

Small, Rural School Districts

The Department is seeking further clarification from the USDE for the definition of eligible small, rural districts to determine if there are districts in Florida to which the definition will apply. For a district that meets the definition of an eligible small, rural district, additional flexibility may be provided through extended timelines for meeting the highly qualified designation. The flexibility provides current teachers in eligible small, rural districts who are highly qualified in at least one subject until the end of the 2006-2007 school year to become highly qualified in the additional core academic subjects they teach via one of the appropriate options. Newly hired teachers in an eligible small, rural district who are highly qualified in one subject would have three years from hiring to meet the highly qualified requirements for all core subjects taught. These teachers must be provided professional development, close supervision, and mentoring to assist them in becoming highly qualified in all subjects they teach.

Dance Courses Clarification:

Dance courses are not to be designated core academic courses. Therefore, the requirements for highly qualified do not apply to teachers of dance courses.

Reading Certification in Sixth Grade:

It has been determined that a teacher who has certification in Elementary Education (K-6 or 1-6) and is teaching reading in grades 1-6, or in kindergarten if certified in K-6, is not required to have the Reading Endorsement or Reading certification. This includes sixth grade in an elementary or middle school. Please reference the memorandum dated May 7, 2004, from the Just Read, Florida! Office at <http://info.fldoe.org/dscqi/ds.py/Get/File-2043/EndorsementUpdate.pdf> for more information relating to the Reading Endorsement.

Reading Certification Requirements for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Teachers:

It has been determined that a teacher who has certification in an appropriate Exceptional Student Education (K-12) area to match the ESE table in the Course Code Directory and is teaching reading to ESE students in grades K-6 is not required to have the Reading Endorsement or Reading certification. This includes sixth grade in an elementary or middle school. Additional information relating to the required certification for teaching reading to exceptional education students was provided in a memorandum dated June 15, 2004, and may be viewed at <http://info.fldoe.org/dscqi/ds.py/Get/File-2132/04-129.pdf>.

Core Academic Courses in Middle School Sixth Grade:

A teacher who has certification in Elementary Education (K-6 or 1-6) and is teaching a core academic course in mathematics, science, social science, and English/language arts in sixth grade in an elementary or middle school is not required to have the separate subject area content certifications or the middle grades integrated curriculum certification. Of course, if a teacher meets requirements and chooses to add the additional subject(s) to a valid certificate, that is encouraged and is appropriate.

Note: The Course Code Directory will be revised to reflect that Elementary Education (K-6 or 1-6) certification will continue to be appropriate at the sixth grade level in middle school for core academic courses.

Core Academic Courses for ESE Students in Sixth Grade:

A teacher who has certification in an appropriate exceptional student education (K-12) area to match the ESE table in the Course Code Directory and is teaching a core academic course in mathematics, science, social science, and English/language arts to ESE students in an elementary or middle school sixth grade is not required to have the separate subject area

content certifications or the middle grades integrated curriculum certification. Of course, if a teacher meets requirements and chooses to add the additional subject(s) to a valid certificate, that is encouraged and is appropriate.

Note: The Course Code Directory will be revised to reflect that specified exceptional student education (K-12) certification areas are appropriate at the sixth grade level for core academic courses for ESE students.

Updated Charts for Highly Qualified (HQ) Teacher Requirements:

Four new charts: an elementary level, a middle/secondary level, a K-12 level, and a chart for ESE assignments have been developed to display the basic HQ requirements and the various options for Florida teachers within the current certification structure to satisfy the HQ requirements. These new charts supersede and replace any and all other charts that were provided earlier. The three basic NCLB requirements for the highly qualified designation are:

1. An acceptable bachelor's or higher degree,
2. State licensure/certification (no requirements waived), and
3. Demonstration of subject competency for the subject(s) and grade level(s) taught.

In Florida, subject requirements for **certification** are met on the basis of an undergraduate or graduate academic major, subject content courses equivalent to a major as specified in State Board of Education rule, a passing score on the appropriate Florida subject area test, a valid standard certificate in the subject area issued by another state, or a valid advanced national certificate in the subject area issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) or American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE).

