

# ESEA and Teacher Qualifications

ESEA recognizes the important role that the classroom teacher and teacher quality plays in promoting student achievement. It requires that all teachers (including those from alternative routes) be “highly qualified” in the subjects they teach by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

To meet the “highly qualified” definition:

**All teachers** must:

- Be fully licensed or certified by the state, *and*
- Not have had any certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis

**New elementary teachers** must:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree, *and*
- Pass a state test demonstrating subject knowledge and teaching skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and other areas of any basic elementary school curriculum

**New middle or secondary teachers** must:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree, *and*
- Demonstrate competency in *each* of the academic subjects taught, *or*
- Complete an academic major *or* coursework equivalent to a major, *or* a graduate degree in each of the academic areas in which the teacher teaches, *or*
- Advanced certification

**Existing elementary, middle, and secondary teachers** must:

- Have at least a bachelor's degree, *and*
- Meet the requirements for new teachers described above, *or*
- Demonstrate competency in all subjects taught. (A uniform state evaluation standard is to be used to judge competency.)
  - The evaluation standard must provide objective information about the teacher's knowledge in the subject taught and can consider, but not use as a primary criterion, time spent teaching the subject.



- The evaluation standard must be applied uniformly to all teachers in the same subject and grade level throughout the state.

ESEA also requires states to publish an annual report disclosing the professional qualifications of teachers, the percent working with emergency or provisional credentials, and the percent of classes in the state not taught by “highly qualified” teachers.

## *Key implementation deadlines*

By the 2002-03 school year:

- Any new teachers hired and working in a program supported by Title I funds must meet requirements of a “highly qualified” teacher.
- States and districts must begin reporting their progress toward ensuring all teachers are “highly qualified.”

By the end of the 2005-06 school year:

- All teachers in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified.” (Core academic subjects include all subjects except PE, computer science, and vocational.)

## *NEA Activities*

Over the past several months, the NEA Teacher Quality Department has attempted to identify members who serve on boards of teaching (professional standards boards) and advisory boards, in order to establish better communications and training. NEA will:

- Assist states in reviewing their current requirements for teacher licensure
- Develop sound alternative routes to licensure or certification
- Provide support for affiliates to strengthen the role of its members who serve on autonomous or advisory boards

## *Status of the States*

For individual state reports and policies on teacher quality and preparation, see Title II State Reports 2001, [www.title2.org/statereports/index.htm](http://www.title2.org/statereports/index.htm).

According to Title II reports, nearly 300,000 teachers nationally are on waivers or are on substandard credentials.

Only Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, and the District of Columbia indicate that they have no teachers on waivers and that all teachers are fully certified. This does not, however, include teachers teaching “out of field.”



## Currently for elementary teachers

- All states require a bachelor's degree
- Only 30 states and the District of Columbia require teachers to have passed a test demonstrating *basic skills* in reading, writing, and math prior to receiving a teaching certificate. Indiana tests reading and writing only
- Only 21 states require teachers to have passed a "knowledge of teaching" exam
- For all grade levels, only 12 states require a subject-area major rather than a major in education

## Currently for middle and secondary teachers

- All states require a bachelor's degree
- Middle or high school level teachers in 31 states and the District of Columbia must also pass a subject-area test
- Seven states and the District of Columbia require a major for middle school or junior high level, and five require either a major or a minor
- For high school or general secondary level certificates, 20 states and the District of Columbia require a major in the subject area taught

Taken from *Manual on the Preparation and Certification of Educational Personnel (2001)*, NASDTEC.


## *Recommendations to Affiliates*

1. Identify the agency that is responsible for reporting the number of "highly qualified" teachers in your state
2. Partner with that agency to determine the answers to the following questions:
  - How many teachers in your state are "highly qualified" as defined by the law?
  - How many teachers in your state are teaching under emergency certificates or other waivers?
  - Does your state have an accurate system to track these data?
  - How will your state ensure that all teachers meet the definition for "highly qualified" by 2005-06?
  - Does your state's certification/licensing procedures guarantee strong subject-matter competence?
  - How will your state ensure that teachers entering the classroom through alternative routes to certification meet the new requirements?



## Resources

NEA ESEA	<a href="http://www.nea.org/esea">www.nea.org/esea</a>
	<a href="http://connect.nea.org/esea">connect.nea.org/esea</a>
American Federation of Teachers	<a href="http://www.aft.org">www.aft.org</a>
Education Commission of the States	<a href="http://www.ecs.org">www.ecs.org</a>
Learning First Alliance	<a href="http://www.learningfirst.org">www.learningfirst.org</a>
U.S. Dept. of Education ESEA site	<a href="http://www.ed.gov/nclb">www.ed.gov/nclb</a>



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