

Overview

Prior to 2015, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 required that core content teachers, and special education teachers and service providers be highly qualified. The qualifications necessary to be considered highly qualified were prescribed by NCLB and included requirements for minimum education, teacher licensure, and subject matter competency. These requirements in NCLB have been replaced by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

Special Education Staff

ESSA retains the requirement for special education teachers and service providers (psychologist, counselor, social worker, nurse, etc.) who work with students with disabilities to hold an active Colorado Teacher or Specialized Service Provider License with the appropriate endorsement. For more information, see the [Special Education Human Resources Handbook](#).

General Education Staff

ESSA defers the requirements for general education teachers to state law. Colorado law (C.R.S 22-63-201) requires that a teacher hold a valid state license or authorization before they can be hired to teach in a public school, unless the school has received a waiver from this provision. Schools that have received a waiver may hire teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado certificate, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or professional experience. Teachers hired who do not hold an active Colorado Teacher License with the appropriate endorsement in the grade level and subject area that they teach, must meet the in-field criteria described in the Colorado state ESSA plan, specifically, the individual must have:

- Degree (B.A. or higher) in the subject area of assignment
OR
- College transcript documenting 36 semester credit hours aligned to the [CDE endorsement worksheet](#) in the subject area of assignment
OR
- Passing score on a [State Board of Education approved content exam](#) (currently the ETS Praxis Series) in the subject area of assignment

Substitute Teachers

Colorado law (C.R.S 22-63-201) requires that a substitute teacher hold a valid state authorization before they can be hired to teach in a public school, unless the school has received a waiver from this provision. Schools that have received a waiver are

encouraged hire individuals with a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree, but may hire individuals that meet the Paraprofessional recommendations listed below.

Paraprofessionals/Teaching Assistants

Neither federal, nor state law define qualification or credentialing requirements for paraprofessionals or teaching assistants. Schools have discretion in setting local hiring policies for these positions. CDE recommends that schools adopt local hiring policies that set requirements for paraprofessionals equivalent or similar to those outlined below.

Instructional paraprofessionals should possess specific skills and knowledge in reading, writing, mathematics and instruction to serve in schools supported by Title I. At a minimum, instructional paraprofessionals should:

- Possess a high school diploma or its equivalent
AND
- Demonstrate subject matter competency by:
 - Earning an Associate's (or higher) degree
OR
 - Completing at least two years (48 credit hours) of study at an institution of higher education
OR
 - Passing a formal assessment measuring one's knowledge of and ability to assist classroom teachers in reading, writing and mathematics (ACT-Work Keys or ETS-ParaPro assessments).