



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

TO: Superintendent of Schools or School Administrators
FROM: Bette Morff, Coordinator, Federal Grants and Financial Management
DATE: October 1, 2009
RE: NCLB Requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires that all public elementary and secondary teachers employed by the LEA who teach a core academic subject (English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, the arts, and social studies) be “highly-qualified.” NCLB defines highly-qualified teachers as those with at least a bachelor’s degree, full state certification in the subject area and grade level in which they teach, and documentation of content expertise.

Based on a monitoring review by the U. S. Department of Education (USDE), we have been asked to review our process of determining compliance with the highly-qualified teacher (HQT) requirement. We must establish appropriate HQT requirements for elementary special education teachers who teach core academic content classes. Elementary special education teachers entering the profession as new teachers and who teach core content must pass the State’s test of elementary content (Praxis test code 0011 Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment) before they can be counted as highly qualified. Elementary special education teachers who have been in the profession for more than one year must either pass the State’s elementary content test or complete Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) before they can be counted as highly qualified.

We have been asked to review our determination of HQT for the past three school years 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009. We have populated a HOUSSE form for each special education teacher who did not meet HQT based on our data for each of these years. Therefore, one teacher may have up to three HOUSSE forms. Typically, the HOUSSE form has been used to verify content expertise of veteran teachers who did not take the Praxis. We believe that many of the elementary special education teachers will not be able to meet the point criteria on the HOUSSE form. If that is the case, the teacher will need to pass the Praxis to show content expertise before they can meet the HQT criteria.

The USDE also cited Missouri for counting teachers with provisional licenses or temporary certification as highly qualified. Teachers with provisional licenses or temporary certification will need to be able to obtain full state certification in the subject area and grade level in which they teach before they can be considered as meeting the HQT requirements. We have included the HOUSSE forms for these teachers for the past three years. However, we believe that most of these teachers will not meet the point criteria on the HOUSSE form.

The enclosed summary sheet lists the teachers in your district who have assignments for which they are qualified under Missouri regulations, but who may not meet the HQT requirements. This list shows teachers in question for the past three school years (2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009). If the teacher has a bachelor’s degree, full state certification and is able to document content expertise by

meeting the criteria on the HOUSSE form, check “Yes.” Their status as highly qualified teachers in the subject area will be established. If the teacher has a bachelor’s degree, full state certification and is not able to document content expertise by meeting the criteria on the HOUSSE form, check “NO.” If the teacher does not have full state certification, or does not have a bachelor’s degree check “NO.”

If a teacher is able to document expertise through the HOUSSE, the form for the educator and content areas reviewed is to be completed and kept on file in the district. Please note that it asks for an educator’s signature. If that person is no longer in the district, or it would be difficult to acquire the signature, a district representative’s signature on the summary page is acceptable. The LEA should keep the HOUSSE form, along with the appropriate documentation of the criteria used to meet the points required, at the district to be reviewed during federal program monitoring visits.

Title I.A and Title II.A funds may be used to help all teachers in the LEA meet the HQT criteria. The funds may be used to pay for the Praxis fee or for college courses to help teachers reach the HQT criteria.

Please give this matter your immediate attention. The only item to be returned to our office is the summary form on which you should check “Yes” or “No” to indicate each teacher’s status. The summary form is to be completed and mailed to Federal Grants Management, PO Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102 or faxed to 573-526-6698 **before Friday, October 30, 2009.** If you have questions about this material, please contact Tawanda Edwards, Julia Cowell, or Theresa Villmer in the Federal Grants Management section at 573-526-5658.