

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001 (NCLB)
HIGHLY QUALIFIED (HQ) TEACHERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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General Information

1. **What is the definition of a highly qualified teacher?**

The requirement that teachers be highly qualified applies to all public early childhood, elementary, middle, or secondary school teachers employed by a local school district who teach a core academic subject. Teachers must be highly qualified by June 30, 2006. “Highly qualified” means that the teacher:

A. Holds a minimum of a bachelor’s degree; and

B. Has obtained full Oklahoma certification or holds an Oklahoma teaching license and does not have certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and

C. Has demonstrated subject-matter competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, in a manner determined by the State.

2. **What is meant by “core academic subjects?”**

The term “core academic subjects” means early childhood education, elementary education, English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics and government, economics, arts (art and music), history, and geography.

3. **May a teacher who is highly qualified in one state also be considered highly qualified in other states?**

Each state uses its own standards and procedures to determine whether those who teach within that state are highly qualified. Just as each state determines when and on what basis to provide full certification or licensure to teachers already certified in other states, each state determines when and on what basis to accept the determination of another state that a particular teacher is highly qualified. Oklahoma will accept out-of-state content testing if the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation has determined and documented that the test is comparable to an Oklahoma content test. Oklahoma issues an Oklahoma certificate to out-of-state teachers holding National Board Certification and accepts National Board Certification to meet the Highly Qualified requirements.

4. **Are local school districts required to inform parents about the quality of a school’s teachers?**

Yes. At the beginning of each school year, a local school district that accepts Title I, Part A funding must notify parents of students in Title I schools that they can request information regarding their child’s teacher, including, at a minimum: (1) whether the teacher has met the state requirements for licensure and certification for the grade levels

and subject-matters in which the teacher provides instruction; and (2) whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or their provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and (3) the college major and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and (4) whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals, and if so, their qualifications.

In addition, each Title I school must provide each parent "timely notice that the parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified."

Which Teachers Must Be Highly Qualified?

5. **Do teachers need to meet the highly qualified requirements if they are not teaching a core academic subject?**

No, only teachers who teach core academic courses are required to meet the definition of a highly qualified teacher.

6. **Are early childhood or pre-kindergarten teachers subject to the highly qualified teacher requirement?**

In Oklahoma, four-year-old pre-kindergarten programs are accredited as a grade level within the Pre-K – 12 public school system. The requirements that teachers need to be highly qualified do not apply to early childhood or pre-kindergarten teachers unless a state includes early childhood or pre-kindergarten as part of its elementary and secondary school system.

7. **Do teachers who primarily teach English language learners need to meet the highly qualified requirements?**

Yes, if the teachers of English language learners provide instruction in core academic subjects. In addition, teachers of English language learners who teach in instructional programs funded under ESEA Title III must be fluent in English and any other language in which they provide instruction, including having written and oral communication skills.

8. **Are charter school teachers required to be highly qualified under NCLB?**

Yes, charter school teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree and must demonstrate competence in the core academic areas in which they teach. Charter school teachers must meet the certification requirements established in the state's public charter school law, which may differ from the requirements for full state certification. In Oklahoma, state certification is not required by law, therefore a charter school teacher does not have to hold an Oklahoma certificate to be Highly Qualified.

9. **Do short- and long-term substitute teachers need to meet the highly qualified requirements?**

Substitutes take the place of teachers and, therefore, play a critical role in the classroom and the school. It is vital that they be able to perform their duties well. It is strongly recommended that substitutes, especially long-term substitute teachers, meet the requirements for a highly qualified teacher. In establishing a definition for a long-term substitute, the local school districts should bear in mind that the law requires that parents of children in Title I schools must be notified if their child has been assigned to, or has been taught four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

10. **Do the highly qualified teacher requirements apply to teachers who work in juvenile institutions, correctional institutions, and other alternative educational settings?**

Section 1119 of Title I requires each state educational agency (SEA) that receives Title I, Part A funds to develop a plan to ensure that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects within the state are highly qualified. This requirement extends to all teachers of core academic subjects who are employed by agencies or entities under the authority of the SEA. As a result, it applies to teachers employed by the local school district as well as teachers employed by the SEA or other entities under the SEA's authority. Thus, if juvenile institutions, correctional institutions, and other alternative educational settings are under the authority of local school districts under state law or under the authority of the state educational agency, teachers of core academic subjects employed by those entities must be highly qualified.

11. **If a state accredits a private school for the education of children living in the state, does the "highly qualified teacher" requirements of NCLB apply to teachers in that private school?**

No. Under NCLB, the highly qualified teacher requirements apply only to public school teachers.

