meeting the same challenging State academic and content standards required of all students. This outreach shall include holding, and sending notice of opportunities for, regular meetings held to formulate and respond to recommendations from parents regarding their participation.

3. Reporting

- a. The results of the assessment of English proficiency must be reported annually to the SDE.
- b. All districts awarded Title III grants must report to the SDE on the scientific research base related to the education of LEP students that underlies their Title III program and professional development activities.

F. GRADUATION RATE

Graduation rate, which is the percentage of students who graduate from a public secondary school with a regular diploma in the standard number of years (i.e., 4 years), is a required high school element of the ESEA accountability model and reporting system. Connecticut does not currently calculate a graduation rate for its regular education students, nor does it collect the data necessary to do so. The SDE will begin collecting graduation rate data on the class of 2006 through the new Connecticut Public School Information System.

G. UNSAFE SCHOOL CHOICE OPTIONS

The SDE is required to certify that it has established and implemented a policy requiring that students attending persistently dangerous public elementary or secondary schools, as determined by the State Department of Education, in consultation with the representative sample of local education agencies, or who become victims of violent criminal offenses, as determined by state law, while in or on the grounds of public and elementary and secondary schools that the students attend, be allowed to choose to attend a different, safe, public elementary or secondary school (including a charter school) within the local education agency.

The Department is in the process of reviewing data and will develop a policy and definition over the next few months.