

Teacher Quality

Title I, Part A, subpart 1, Section 1119
Regulations: Starting Section 200.55 through 200.57

NCLB contains provisions designed to:

- discourage the hiring of teachers who lack expertise in their content areas which are defined as “core subject” areas, and
- to rectify the problem of large numbers of students being taught by teachers with inadequate content knowledge and preparation in the subjects they are teaching.

The law requires:

- each state to develop a plan defining “highly qualified” teachers
- each state to adopt the teacher qualification stipulations as outlined in the law
- each Title I school district and Title I school to notify parents that they can request information about the qualifications of teachers in their school and their school district (see Parents Right to Know Action Brief)
- Title I schools to notify parents if their child is being taught, for four consecutive weeks or more, by a teacher that does not meet the states “highly qualified” expectation

State and Local Teacher Quality Plans

NCLB calls for each state receiving Title I money (which is currently all of them) to develop a plan with action steps to ensure that all public elementary and secondary school teachers teaching in core academic subjects within the state are “highly qualified” not later than the end of the 2005–2006 school year. These requirements do not apply to private school teachers. Core academic subjects are defined as: English, reading or language arts, history, mathematics, science, foreign language, civics, government, economics, arts, history and geography.

A teacher who does not teach in a core subject area such as vocational education is not required to meet the “highly qualified” requirements. The state NCLB teacher quality plan must describe how:

- It will meet the highly qualified teacher requirements,
- It will define “highly qualified” teacher, and,
- It will develop and implement strategies for preparing, training, and recruiting teachers to meet the quality definition.

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The state must also establish annual measurable goals for each school district and school to include:

1. definition of a qualified teacher;
2. annual increase in the percentage of highly qualified teachers in each school district and schools to meet the goal of a highly qualified by the year 2005–2006;
3. annual increase in the percentage of teachers receiving high quality professional development aimed at making them highly qualified and successful teachers;
4. develop any other measures required by the state to meet the teacher quality goal;
5. develop strategies the state will use to monitor the progress of school districts and schools in meeting the goals;
6. steps the SEA will take to ensure that Title I minority children and children from low income families are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified or out-of-field teachers;
7. other measure the state determines to be appropriate to increase teacher qualifications.

Each school district must follow up with an implementation plan tailored to its local school community. **The act requires SEAs and LEAs to seek parent and community input when developing teacher quality action plans (hot link with the provision in the law) and requires schools to notify parents, upon parental request, of the qualifications of their children's teachers.** School districts that participate in Title I must also develop plan for meeting the federal teacher criteria by 2005–2006 which must include;

- Strategies the school district will use to implement the state plan;
- Include incentives for voluntary transfers, professional development, recruitment programs, or other effective means that minority students and students from low-income families are not taught at higher rates than other students by unqualified, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

Beginning in school year 2002–2003, both the states and school districts must annually report their progress in meeting their measurable goals publicly. School districts must also require their principals of Title I school to annually attest that their schools are in compliance with the teacher qualification requirements.

Teacher Quality

Effective the first day of the 2002–2003 school year, all teachers newly hired in programs funded by Title I must be highly qualified. The term highly qualified, as defined in Title II, Part A, means that, at a minimum, teachers must:

- Possess a bachelor's degree,
- must be certified in the subjects and/or grades they teach,
- must be licensed to teach in the state,
- must demonstrate subject knowledge and teaching skills, and,
- must not be teaching with an emergency, temporary, or provisional license.

NCLB Definition of "Highly Qualified"

In final regulations released in March 2003, the US Department of Education specified that NCLB teacher requirements apply not just to newly hired teachers paid with Title I, Part A funds in targeted assistance programs, but also to newly hired teachers of core academic subjects in Title I schoolwide programs, and teachers employed by an LEA with Title I, Part A funds to provide services to eligible private school children.

New Teacher in Elementary School

A public elementary school teacher new to the profession is considered to be highly qualified under the NCLB if he or she has:

1. Obtained full certification or passed the state's licensing exam and holds a license to teach;
2. Has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis; AND
3. Holds at least a bachelor's degree; AND
4. Has demonstrated, by passing a rigorous state test, subject matter knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and other areas of basic school curriculum.

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New Teacher in Middle and High School

A public middle school or high school teacher who is new to the profession is considered to be highly qualified under NCLB if he or she has;

1. Obtained full certification or passed the state's licensing exam and holds a license to teach;
2. Has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis; AND
3. Holds at least a bachelor's degree; AND
4. Has demonstrated a high level of competency in each of the subject matters he or she teaches by:
 - Passing a rigorous state academic subject test in each of the subjects he or she teaches; this subject matter knowledge could be assessed either with a state required certification or licensing test, or with a separate test in each academic subject that the teacher teaches, OR
 - Successfully completing an academic major, graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major, or advanced certification or credentialing in each of the academic subjects he or she teaches.