12. **If a highly qualified teacher is not available locally to teach a certain subject, may a district use a highly qualified teacher who is located elsewhere to teach that subject through distance learning?**

Yes, highly qualified teachers may teach "virtual" classes through distance learning. For example, rural districts might take advantage of Internet connectivity to allow students to take advanced science, mathematics, or foreign language courses from highly qualified teachers throughout or outside of the state. The highly qualified teacher must be responsible for providing the direct instruction through distance learning and be assisted by on-site personnel (e.g., teacher aides, paraprofessionals, or teachers who are not highly qualified in that subject) responsible for supporting instruction provided by the highly qualified teacher.

13. **Must a college or university faculty member who teaches core academic subjects to secondary school students be highly qualified?**

A faculty member must be highly qualified if the local school district employs him or her. If, on the other hand, a local school district (1) pays tuition to an institution of higher education to permit students to take core academic courses at the college or university, or (2) acquires the teaching services of the college or university faculty member at the local school district through a contract or a memorandum of understanding with that individual's institution of higher education, then the faculty member is not an employee of the local school district and is not subject to the highly qualified teacher requirements.

14. **Can a state consider an applied mathematics or science course that is team taught by a highly qualified mathematics or science teacher and career and technical education teacher to be taught by a highly qualified teacher?**

If the highly qualified teacher of mathematics and science is collaborating with the career and technical education teacher in the design of the lessons, teaching the mathematics or science concepts and grading the assignments and assessments, the course can be considered as taught by a highly qualified teacher. While the career and technical education teacher may be in a better position to set the context for the application of a particular mathematics or science context, either teacher may introduce the concept. The concept must, however, be thoroughly taught by the mathematics or science teacher.

Middle School Teachers

15. **How does a state determine whether teachers of core academic subjects in Grades 6, 7, and 8 must meet the subject-area competency requirements for elementary school or for middle school teachers?**

The intent of the law is to ensure that each teacher of a core academic subject has sufficient subject-matter knowledge and skills to instruct effectively in his or her assigned subjects, regardless of whether the school is configured as an elementary or a middle school. For instance, 8th grade algebra teachers must have the same requisite skills and knowledge whether they teach in elementary schools or middle schools.

16. **May a teacher with middle school certification be considered highly qualified?**

Yes, in a state that issues middle level certification, teachers holding such a certificate would be considered highly qualified if they hold a bachelor's degree and either pass a rigorous state-approved test of their knowledge in each of the core academic subjects they will teach, or complete an academic major or coursework equivalent to an academic major, or attain an advanced degree in each subject they teach, or hold certification through National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the subject

taught, or demonstrate competency in each subject they teach through their State HOUSSE procedures.

Special Education

17. Must special education teachers who teach core academic subjects be highly qualified?

Yes. NCLB requires all teachers of core academic subjects, including special education teachers, to be highly qualified. The November 2004 reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reinforces this requirement. The reauthorized IDEA adds the requirement that in order to be highly qualified, special education teachers must hold a special education certificate or be licensed as a special education teacher in addition to holding a bachelor's degree and demonstrating subject-matter competency.

18. If a special education teacher teaches core academic subjects exclusively to students who are being assessed against alternate academic achievement standards, at what subject matter level must the special education teacher be highly qualified?

The 2004 IDEA amendments provide that if a special education teacher teaches core academic subjects exclusively to students who are being assessed against alternate achievement standards, the teacher must meet the highly qualified requirements for elementary school teachers and for instruction above the elementary level have subject-matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided.

19. Must a special education teacher who teaches core academic subjects exclusively to students with disabilities be highly qualified in all subjects they teach?

Yes. Special education teachers in this category, whether new to the profession or not, must be highly qualified. Special education teachers who are not new to the profession must demonstrate competence in all core subjects they teach, just as all teachers not new to the profession do. States may, however, develop a multisubject HOUSSE that allows teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency in each of the core academic subjects they teach.

The 2004 IDEA amendments provide that special education teachers new to the profession who teach multiple core academic subjects and are highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired, have two additional years after the date of hire to become highly qualified in all other academic subjects they teach, including through use of a core academic HOUSSE.

20. **What activities may special education teachers carry out if they are not highly qualified in the core academic content area being taught?**

There are many activities that special education teachers may carry out that would not, by themselves, require those teachers to be highly qualified in a particular subject matter. Special educators who do not directly instruct students in any core academic subjects or who provide only consultation to highly qualified teachers of core academic subjects in adapting curricula, using behavioral supports and interventions, or selecting appropriate accommodations do not need to demonstrate subject-matter competency in those subjects. These special educators could also assist students with study skills or organizational skills and reinforce instruction that the child has already received from a highly qualified teacher in that core academic subject.