The new charts display the various options by which subject competency may be documented for new and experienced teachers and for the grade level(s) taught to meet the subject competency requirement of NCLB. It is hoped that these charts simplify the information. Documentation of the basis for establishing a highly qualified status such as a copy of a certificate, passing test score verification, etc. should be included in the teacher's personnel file for audit purposes.

High, Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) Revised Plan for Experienced Teachers:

HOUSSE is a method other than certification or subject testing by which **experienced** teachers can document subject content competency and knowledge in a core academic subject(s) the teacher is teaching. A HOUSSE plan uses multiple components that in total document competency in the subject content to meet requirements for the NCLB highly qualified designation.

- Model HOUSSE forms incorporating the required components and points for designation of highly qualified teacher status are included for school districts to use to establish and document a teacher's highly qualified status in a core academic subject pursuant to the requirements of NCLB. A copy of the HOUSSE form bearing the teacher's signature and the signature of the designated school district official and the documentation of the basis for establishing a highly qualified status is to be included in the teacher's personnel file. The HOUSSE form may be used for an experienced teacher who is teaching a core academic subject content course for which they have not yet completed certification requirements but who can document the required number of components and points to earn the highly qualified designation.
- The HOUSSE option is not appropriate for and **shall not be used for teachers of reading and English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements September 2004

- The HOUSSE plan is not limited to, but may be especially applicable, to the following types of teaching assignments:
 - a) Teachers certified in an exceptional student education area and who teach one or more academic core content subjects.
 - b) Teachers of a foreign language. This plan is available for all foreign languages in which certification is offered but will be especially beneficial for a foreign language teacher who is a highly qualified native speaker in one of the foreign languages for which there is no subject area exam available for adding the foreign language to a valid certificate such as Italian, Greek, Hebrew, etc.
 - c) Teachers of multiple core academic subjects to hospital or homebound students.
 - d) Teachers of multiple core academic subjects in alternative school settings.
 - e) Teachers in Project Child programs.
 - f) Exchange teachers who hold the equivalent of an acceptable bachelor's or higher degree and a valid Exchange Teacher Certificate may combine the Exchange Certificate with the documented requirements of a HOUSSE plan for the subject(s) being taught to meet the highly qualified teacher designation requirements as an experienced international teacher.
- The initial preliminary Florida HOUSSE plan was available only to experienced, not new elementary teachers and was based on the criteria of the performance evaluation system pursuant to Section 1012.43 (formerly 231.29), F. S. The initial limited plan has been replaced by this expanded HOUSSE option for all experienced teachers of core academic subjects. An experienced elementary teacher who established highly qualified status through the use of the initial plan of a successful performance evaluation will retain the highly qualified designation. However, effective with the date of this memorandum, the performance evaluation initial plan shall no longer be used and is replaced with the revised HOUSSE form requiring the documentation of at least 100 points appropriate to the subject area.
- **Notification to Parents Pursuant to Section 1012.42, Florida Statutes:**

This section of statute offers a provision for school boards to adopt a policy for a teacher to demonstrate sufficient subject area expertise other than holding certification in the subject to be taught. If the board adopts such a subject expertise policy, the board is not required to notify parents of the students taught by such teachers that the teacher does not have certification in the subject. It is encouraged that school boards adopt a policy or amend an existing policy for subject area expertise demonstration to include the HOUSSE plan for experienced teachers.
- **Florida Out-of field Designation:**

It has been determined that an amendment to Rule 6A-1.0503, FAC. will be proposed to the Florida State Board of Education that will add documentation of meeting requirements for the NCLB highly qualified designation via the HOUSSE plan as a method for being defined as a qualified, infield teacher pursuant to Florida law and rule. This amendment, if adopted, would mean the teacher would not have to earn additional college credit, pass the subject test, or add the subject to the certificate. This option for designation as qualified per state requirements would not be applicable to teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and reading.