



## PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSESSMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (PAKS)

### Frequently Asked Questions

- Q1.** *Will the paraprofessional receive a certificate from the State or from the education service center for successfully completing the PAKS?*
- A1.** Awarding a certificate is a local option. If the district chooses to give a certificate, the certificate should be kept in the paraprofessional's personnel file. Neither TEA nor SBEC maintains a database of how paraprofessionals perform on PAKS.
- Q2.** *Do paraprofessionals who successfully complete the PAKS have to pass any additional assessments in order to satisfy provisions of NCLB?*
- A2.** No. Successful completion of the PAKS is sufficient. PAKS requires that the lesson the paraprofessional assists in delivering must include reading, writing and math skills or reading readiness, writing readiness and math readiness skills, as appropriate.
- Q3.** *Am I required to administer the PAKS or can I administer the assessment my service center has developed?*
- A3.** You are not required to administer the PAKS—it is a State approved assessment option. You may use an assessment developed by a service center, private consultant or your district. **However, the assessment you use must satisfy the requirements of NCLB.**
- Q4.** *Can PAKS be used with a paraprofessional working in a one-to-one situation?*
- A4.** Yes.
- Q5.** *Does the assessor have to be an administrator?*
- A5.** No. The assessor, however, must have had some form of assessor training such as PDAS.

**Q6.** *Is the assessor required to make comments in the space provided?*

**A6.** No. However, if assigning a “below expectations”, the assessor should provide comments justifying the scoring.

**Q7.** *Must the PAKS be administered in English?*

**A7.** No. If the paraprofessional ordinarily assists the teacher in a language other than English, the lesson being assessed under PAKS should also be in that language.

**Q8.** *Are ALL campuses in the district required to use the PAKS?*

**A8.** PAKS is an option, not a mandate—none of the campuses are required to administer the PAKS if the district prefers another assessment. As to whether the district may use different assessments for different campuses, that depends on the district policy.

**Q9.** *Is there a limit to how many times a paraprofessional may take the PAKS?*

**A9.** This should be determined through district policy.

**Q10.** *Must the 45-minute observation be continuous?*

**A10.** This is a district decision.

**Q11.** *If a paraprofessional transfers into a district from another district and the former district had already administered the PAKS, is the district required to give the PAKS again?*

**A11.** You may accept the previous district’s results unless your district policy prohibits doing so. District policy, for example, could require readministration of the PAKS or administration of a different assessment instrument.

**Q12.** *May a paraprofessional being readministered the assessment request a different Collaborating Teacher or a different Trained Assessor?*

**A12.** The answer to both of the questions is yes. However, the district is not required to grant either request unless the district policy requires you to do so.

**Q13.** *Must a paraprofessional demonstrate the ability to teach writing skills regardless of the instructional level of the students?*

**A13.** Paraprofessionals are required by NCLB to demonstrate their abilities to teach writing (as well as reading and math) skills. Such instruction must be provided at the students' developmentally appropriate skill levels and **evidence** of such instruction **must** be seen by the PAKS appraiser.

**Q14.** *In appraising teachers, PDAS allows an appraiser "to infer". Am I allowed to do this with PAKS?*

**A14.** No.

**Q15.** *Is there a pencil and paper version of the PAKS?*

**A15.** No. The PAKS is performance-based.

**Q16.** *Is the PAKS only for Title I aides/Title I campuses?*

**A16.** The PAKS may be administered to any paraprofessional performing instructional support duties.

**Q17.** *NCLB refers to completing "at least two years of study" at a higher education institution. How many hours equal two years?*

**A17.** Forty-eight.

**Q18.** *If a paraprofessional fails the PAKS, how soon should the aide's instructional duties be terminated?*

**A18.** Instructional duties should be terminated as soon as feasible, given staffing and paperwork considerations.