

## NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER FLEXIBILITY UPDATE

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) released additional No Child Left Behind (NCLB) flexibility guidelines for highly qualified teachers on March 15, 2004.

Michigan has been diligently working to implement the various provisions of NCLB by the 2005-06 deadline. The new flexibility will allow Michigan to expand the number of teachers who will now meet the NCLB highly qualified requirements without additional coursework or testing.

### NEW FLEXIBILITY

#### I. Rural Teachers

Approximately one-third—or almost 5,000—of all school districts in the United States are considered rural. As USDOE officials have traveled the country listening to teachers and state and district officials, they frequently have heard that the highly qualified teacher provisions of the No Child Left Behind law don't adequately accommodate the special challenges faced by teachers in small, rural districts. Often, the teachers in these areas are required to teach more than one academic subject. This new flexibility is designed to recognize this challenge and provide additional time for these teachers to prove that they are highly qualified.

- Under this new policy teachers in eligible, rural districts who are highly qualified in at least one of the subjects that they are assigned to teach will have three years from now (until June 30, 2007) to become highly qualified in the additional subjects they teach. They must also be provided professional development, intense supervision or structured mentoring to become highly qualified in those additional subjects. Eligible rural districts are those that have 600 or less average daily student enrollment or 10 or less persons per square mile **and** have either a U.S. census designation of category 7 or 8.
- Eligible rural teachers may also use the High Objective Uniform State-Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) options such as the content portfolio to demonstrate that they are highly qualified in other subjects that they are assigned to teach. This flexibility also applies to teachers who are new to the profession who are employed by eligible rural schools/districts.

#### II. Science Teachers

Science teachers, like rural teachers, are often needed to teach in more than one field of science. In science, where demand for teachers is so high, the USDOE is issuing additional flexibility for teachers to demonstrate that they are highly qualified.

- Now, states may determine—based on their current certification requirements—to allow science teachers to demonstrate that they are highly qualified in “broad field” science or individual fields of science (such as physics, biology, chemistry, or earth/space science).
- The MDE has determined that middle school and high school experienced/veteran and new teachers who hold the Science (DX) or the new Integrated Science (DI) endorsement based on having completed a major meet the NCLB highly qualified designation for each of the individual subjects covered by the endorsement. Those teachers who hold either endorsement based on having completed **a minor and have**

**passed the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC)** general science subject area examination are also considered highly qualified under NCLB. Those teachers who hold the science endorsement based on having completed a minor, **but were not required to pass the MTTC general science test**, may take the MTTC test or use one of the NCLB or HOUSSE options for demonstrating that they are highly qualified to teach the science classes to which they are assigned.

- It is **inappropriate** to assign a teacher with an individual science subject endorsement such as chemistry, or biology to teach a general science class. Only a teacher with the general science (DX or DI) endorsement can be assigned to teach a general science class or course.

### III. Social Studies

Social studies teachers in Michigan either have the newer Social Studies (RX) or Social Science (CX) endorsement. The Social Studies endorsement program replaced the Social Science endorsement program in 1995 with revised standards and is limited to four core academic subjects (history, geography, economics, and political science/government/civics).

- The MDE has determined that middle and high school experienced/veteran and new teachers who hold the Social Studies (RX) endorsement based on having completed a major or minor meet the NCLB highly qualified designation for each of the individual subjects covered by that endorsement (these teachers are required to pass the MTTC social studies examination prior to certification/endorsement). Those teachers who hold the Social Science (CX) endorsement based on having completed a major, which included content coursework in history, geography, political science and economics are also highly qualified to teach in each of the subjects covered by that endorsement.
- Teachers who hold the social science (CX) endorsement based on having completed a minor must use one of the NCLB or HOUSSE options for demonstrating that they are highly qualified to teach the social science/social studies classes to which they are assigned.
- It is **inappropriate** to assign a teacher with an individual social studies or social science subject endorsement such as history, or geography to teach a general social studies class. Only a teacher with the social studies (RX) or social science (CX) endorsement can be assigned to teach a general social studies class or course.

### ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION FROM THE MDE

#### Special Education

A middle or high school special education teacher who is appropriately certificated for his/her special education assignment and responsible for direct instruction in any of the core academic subjects may be considered highly qualified if he/she has taken and passed the MTTC general elementary education examination. Successful passage of the general elementary education examination provides the teacher an opportunity to demonstrate competence based on the academic content and achievement level of the special population served by the teacher. Current special education teachers with a secondary teaching certificate may also use the HOUSSE options to demonstrate competence as a special education teacher.

The special education teacher “new to the profession” who has taken and passed the MTTC general elementary education examination, in addition to other required endorsement

examinations, may be considered to be highly qualified for an all subjects special education classroom assignment.

### **Elementary Teachers**

All Michigan elementary certificated teachers (grades K-5) are considered highly qualified because of the rigor of the elementary programs offered by Michigan teacher preparation institutions. These programs are the equivalent of an academic major in elementary education.

### **Master's Degrees that may be Used to Meet Highly Qualified Requirements**

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), the Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Master's in Educational Technology, or a master's degree in the specific content area are appropriate for demonstrating that the teacher is highly qualified to teach the subjects to which he/she is assigned.

### **Master's Degrees that may not be Used to Meet Highly Qualified Requirements**

Master's degrees in educational psychology, psychology, counseling, educational leadership/administration or other non-educational/content related degrees are not appropriate for meeting NCLB highly qualified requirements.

### **English as a Second Language (ESL) and Bilingual Education**

In accordance with NCLB teachers of English language learners who provide instruction in core academic subjects must meet highly qualified requirements. 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. These teachers must also hold the appropriate endorsement on their Michigan teaching certificates in either ESL or Bi-Lingual education.

### **Middle Schools**

A current middle school teacher assigned to teach a core academic subject based on a K-8 (all subjects) or 7-8 (all subjects) designation on his/her teaching certificate may use one of the NCLB provisions/options for demonstrating that he/she is highly qualified:

1. Take the MTTC subject area examination, or
2. Complete coursework that would be the equivalent of a major in the subject, or
3. Complete an advanced degree with a major in the subject area, or
4. Achieve National Board certification in appropriate subject and grade ranges, or
5. Meet one of Michigan's HOUSSE options

### **Middle School Team Teaching**

Middle school teachers who are assigned to team teach can only teach subjects in which they hold an endorsement on their teaching certificate and meet NCLB highly qualified requirements.

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