



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— *Missouri public schools: the best choice. . .the best results!* —

October 15, 2010

Dear School Administrator:

A compliance monitoring finding reinforced the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requirement for state education agencies to make determinations regarding the percent of courses taught in districts by teachers who are highly qualified and to notify districts that do not meet the threshold. NCLB requires 100% of the core courses in a district to be assigned to and taught by teachers who are fully certificated in the subject(s) they are teaching and have demonstrated competence in the core area through one or more approved methods. Data provided by your district for the school year 2009-10 indicate that not all core courses were taught by teachers who were highly qualified to teach those courses as required under the NCLB Act. The state-established district Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO) currently requires at least 100% of all core courses to be taught by Highly Qualified Teachers (HQT). According to the data you reported for 2009-2010, only --- percent of the core courses in your district were taught by teachers who were HQT.

As a result of this data, your local report card will be updated to reflect the reported percentage of courses taught by teachers who are HQT. There are several actions you must take to fulfill your responsibility under the federal law. You must include in your district's comprehensive improvement plan strategies which ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. Additionally, you must identify the reasons preventing your district from having 100% of its courses taught by teachers who are HQT. You must then include strategies in the plan to address the major issues keeping your district from reaching 100% HQT. Some of the most frequent strategies address the following:

- Retaining teachers who are HQT,
- Ensuring that persons making teacher course assignments are aware of the HQT requirements prior to assigning courses,
- Informing teachers of HQT requirements and assisting them in becoming highly qualified, and
- Instituting a screening tool to ensure that all teaching vacancies are filled by teachers who are highly qualified—you may not fund any teacher who is not

highly qualified with Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds.

The two groups of teachers most often found to not meet the HQT standards are teachers with lifetime certifications and special education teachers. Many of these teachers can become HQT once they are aware of the specific requirements. For instance, some districts sent in HOUSSE forms for Special Education teachers focusing on demonstrating competence in the area of Special Education. In addition to being HQT in Special Education, the Special Education teacher must also demonstrate competence in any subject area for which he/she is the teacher of record. In the elementary school this is most easily accomplished by also having elementary education certification. In the secondary school, the Special Education teacher of record needs to demonstrate competence in each subject area for which he/she is the teacher of record. The following site is available to administrators and teachers.

<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/fedprog/grantmgmnt/HighlyQualifiedTeacherIndex.html>

If you need a list of the courses in your district taught by teachers who are not highly qualified to teach the course, please send your request through the following site (be sure to include your district name and county-district code): webreplyfedpro@dese.mo.gov. Questions related to this letter should be directed to the Federal Compliance supervisor serving your district. Thank you in advance for your cooperation in helping assure that 100% of the core courses in your district are taught by teachers who are HQT.

Sincerely,

Margie Vandeven
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Quality Schools

c: Federal Programs Coordinator