

**TITLE 210. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
CHAPTER 20. STAFF
SUBCHAPTER 9. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: TEACHER EDUCATION
AND CERTIFICATION
PART 9. TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

210:20-9-102. Paraprofessional credentials and ~~Career~~ career development program for paraprofessionals

(a) Purpose. Under Oklahoma law at 70 O.S. § 6-127A, a public school paraprofessional is an employee of a school district whose position is instructional in nature, or who delivers other direct services to students and/or their parents, and for which a certified teacher or other professional has the ultimate responsibility for the design, implementation, and evaluation of the individual educational programs or related services and student performance. Individuals must meet requirements established by federal and state law to be authorized to serve as public school paraprofessionals in Title I schools and in special education settings. The State Board of Education is also authorized to issue provisional teaching certification to a qualifying individual with a paraprofessional credential and relevant experience serving as a paraprofessional.

(a)(b) Paraprofessional credential. ~~The State Department of Education shall issue a paraprofessional credential to an applicant who meets all of the following requirements:~~ An individual who wishes to apply for a paraprofessional credential shall submit an application and all required supporting documentation to the State Department of Education Office of Certification.

(1) Tier 1. In order to qualify for a Tier 1 Oklahoma paraprofessional credential issued by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), which is required for general education paraprofessionals in Title I schools and available to general education paraprofessionals in other settings, an applicant shall meet the following eligibility criteria, established through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA):

(1)(A) Has a high school diploma, or a General Educational Development (GED) Diploma or other certificate of high school equivalency recognized by the State of Oklahoma.

~~(2) Has met a career development paraprofessional program approved by the State Board of Education; and~~

~~(3)(B)~~ (B) Has on file with the State Board of Education a current Oklahoma criminal history record from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI) as well as a national fingerprint-based criminal history record provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Upon receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record, the Board may issue a temporary credential which shall be effective until receipt of the national fingerprint-based criminal history record. The person applying for a credential shall be responsible for the cost of obtaining the criminal history records.

(C) Meets at least one of the following criteria:

(i) Has completed at least two (2) years of study at an institution of higher education, defined as completion of at least forty-eight (48) credit hours of college coursework;

or

(ii) Has obtained an associate's degree or higher; or

(iii) Has either passed the Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET), obtained a National Career Readiness Certificate through successful completion of the ACT

WorkKeys assessment, or passed the ParaPro Assessment offered through the Educational Testing Service.

(2) **Tier 2.** In order to qualify for a Tier 2 Oklahoma paraprofessional credential issued by the State Department of Education, which is valid for special education paraprofessionals, an applicant shall meet the criteria for a Tier 1 paraprofessional credential and all of the following qualifications:

(A) Has completed the Oklahoma Special Education Paraprofessional Training available at Career Technology centers, equivalent training provided by the State Department of Education through an in-person or online program, or other state-approved training provided by a school district.

(B) Has completed training in cardiovascular pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and First Aid.

(C) Has completed training in Universal Precautions/Bloodborne Pathogens.

(3) **Provisional employment of paraprofessionals in special education settings.** In the event a school district requires a special education paraprofessional in order to provide necessary services to one or more students with disabilities, but is unable to secure the services of an individual who holds a Tier 2 paraprofessional credential at the time the services must be delivered, the district may employ an individual on a provisional basis if the district determines the individual is able to provide the appropriate paraprofessional services. An individual who is employed as a paraprofessional to provide special education services on a provisional basis must meet the criteria for a Tier 1 credential, and obtain all training required to qualify for a Tier 2 credential as listed in (b)(2) of this section, within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days of employment providing special education paraprofessional services in order to continue providing special education paraprofessional services, provided a criminal history record check is obtained within sixty (60) calendar days of initial employment pursuant to 70 O.S. § 5-142. If it is necessary for a school district to provisionally employ a paraprofessional to provide special education services, the district shall report the provisional placement of the paraprofessional and the paraprofessional's starting date of employment to the State Department of Education Office of Special Education.

(b)(c) Provisional teaching certificates - paraprofessional. The State Department of Education shall issue a provisional teaching certificate, valid for up to three (3) years, in early childhood, elementary education, or special education to a paraprofessional who meets all of the following requirements:

(1) Has been employed for one full school year (i.e., two consecutive semesters, three consecutive trimesters, or four consecutive quarters) in an accredited public or private school as a paraprofessional in the area for which a certificate is being pursued. The full school year (or the equivalent in consecutive school terms) of required paraprofessional experience must be completed in one school district or accredited private school; For purposes of this paragraph, experience obtained while teaching with a non-traditional certification in special education issued in accordance with the provisions of 210:20-9-105 shall not count toward the one year experience requirement;

(2) Has earned at least a bachelor's degree from a college or university whose accreditation is recognized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and has attained a cumulative grade point average of not less than 2.5 on a 4.0 scale;

- (3) Has passed all of the following teacher competency examinations adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation prior to July 1, 2014, or adopted by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability on and after July 1, 2014:
 - (A) The Oklahoma General Education Test (OGET);
 - (B) The Oklahoma Subject Area Test (OSAT) in Early Childhood, Elementary Education, or Special Education; and
 - (C) The Oklahoma Professional Teaching Exam (OPTE) (PK-8);
- (4) Has on file with the State Board of Education a current Oklahoma criminal history record from the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation as well as a national fingerprint-based criminal history record provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Upon receipt of the Oklahoma criminal history record, the Board may issue a temporary credential which shall be effective until receipt of the national fingerprint-based criminal history record. The person applying for a credential shall be responsible for the cost of the criminal history records;
- (5) Has made application for teacher certification to the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

~~(e)~~(d) **Standard teaching certificate - paraprofessional.** The State Department of Education shall issue a standard teaching certificate to individuals who have met all of the requirements of (b) of this section and met all of the following requirements:

- (1) The applicant has successfully completed at least one (1) full school year (i.e., two consecutive semesters, three consecutive trimesters, or four consecutive quarters) of teaching service in a public or private school accredited by the State Board of Education or a private school accrediting organization approved by the Board. The full school year (or the equivalent in consecutive school terms) of required teaching experience must be completed in one school district or accredited private school;
- (2) The applicant provides at least two (2) favorable recommendations for granting a standard teaching certificate to the applicant from:
 - (A) ~~A~~The superintendent of a school district board of education where the applicant has served as a teacher, or the principal of a school site where the applicant has served as a teacher; and
 - (B) The chair or director of the accredited teacher preparation program in which the applicant completed the coursework requirements set forth in (3) of this subsection.
- (3) Within three (3) years of initial issuance of the provisional teaching certificate in accordance with the provisions of ~~(b)~~(c) of this Section, the applicant has successfully completed twelve (12) semester hours of professional education coursework from an institution of higher education whose accreditation is recognized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The twelve (12) hours of coursework required by this paragraph shall consist of coursework that:
 - (A) Is offered in a teacher preparation program that has been accredited by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation prior to July 1, 2014 or accredited by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability on and after July 1, 2014;
 - (B) Is related to the area of teacher certification sought;
 - (C) Includes a minimum of three (3) semester hours in reading instruction.

~~(d)~~(e) **Reporting.** Any individual who has been issued a provisional certificate in accordance with the provisions of ~~(b)~~(c) of this Section shall be reported on the certified personnel report and be considered as any other certified employee.