Paraprofessional

21. **What are the requirements in No Child Left Behind for paraprofessionals or teacher assistants?**

Paraprofessionals who provide instructional support services in a school can be a valuable resource in any school setting. No Child Left Behind sets clear guidelines for academic qualifications for individuals assisting in instruction in Title I funded programs. The law allows those teacher assistants to support instruction if they have met certain academic requirements. They must have at least an associate's degree or have completed at least two years of college, or meet a rigorous standard of demonstrating quality, through a formal state or local assessment.

However, paraprofessionals in Title I schools do not need to meet these requirements if their role does not involve instructional support. Thus, paraprofessionals who serve only as hall monitors, interpreters, or parental involvement aides do not have to meet the same academic requirements. Similarly, if an assistant working with special education students does not provide any instructional support (such as one who solely provides personal care services), that person is not considered a paraprofessional under Title I, and the academic requirements do not apply.

NCLB required that paraprofessionals demonstrate competency no later than four years after the law's enactment, or January 8, 2006. **On June 17, 2005, Deputy Secretary of Education, Ray Simon announced that this deadline would be extended to the end of the 2005-2006 school year, bringing it into conformity with the deadline by which teachers of core subjects must be highly qualified.**

High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE)

22. **What is meant by High Objective Uniforms State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) procedures?**

As noted in NCLB, states have the option of developing a method by which teachers can demonstrate competency in each subject they teach on the basis of a “high objective uniform state standard of evaluation” (HOUSSE). This standard must be one that “ provides objective coherent information about the teacher’s attainment of content knowledge in the academic subject(s) in which a teacher teaches.”

The states can establish a process to evaluate teacher knowledge and ability based on a HOUSSE that meets each of the following criteria:

- A. Be set by the state for both grade-appropriate academic subject-matter knowledge and teaching skills; and
- B. Be aligned with challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards and developed in consultation with core content specialists, teachers, principals, and school administrators; and
- C. Provide objective, coherent information about the teacher’s attainment of core content knowledge in the academic subjects in which a teacher teaches; and
- D. Be applied uniformly to all teachers in the same academic subject and teaching in the same grade level throughout the State; and
- E. Take into consideration, but not be based primarily on, the time the teacher has been teaching in the academic subject; and
- F. Be made available to the public upon request.

23. **May States offer HOUSSE procedures as a way for experienced teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency in the subjects they teach after the 2005-2006 school year?**

Yes. Even after the end of the 2005-06 school year, States may continue to offer HOUSSE as a way of determining that individual teachers have the subject-matter competence they need to be highly qualified in each subject they teach. For example, a State's HOUSSE can still be used after 2006 to demonstrate subject-matter knowledge to be highly qualified for: teachers highly qualified in one subject area who are asked to teach an additional subject for which they have not yet demonstrated subject area competency; teachers hired from other states; or teachers rehired after periods of work in other professions or retirement.

24. **Does a core academic subject listed on the teaching certificate make a teacher highly qualified?**

No. It means they hold an appropriate certificate. The teacher would have to document being highly qualified by building a HOUSSE, having tested in the subject, being a National Board certified teacher, etc.

25. **Do all areas of advanced certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards make a teacher automatically highly qualified?**

A teacher is automatically highly qualified at the middle/secondary level if the national board certification is in the specific core academic subject area the teacher teaches.

Example: “ English Language Arts/Early Adolescence.”

A teacher holding national board certification in a non-core academic subject may become highly qualified by counting the national board certification within their HOUSSE.

Example: Generalist/Early Childhood.

26. **Will college course work at the college of education count when building a HOUSSE?**

No. An EDUC, CIED, or any other education prefix is not acceptable except for reading.

Examples of acceptable core academic prefixes are: POLSCI, ENG, MATH, etc.

27. **Can psychology or sociology count when building a HOUSSE in social studies?**

No. NCLB specifically identified the social studies core academic areas as civics and government, economics, history, and geography. This is in contrast to the other core academic areas of science, mathematics, language arts, etc. Therefore, when counting coursework for social studies only these specific core academic social studies areas may be counted.

28. **Can college course work in Humanities count for any core academic subjects when building a HOUSSE?**

Yes. When a teacher is teaching a course for art or music credit, they may count Humanities when building a HOUSSE.

29. **Can college course work in speech, drama, journalism, or communications count when building a HOUSSE in language arts?**

No. These courses are not considered core academic subjects.

30. **Can you count out-of-state years of teaching experience when building a HOUSSE?**

No. Each state must develop their HOUSSE based on their state standards.

31. **When building a HOUSSE, can service in the content area (Column 3) or awards and publications in the content area (Column 4) count if they are accrued out of state?**

No. Each state must develop their HOUSSE based on their state standards.

32. **Can you count out of state professional development when building a HOUSSE?**

No. Each state must develop their HOUSSE based on their state standards.