

SIMON ISSUES STATEMENT REGARDING NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REQUIREMENTS FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS

Deputy Secretary of Education Ray Simon today issued the following statement regarding No Child Left Behind and the time frame within which all paraprofessionals working in Title I-funded programs must meet certain qualifications.

"No Child Left Behind is built upon a promise: all children deserve the opportunity to learn from a highly qualified teacher. The law states that all teachers and paraprofessionals must be highly qualified. Teachers must demonstrate their competency by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Paraprofessionals must show competency no later than four years after the law's enactment, or January 8, 2006, which is the middle of the school year.

"It's unusual to have a deadline in the middle of the school year, and we believe that the paraprofessional and highly qualified teacher provisions should be consistent. The Department will continue to be supportive of states, school districts and schools, in implementing these particular requirements. Therefore, the Department will align its monitoring and enforcement efforts of states for both the highly qualified teacher and paraprofessional provisions of the law. This will ensure a more efficient, effective and coordinated method of monitoring state efforts in these areas while ensuring that all children are provided with the resources the law provides them."