

CODESP NEWS

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WHAT IS CODESP?

CODESP began in 1973 as a consortium consisting of a small group of Southern California school districts who decided to pool technical and financial resources to meet a variety of personnel management goals. The districts' main purpose was to improve employee selection procedures.

When Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was amended to cover the public sector, the personnel directors of these districts knew they would have to develop job-related employment tests for large numbers of employees in many different classifications, ranging in complexity from custodian to business manager. They also knew that they would have to do so in compliance with federal laws, regulations, and selection guidelines. Their solution was the formation of the Cooperative Organization for Employee Selection Procedures.

CODESP was established with the help of an Intergovernmental Personnel Act grant. It was designated to develop and implement a model system of cooperative selection procedures that would measure common skills, knowledges, abilities and personal characteristics (SKAP's) related to jobs found in school districts.

Increasing the technical capabilities of each district's personnel staff by providing them with training and access to job-related selection materials allows members to develop tests that are legally defensible.

CODESP still operates as a consortium and encourages members to share information and test materials with staff and among themselves. Frequent subject matter expert review of items is also encouraged as CODESP staff updates test materials regularly.

Although CODESP was provided with initial start-up funding through an IPA grant, it no longer receives federal funds. The consortium, which currently numbers over 187 members, is now fiscally independent and is funded solely by member agencies.

Because we operate as a nonprofit agency, it is important that we can anticipate our membership/funding for each fiscal year. We rely on the return of the Intents to Continue Membership to plan our programs and encourage members to return them as soon as possible. Prospective new members can access the necessary paperwork by visiting our website and clicking on Membership.

TRAINING MEETING

SACRAMENTO

On **May 17**, from 10 a.m. - 12 noon, San Juan Unified School District in Carmichael (Sacramento) will host a meeting on **Preventing Violence in the Workplace**. Although extra security has been added at most school districts, violent instances still occur. Planning for these instances and learning to diffuse situations that become violent is very important.

Our speaker will be attorney Marc Bouret of Girard and Vinson (www.gandv.com). He has practiced education and school law for several years in the Bay Area and Sacramento.

Participants will learn how to more effectively screen job applicants, look for early warning signs, promptly address morale issues, handle terminations more carefully, utilize external legal resources, and seek temporary restraining orders.

There is no cost for attendance and other employees from departments other than human resources, such as risk management, may attend.

Please RSVP to marcodesp@aol.com. For more information and a map please visit our website at www.codesp.com.



NEW STAFF MEMBER

Elizabeth Siri has joined the CODESP team as Administrative Assistant. She will be assisting in the accounting and office management aspects of the consortium. She will also be editing test materials and assisting in filling requests. Elizabeth has a Bachelor's degree from the University of California, Irvine in English Literature and has experience in technical writing.

We look forward to her contributions to the consortium. She can be reached at Elizabeth@codesp.com.

PROPOSED INSTRUCTIONAL AIDE BILL

CSEA is sponsoring Senate Bill 1405 authored by Senator O'Connell. This proposed bill would amend Sections 45344.5 and 45361.5 and add Section 4573.1 to the Education Code relating to Instructional Aides. According to the sponsor, the purpose of this bill is to clarify and align state laws to the recently enacted federal Title I programs under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLBA). The sponsor purports that this bill deals with the requirements for local school districts to assess the ability of paraprofessionals (instructional aides) to assist a teacher prior to their employment and assignment to a classroom teacher.

The Senate Bill Analysis, Staff Comments section includes the following:

1. Aligning with federal law. The new federal law requires that all paraprofessionals hold a high school diploma, or the equivalent. Additionally for those paraprofessionals working in schools receiving federal funds, they must achieve one of the three requirements including passing a rigorous state or local assessment. After several conversations with the sponsor of this bill, it is the staff's understanding that it was not the intent to limit, narrow, or weaken the requirements for paraprofessionals; but rather, to clarify and align state requirements with the new federal law. Therefore, staff recommends the following amendments:

a. To ensure that local districts have flexibility, amend the bill to allow districts to utilize a local or state developed assessment in reading, writing and mathematics.

As of May 1, 2002, amendments have been made to the proposed bill. According to the Legislative Counsel's Digest Section 1d, the bill currently includes the following language, as summarized below :

(d) California is a major participant in the Title I program under the recently enacted federal legislation, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Since 1982, paraprofessionals in California public schools have been assessed for their proficiency and ability to assist teachers and certificated personnel in teaching, reading, writing, and mathematics.

This legislation is intended to ensure that state law conforms with federal law regarding the testing requirements for paraprofessionals supported by federal Title I funds.

SEC. 2. Section 45273.1 is added to the Education Code, to read:

45273.1 (a) As used in this section, a paraprofessional means a person who assists classroom teachers and other certificated personnel in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics. A paraprofessional includes an instructional aide as defined in subdivision (a) of Section 45343 and a teacher aide as described in Section 45360.

(b) A paraprofessional shall perform only duties that, in the judgment of the certificated personnel to whom the instructional aide is assigned, may be performed by a person not licensed as a classroom teacher. These duties shall not include assignment of grades to pupils.

