

Series 2002-2003

Circular Letter: C-16

TO: Superintendents of Schools
Principals of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: October 10, 2002

SUBJECT: HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AS DEFINED IN THE *NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT OF 2001*

In the May 31, 2002, and August 15, 2002, Circular Letters (see C-9, Series 2002-2003), an overview was provided of the requirements for highly qualified teachers as defined in the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. A number of districts have asked for further clarification of the new requirements as they relate to “highly qualified” teachers.

1. Definitions

The term “highly qualified teacher” only applies to those who teach core academic subjects as defined below.

Core Academic Subjects

Core academic subjects are English, mathematics, reading/language arts, sciences, world languages, arts (includes music), history, geography, civics and government, and economics.

These would include the following Connecticut certification endorsements:

- All early Childhood;
- All elementary;
- Middle School 4-8 and Middle School in the content areas identified above;
- All secondary in content areas identified above;
- All world Languages;
- Remedial Reading and Remedial Language Arts;
- Bilingual Education;
- TESOL;
- Special Education; and,
- Reading/Language Arts Consultant who teaches reading.

Highly Qualified Teachers

“A highly qualified teacher holds full state certification as a teacher (including certification through alternative routes) or has passed a state teacher licensing exam and holds state certification.”

Those teachers new to the profession (no public school teaching experience), who are teaching core academic subjects, must:

- Hold at least a bachelor’s degree; **and**
- At the elementary level, demonstrate by passing a state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading/language arts, writing, mathematics and other areas of the basic elementary school curriculum (in Connecticut, this is PRAXIS I in reading, writing and mathematics and PRAXIS II elementary tests);
- At the middle and high school levels, demonstrate a high level of competency by: passing a state test in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches (PRAXIS II or the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL]); or have successfully completed, in each academic subject in which the teacher teaches an undergraduate major or a graduate degree or coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major or advanced certification or credentials.

Those teachers not new to the profession and teaching core academic subjects must:

- Hold at least a bachelor’s degree; **and**
- Meet the applicable requirements in the paragraph above; **or**
- Another alternative is based on the teacher’s demonstration of competence in all the core academic subjects taught based on a “high, objective, uniform state standard of evaluation.” If your district teacher evaluation system is based on the Connecticut teacher evaluation and professional development guidelines, was reviewed and critiqued using the Department’s Peer Review process in 2001, and the evaluation includes subject matter knowledge assessment, then this standard will have been met (pending the United States Department of Education approval). Districts would particularly need to evaluate the subject matter competence, based on the *Common Core of Teaching*, using both the: 1) foundational skills and competencies; and 2) the discipline-based professional standards, of teachers teaching core academic subjects who are working under a 1-8, PreK-8 or 4-8 middle school endorsement.

“A teacher is not highly qualified if certification requirements were waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis.”

Based on Connecticut’s certification rules, teachers teaching the core academic subjects working under the following certificates/permits are not highly qualified according to the federal definitions:

- Durational Shortage Area Permit (DSAP);
- Temporary Authorization for Minor Assignment;
- Nonrenewable Interim Initial Education Certificate;
- Nonrenewable Interim Provisional Education Certificate;
- Interim Initial Education Certificate;

- Interim Provisional Education Certificate;
- Limited Extended Authorization for Early Childhood;
- Substitute Teacher Authorization-Long Term; and,
- Any certified teacher not teaching in his/her endorsement area. (Certification regulations require teachers to teach only in their endorsement area(s) unless a temporary authorization for minor assignment has been requested and approved.)

2. Requirements for Newly Hired and Current Teachers

Newly Hired Teachers in Title I Schools and Programs: 2002-2003

- A local educational agency (LEA) must ensure that all teachers hired after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year to teach core academic subjects in a school or program supported with Title I funds are highly qualified.
- This includes teachers teaching core academic subjects in a “targeted assistance school” who are paid with Title I funds or all teachers teaching core academic subjects in a Title I “schoolwide” program school, regardless of funding.

All Teachers of Core Academic Subjects: 2005-2006

Not later than the end of the 2005-2006 school year, each state that receives Title I funds must ensure that all teachers in the state who teach core academic subjects are highly qualified. This includes all school districts and all schools regardless of receipt of ESEA federal funds.

