



# Highly Qualified Teachers

September 2009

The Federal *No Child Left Behind* law provides for each state to develop a definition of “highly qualified” for individuals currently working in a school district. The goal is to ensure that the learning opportunities of all children are delivered by teachers who are highly qualified in the core academic subjects.

Nationwide, approximately one-third (almost 5,000) of all school districts are considered rural school districts. The U.S. Department of Education officials understand that the highly qualified teacher provisions of the *NCLB* 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. The most recent review of the highly qualified status of teachers in Wyoming revealed that 95.3% of classes in Wyoming’s schools are taught by highly qualified teachers. A teacher must demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the areas to which he/she is assigned in order to be a highly qualified teacher.

In Wyoming, the State Department of Education (WDE), working with the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB), has instructed every local school district to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified. An action plan with attainable timelines that includes the specifics of assisting teachers with becoming highly qualified and ensuring equitable teacher distribution is expected. The WDE is concentrating very hard to provide technical assistance to local districts in support of their efforts to meet the goal of 100% highly qualified teachers in all core academic classes by the end of the 2006-2007 academic year.

## Which teachers meet the criteria for “Highly Qualified”?

Whether or not a teacher is “highly qualified” as defined by the *No Child Left Behind* federal education law is not an easy question to answer. It depends on a variety of factors. In addition to the federal rules, each state has further clarified the meaning of several of these requirements. (See reverse side.)

## What does “Highly Qualified” mean?

The federal definition of a “Highly Qualified” teacher is one who is: fully certified and/or licensed by the state; holds at least a bachelor’s degree from a four-year institution; and demonstrates competence in each core academic subject area in which the teacher teaches.

## What are the requirements for teachers of multiple subjects?

Teachers must be “Highly Qualified” in each of their core subject teaching areas.

## Does the “Highly Qualified” status apply to all teachers?

No. The “Highly Qualified” status applies to all teachers in *Title I and non-Title I public schools who teach in core academic subject areas*. The federal regulations do not pertain to non-core academic subject area teachers such as those in most vocational (workforce development/career-technical education) programs or physical education.

## What are the core academic subject areas?

Those areas include: English, reading, language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, social studies, economics, arts, history, geography, and kindergarten through Grade 6 (K-6).

## What parent notifications must Title I schools make regarding “Highly Qualified” teachers?

*NCLB* requires Title I schools to notify each parent in the school whose child is being taught for four or more weeks by a teacher who is not “Highly Qualified” regardless of whether or not the teacher is being paid with Title I funds.

Teachers can go to [www.nea.org/esea/qualification/teacher](http://www.nea.org/esea/qualification/teacher) and take the “highly qualified” quiz to see if they meet the requirements to be identified as a highly qualified teacher.

Sources: Wyoming Department of Education, [www.ptsb.state.wy.us/qualified](http://www.ptsb.state.wy.us/qualified); [www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/faqs/highly](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/nclb/faqs/highly)

### New Elementary Teachers

- ✓ Graduated with an elementary and/or early childhood degree AND
- ✓ Were recommended for licensure/certification by that institution AND
- ✓ Scored a passing score on Praxis II Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (0011) or a comparable test from another state AND
- ✓ Hold a current Wyoming certificate AND
- ✓ Are appropriately assigned.

OR

- ✓ Teachers who meet Wyoming certification requirements and have been designated Highly Qualified from another state.

### Not-New Elementary Teachers

- Hold a current Wyoming Certificate AND
- Are appropriately assigned AND
- Complete a teaching major or the equivalent AND
- Obtain a passing score on the Praxis 10011.

OR

- Obtain a passing score on an equivalent test in another state.
- Teachers who meet Wyoming certification requirements and have been designated Highly Qualified from another state.

### New Elementary Special Education Teachers

- Graduated with a degree in special education AND
- Were recommended for licensure/certification by that institution AND
- Scored a passing score on the Praxis II Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (0011) or a comparable test from another state AND
- Hold a current Wyoming certificate AND
- Are appropriately assigned.

OR

- Teachers who meet Wyoming certification requirements and have been designated Highly Qualified from another state.

(<http://www.ets.org/praxis/index.html> Elementary Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment 0011.)

### Not-New Secondary/Middle Level Teachers

- + Hold a current Wyoming certificate AND
- + Are appropriately assigned AND
- + Completed a teaching major or the equivalent in a core content area AND
- + Obtain a passing score on the Praxis 0053 and 0054

OR

- + Obtain a passing score on an equivalent test in another state.
- + Teachers who meet Wyoming certification requirements and have been designated Highly Qualified from another state.

### New Secondary/Middle Level Teachers

- Graduated with a major in a subject area AND
- Were recommended for licensure/certification by that institution AND
- Scored a passing score on the Praxis pedagogy test for secondary education AND
- Have a current Wyoming certificate AND
- Are appropriately assigned.

OR

- Teachers who meet Wyoming certification requirements and have been designated Highly Qualified from another state.

### Not-New Special Education Teachers must meet the same requirements as other teachers at the specified grade level.

(**New** to the profession are those teachers who began teaching in a licensed position on or after July 1, 2002. **Not new** to the profession are educators who began their teaching career before that date.)

Education Extras are publications of the Parent Education Network, Wyoming State PIRC, a project of Parents Helping Parents of WY, Inc., funded by the US Department of Education., Office of Innovation & Improvement, Parent Options & Information, grant award #U310A060160. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Education.

In Wyoming, the Highly Objective State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) no longer exists with the following exceptions:

1. Teachers in rural schools (as defined by the US Department of Education) who teach multiple subjects.
2. Special Education teachers who teach multiple core academic subjects.

In both of these exceptions, the HOUSSE rubric may be applied **IF** those teachers were highly qualified in **one** core academic subject at the time of hire.