

TO: LEA Staff
Field Service Center Staff

FROM: Assistant Commissioner John W. Scott
Assistant Commissioner Joseph Fisher

RE: Highly Qualified Issues for Special Education Teachers

DATE: January 6, 2005

From the first Federal Guidance, it has been clear that only Special Education teachers who are the “teachers of record” for core academic subject areas must document “Highly Qualified” status by the same methods available to a regular division teacher. Special educators who do not directly instruct students in core academic subjects or who provide only consultation to highly qualified teachers in adapting curricula, using behavioral supports and interventions or selecting appropriate accommodations, do not need to demonstrate subject matter competency in those subjects.

If the Special Education teacher is classified as “self-contained” (being the teacher of record for the same students in all subjects) he/she would use one of the available options in order to demonstrate HQ status in all subject areas....

“Current Multi-subject Teachers

Current teachers do not have to return to school or take a test in every subject to demonstrate that they meet highly qualified requirements. No Child Left Behind allows states to create an alternative method (High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation or HOUSSE) for teachers not new to the field – as determined by each state – to certify they know the subject they teach. But, for multiple subject teachers, this alternative process could become unnecessarily protracted and repetitive as they go through the HOUSSE process for each subject.

- *Under March 2004 guidelines, states may streamline this evaluation process by developing a method for current, multi-subject teachers to demonstrate through one process that they are highly qualified in each of their subjects and maintain the same high standards in subject matter mastery.”*

On the other hand, if the special education teacher is considered a “content specialist,” he/she must complete an HQ option for each subject for which they are the teacher of record. For example, a special educator who is the teacher of record for math and science would need to complete documentation for one of the HQ options for each of these two content areas. However, the teacher would not need to use the same option for each subject. They could use a Praxis Exam for one, the Professional Matrix for another, or the revised Framework for either one.

Please recall that teachers using the Professional Matrix option for more than one content area can use points for experience, positive evaluations, professional leadership, etc., multiple times. They would need to change only the content-specific sections for each subject in which they wish to document HQ status.

[A chart of example scenarios is attached]

Special Education “Highly Qualified” Examples...

Teaching Assignment	Core Academic Subjects	“Highly Qualified” requirements
Inclusion Teacher (K-12)	- Any Subject (Direct Instruction/ Facilitate Modifications)	None (Not teacher of record)
SE “Gateway” classes (9-12)	- English/Algebra/Biology “Pre/Post <u>Intervention</u> ”	None (Elective: Not required)
Resource Teacher (K-12) (Pull-out to <u>reinforce</u> classroom instruction)	- Any core academic subject	None (<u>Not</u> teacher of record)
Resource Teacher (K-12) (Pull-out... main delivery of instruction)	- Any core academic subject	Must be H.Q. in <u>each</u> core academic subject
Self-Contained (K-12) Comp. Devel. Classes (CDC) (Also – Extended Resource)	- <u>Multiple</u> core academic subjects	Must be H.Q. (like a K-6 “self-contained” teacher...one option covers all)
Self-Contained (K-12) Varied disabilities – removed from regular class due to behavior	- <u>Multiple</u> core academic subjects	Must be H.Q. (like a K-6 “self-contained” teacher...one option covers all)
Self-Contained (K-12) Alternative School	- <u>Multiple</u> core academic subjects	Must be H.Q. (like a K-6 “self-contained” teacher...one option covers all)
Homebound (K-12) (Teacher of Record)	- <u>Multiple</u> core academic subjects	Must be H.Q. - <u>only</u> if teacher of record! (like a K-6 “self-contained” teacher...one option covers all)

NOTES:

1. NCLB applies to grades K-12 only. [Not Pre-K]
2. All teachers in column one above must hold an appropriate SE endorsement.