3. State Requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers

- A State Plan must be developed to ensure that all teachers in the state teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year; and,
- The State Plan must establish annual, measurable objectives for each LEA and school that include, at a minimum, an annual increase in the percentage of teachers highly qualified and that these teachers are receiving high quality, job-embedded professional development. The ultimate goal of meeting federal expectations is that 100 percent of all teachers teaching in core academic subjects are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year and beyond. An LEA that receives Title I funds is responsible for developing an action plan to annually increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers.

4. Notification of Parents

Parental Requests

At the beginning of each school year, LEA’s that receive Title I funds must notify the parents of all children in a school or program supported by Title I funds, that they may request information regarding the professional qualifications of the students’ classroom

teachers. Upon request, this information must be provided in a timely fashion and include, at a minimum:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and certification criteria for the grade level and subject areas taught;
- Whether the teacher is teaching under a DSAP, Minor Assignment, Limited Extended Authorization, Interim certificates or long-term substitute permit;
- Whether the teacher is teaching out of endorsement area;
- The baccalaureate degree major and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field of discipline of the degree; and
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications. (Please see the attached Sample A form for your use at your discretion—but, you must meet the requirements above.)

Parental Right to Know

A school district receiving Title I funds with a school or program supported by Title I funds must provide to each individual parent:

- Information on the level of achievement of their child on the CMT or CAPT (Individual Student Reports for CMT or CAPT [provided by Harcourt Educational Measurement] given to parents fulfills this requirement); and
- Timely notice that their child has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified. (Please see Sample B.)

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Abigail L. Hughes, Associate Commissioner, Division of Evaluation and Research, at abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us or Betty J. Sternberg, Associate Commissioner, Division of Teaching and Learning, at betty.sternberg@po.state.ct.us.

TSS:ahe

Attachments: Sample Form
Sample Letter

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

DISTRICT: _____ **SCHOOL YEAR:** _____

SCHOOL: _____

TEACHER NAME: _____

CERTIFICATION STATUS:

- Full state certification for grade level and subject taught.
- Durational Shortage Area Permit: (minimum of a Bachelor’s degree, 12 semester hours of credit in subject taught, passed basic skills test; must complete all certification requirements within three years).
- Minor Assignment: Holds full certification in a different—but often related—subject and may teach no more than two periods a day in non-certified subject (holds state certification in another subject, minimum of 12 semester hours of credit in subject taught; must complete all certification requirements within two years).
- Non-Renewable Interim Certificate: Valid one year (meets all certification requirements except for state tests).
- Interim Certificate: Valid one year, renewable one year (meets all certification requirements except for required course in special education).
- Limited Extended Authorization for Early Childhood: (minimum of 10 months teaching experience under Early Childhood certificate [nursery to Grade 3]; may teach in Grades 4-6, minimum 12 semester hours of credit in elementary education; must complete all certification requirements within two years.)
- Holds Connecticut certification but not for grade level or subject taught.
- Long-Term Substitute Permit: Valid for one year (holds a bachelor’s degree and has 12 semester hours of credit in the subject taught).
- Regular Substitute Teacher: May not teach in the same classroom more than 40 days (holds a Bachelor’s degree).

DEGREES HELD: Baccalaureate degree major: _____

Graduate degrees: _____
(identify field of discipline) _____

PARAPROFESSIONAL: Your child is receiving services by a paraprofessional.
(Please check one box) Qualifications:
Highest Level of Education: _____
Years of Experience: _____
Other: _____

Your child is not receiving services by a paraprofessional.

Use for teachers not fully certified
or substitute teachers.

SAMPLE B

DATE

INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 1)
INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 2)
INSIDE ADDRESS (Line 3)

Dear "Parent":

In fulfillment of new federal legislation, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, we are informing you that your child, _____, has been taught by a teacher for more than four consecutive weeks who, by federal definition, is not highly qualified, although he/she has been hired by the _____ Public Schools *and is authorized to teach the grade level and subject being taught by the Connecticut State Department of Education. *

The teacher does not hold full Connecticut certification but holds, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree and has met minimum semester hours of coursework in the subject being taught and needs to complete tests and/or additional coursework to become fully certified.

or

Your child is being taught by a substitute teacher (fill in qualifications as appropriate.)

Alternate paragraphs.

Please use the paragraph that is most appropriate.

The District was unable to find and hire a fully certified teacher to fill this position, but will continue to seek a fully certified teacher.

Sincerely,

AUTHOR
TITLE

XXX:xxx

***Note to Superintendent/Principal: Please do not use this phrase if you have a certified teacher providing instruction in an area in which he/she is not certified.**