

SUBJECT: NCLB Requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers

LISTSERV MESSAGE DATE: October 8, 2009

The federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires all public elementary and secondary teachers employed by the local education agency (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), the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) must review our process of determining compliance with the highly-qualified teacher (HQT) requirement for all public elementary and secondary teachers who teach a core academic subject. Although a teacher of core academic subjects may meet the appropriate requirements to teach in Missouri, the teacher must also meet the HQT requirements.

The following areas were specifically mentioned in our monitoring review and need to be remedied by DESE:

1. 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. These teachers must meet all HQT requirements before they can be considered highly-qualified.
2. Elementary special education teachers who teach core academic content classes must document content expertise. 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.
3. All teachers of core academic subjects hired after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year and teaching in a program supported with Title I.A funds must be highly qualified.
4. If the LEA has a teacher in a Title I school who does not meet the HQT requirements, the LEA must provide each parent “timely notice that the parent’s child has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by, a teacher who is not highly qualified.”
5. If the LEA has a teacher paid with Title I.A or Title II.A funds, the teacher must meet HQT requirements. There are no exceptions to this requirement.

Title I.A and Title II.A funds may be used to help all teachers in the LEA meet the HQT criteria. These funds may be used to pay for the Praxis fee or for college courses to help teachers reach the HQT criteria. When a teacher passes the elementary Praxis II, they should request to add the elementary education to their certificate in order to meet HQT. The form to add an area to a certificate is on the right hand side of the certification page at:

<http://www.dese.mo.gov/divteachqual/teachcert/index.html>

Additional guidance on the HQT is available at: <http://www.ed.gov/teachers/nclbguide/improve-quality.html>

Please review the HQT status of teachers in your LEA who teach core academic subjects for the 2009-2010 school year. If you have a teacher that does not meet the HQT requirements and who teaches in a Title I school, please make sure you notify parents immediately. Keep documentation of parent notification on file at the district.

We understand the change in our process of determining Highly Qualified Teachers to meet NCLB requirements involves teachers and should be treated with utmost care and respect. If you have questions about this information, please contact one of the following: bette.morff@dese.mo.gov; julia.cowell@dese.mo.gov; theresa.villmer@dese.mo.gov.

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