(c) A school district shall ensure that a paraprofessional who assists in instruction has demonstrated, through a local or state assessment, knowledge of, and ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics.

(1) No person shall be initially assigned to assist in instruction as a paraprofessional in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12 inclusive, unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics skills up to or exceeding that required by the employing district for high school seniors pursuant to subdivisions (a) and (f) of Section 51220 if the employing district educates high school students.

(2) If the employing district is an elementary district, the paraprofessional shall demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, and mathematics skills up to or exceeding that required for high school seniors pursuant to subdivision (a) and (f) of Section 51220 in the high school district that includes all or the largest portion of the elementary district.

(d) In establishing the educational qualifications or in developing a proficiency exam, a school district shall align the qualifications and proficiency exams pursuant to subdivision (c).

(e) Pursuant to Title I of the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, a paraprofessional that is supported by Title I funds shall have passed a proficiency exam pursuant to subdivision (c). A paraprofessional who provides services related to language translation or parental involvement activities is exempt from the same requirements of this subdivision and subdivision (c).

(f) A paraprofessional who was hired on or before January 1, 2003 is deemed to have met the proficiency exam requirements of subdivisions (c) and (e).

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(g) A paraprofessional who holds an associate in arts degree or who has completed two years of higher education is deemed to have met the proficiency exam requirements of subdivisions (c) and (e).

(h) A school district may use an existing proficiency exam to test a paraprofessional, or may develop a new proficiency exam to meet the exam requirements or subdivisions (c) and (e).

SEC. 3. Section 45344.5 of the Education Code is amended to read:

45344.5 (a) No person shall be initially assigned to assist in instruction as an instructional aide unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills pursuant to Section 45273.1.

SEC. 4. Section 45361.5 of the Education Code is amended to read:

45361.5. (a) No person shall be initially assigned to assist in instruction for work as an aide for instructional purposes in kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, unless the person has demonstrated proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills pursuant to Section 45273.1.

(b) As used in this section, "initially assigned" means any assignment, including substitute, temporary, probationary, or permanent employment, to assist in instruction as an aide for instructional purposes.

This bill has NOT yet been passed. It is set for hearing on May 13, 2002 with Senate Appropriations. More amendments may occur before it goes to a vote.

It is apparent that the bill's authors want to ensure that current Instructional Aides will not be required to be re-tested and that the State or local agency should determine the level of testing.

For school districts this means that you may need to update your Instructional Aide test so that it will determine if candidates are proficient in writing, reading and mathematics equivalent to the level of a current high school graduate. Graduation requirements have increased and your test should reflect these changes. Check with your curriculum department to ensure that your district's test is up-to-date in regards to new graduation standards.

If your test needs updating, request new materials from CODESP by completing a C-CIB Request Form. Sample tests and hundreds of other multiple choice items are available to customize your exam. Test development is an ongoing process and new items are frequently available.

**TO ORDER TEST MATERIALS
COMPLETE A C-CIB REQUEST FORM ON
OUR WEBSITE: WWW.CODESP.COM**



New questions have been added in the following computerized test subject areas:

- HTML
- JAVA
- Operating Systems
- Anatomy/Physiology

A new Excel performance exam is now available.

CODESP LOSES A FRIEND

Last week we lost a dear friend and CODESP supporter. Tom Gibbons, Director of Classified Personnel at Barstow Unified School District passed away after a heroic fight with cancer.

Tom was a strong advocate of the merit system principle of fair and equitable employee selection. He was always willing to share his district's test administration experiences with us so that we could use them to help others. We will miss his friendship, professional insight, and loyalty.

**CHECK OUT OUR HR JOB POSTING
SITE at WWW.CODESP.COM**

DIRECTOR, PERSONNEL COMMISSION

**Pasadena Unified School
District**

**\$76,664—\$93,120
Closing date: 5/31/02**

TITLE I INTERPRETATION

In an April 28 letter to chief state school officers, U.S. Department of Education (ED) officials took a tentative step toward interpreting the paraprofessional requirements within the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB).

ED officials began talking about the new requirement immediately, but until now refrained from interpreting (summarized below) which paraprofessionals would fall under the new requirement.

Of particular concern has been the extent to which the new provision applies to paraprofessionals working in Title I schoolwide programs. ED has consistently said that in these programs every child at the school is a "Title I Child;" every teacher is considered to be a "Title I Teacher;" and every paraprofessional is a "Title I Paraprofessional."

Dr. Joe Johnson, director of the federal Title I program, stated that the policy is not finalized and the ED is working on guidance that will further address this issue. ED's current thinking is that for a schoolwide school, this would apply to all paraprofessionals with instructional duties without regard to the source of funding of the positions.

The new testing requirements do not apply to paraprofessionals working primarily as translators or solely on parental involvement activities. Individuals who work solely in non-instructional roles, such as food service, cafeteria or playground supervision, personal care services, and noninstructional computer assistance are not considered paraprofessionals for Title I purposes.

Title I and Title II funds may be used for ongoing training and professional development to help paraprofessionals meet the statutory requirements.

Excerpts from Title I Alert, Thompson Publishing Group, May 7, 2002.

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