Current Teachers in Elementary, Middle and High Schools

A public school teacher who is not new to the profession is considered to highly qualified under NCLB if he or she has:

1. Obtained full certification or passed the state's licensing exam and holds a license to teach; AND
2. Has not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis; AND
3. Holds at least a bachelor's degree; AND
4. Meets the appropriate criteria for teachers new to the profession, including the option for passing a rigorous state academic subject test,
OR
Has demonstrated competence in all the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches based on high objective state uniform standards of evaluation.

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Charter Schools Teachers

Public school teachers in charter schools who are in compliance with the state's charter school law regarding certification or licensure of such teachers are considered "highly qualified."

Alternatively Certified Teachers

A teacher who obtained certification through an alternative route is considered to meet the state certification requirement. However, the final regulations issued by the US Department of Education clarify that a teacher in an alternative route program is highly qualified if her or she is making satisfactory progress toward full certification. Such teachers must receive high quality, sustained professional development before and while teaching, participate in a program of intensive supervision, and assume functions as a teacher for no more than three years before receiving full certification. In addition, the regulations clarified that alternative certification programs should not become "vehicles for granting long-term waivers of certification requirements" and specified that teachers in alternate route programs should receive sustained, high-quality professional development, participate in a program of intensive supervision, assume functions of a teacher for no more than three years before receiving full certification, and demonstrate satisfactory progress toward full certification.

Action Items

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders

- Ask the SEA how the teacher quality plan and Title II application will be developed, who the community representatives are, and how they were selected.
- If the state has not yet completed its planning, ask to be part of the planning process as a CBO with expertise in teacher issues and public engagement.
- Widely disseminate the state plan to other CBOs and the community. Provide comments on the plan, and seek revisions and changes if necessary.
- Monitor the state planning process and hold state officials accountable for developing and implementing the plan.
- Find out about the LEA planning process, ask to participate on the LEA teacher quality planning committee, and provide information and feedback on the LEA plan.

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Action Items

Action Opportunities for Community Leaders (cont'd)

- Develop statewide and school district coalitions to monitor implementation of the state's teacher quality plan and progress of the school district's teacher quality plan.
- Build statewide and community-based coalitions and partnerships to inform the public about the state plan. Create community and public support and demand for quality teachers and principals through an information campaign.
- Work with elected officials and state policymakers to ensure that state and federal resources are available for achieving teacher quality objectives.

Action Opportunities for Parent Leaders

On the state level

- Get involved with the state teacher quality planning committee.
- Get a copy of the SEA teacher quality plan. Join statewide coalitions to provide leadership, support, and wide dissemination of the plan.
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- Voice comments and concerns about the plan to the SEA. If the plan is acceptable, build ownership for the plan among parents. Educate parents statewide about the content of the plan and progress toward implementation.
- Work with statewide and local community coalitions to hold school districts and the state accountable for implementation.
- Organize parents and community representatives in efforts to become informed about the need for more qualified teachers. Build public support and pressure state and federal governments to provide the resources needed to increase the number of qualified teachers.

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On the district and local level

- Work with local community colleges and universities to develop partnerships with schools to recruit interns, student teachers and graduate students in the field of education.
- Find out how many teachers in your school are not highly qualified by requesting the information from the principal. Ask what is being done to help them become highly qualified.
- Find out about teacher turnover in your district and ask what is being done to retain good teachers.
- Find out what professional development opportunities are available to assist those who are not highly qualified and sustain those who are.
- Find out what support systems are in place, especially for new teachers. Advocate for coaching/mentoring of new staff.
- Join the school improvement council to provide support and resources.

Resources

AdultGegaSkills.org – www.adultmegaskills.org/

Alliance for Excellent Education—<http://www.all4ed.org>

American Federation of Teachers—<http://www.aft.org>

Education Trust—<http://www.edtrust.org>

MegaSkills® Online—www.megaskillshsi.org/Default.htm

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education—<http://www.ncpie.org>

National Education Association—<http://www.nea.org>

Parents for Public Schools; Parent Press—<http://www.parents4publicschools.com/pics/newsletter.15.upload/2003.04PPSPress.pdf>

Public Education Network—<http://www.PublicEducation.org>

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NCLB Teacher Quality Timeline

2002–2003 School Year

Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.
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All teachers hired after the first day of schools year 2002–2003 to work in a program supported by Title I must meet the NCLB definition of "highly qualified."

	By May 2003, states must set annual measurable teacher quality goals for each school district, no matter if they are districts that receive Title I or not
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School districts receiving Title I, Part A funds must begin filing annual reports on each district's progress of their individual schools toward the goal of all teachers meeting the NCLB's definition of "highly qualified".

2005–2006 School Year

	All public schools teachers who teach core academic subjects must meet the NCLB definition of "highly qualified."
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