

# HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS IN CALIFORNIA



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



# HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS IN CALIFORNIA

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

©2003 California Teachers Association  
Department for Instruction & Professional Development  
[ipd@cta.org](mailto:ipd@cta.org)  
[www.cta.org](http://www.cta.org)



**HOT**

# CONTENTS

ESEA/NCLB Mandates . . . . .	1
ESEA/NCLB Funds . . . . .	1
Teacher Testing . . . . .	4
Middle School Teachers . . . . .	8
Substitute Teachers . . . . .	9
High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) . . . . .	10
Subject Matter Competency . . . . .	13



**HOT**

## **ESEA/NCLB MANDATES**

Do teachers need to meet the highly qualified requirements if they are not teaching a core academic subject?

No, only teachers who teach core academic courses are required to meet the definition of a highly qualified teacher.

What is meant by "core academic subjects?"

ESEA/NCLB defines the term "core academic subjects" as English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. While the list of core academic subjects in the statute includes the arts, it does not define specifically which arts courses are core academic subjects. States may decide which arts courses will be considered core academic subjects.

## **ESEA/NCLB FUNDS**

What is the relationship between ESEA/NCLB funding and state education budgets?

States use ESEA/NCLB funds to supplement - not supplant - state budget allocations to education.



## Can states opt out of ESEA/NCLB? If so, what are the consequences?

States, like Vermont, can and have opted out of ESEA/NCLB. The most important consequence of opting out in California would be the loss of millions of dollars for Title I programs, as well as funds for:

- Title II-Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
- Title III-English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement
- Title IV-Safe and Drug Free Schools, 21st Century Schools
- Title V-Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
- Title VI-Flexibility and Accountability
- Title VII-Native American and Alaskan Education Programs
- Title VIII-Impact Aid
- Title IX-Equal Access and Unsafe School Choice

## By what date do districts need to have ESEA/NCLB plans ready?

Districts annually submit their consolidated applications to the state by June 30. In 2003, district plans included supplemental submissions in August. Each annual submission requires districts to include a needs assessment that enumerates:

- student progress toward ESEA benchmarks;
- the percentage of core subjects taught by highly qualified (NCLB compliant) teachers; and
- the percentage of certificated personnel participating in high quality professional development.

## **What is the purpose of the Title II, Part A program?**

Title II, Part A replaces the Eisenhower Professional Development and the Class-Size Reduction programs. The purpose of Title II, Part A is to help schools and school districts improve teacher and principal quality and ensure that all teachers are highly qualified.

Agencies that receive these funds are held accountable to the public for improvements in academic achievement. Title II, Part A provides these agencies with the flexibility to use these funds to address challenges to teacher quality, whether they concern teacher preparation and qualifications of new teachers, recruitment and hiring, induction, professional development, teacher retention, or the need for more capable principals and assistant principals to serve as effective school leaders.

## **Does ESEA/NCLB contain any restrictions on the amount of Title II, Part A funds that a Local Educational Agency (LEA) may spend on professional development?**

The law does not include any such restrictions. However, in considering how to spend its State-level funds, the LEA should focus on its need to ensure that all teachers it employs, who teach in core academic subjects, meet the requirements for a highly qualified teacher by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

## TEACHER TESTING

### Who is required to take the California Subject Examination for Teachers (CSET)?

Teachers who received a multiple subject credential after July 1, 2002 are required to take the CSET - even if the credential program did not require the test to complete the training and receive the preliminary credential.

Multiple subject credential candidates who enroll in a teacher preparation program on or after July 1, 2004 will be required to demonstrate subject matter competency by passing a California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC) approved examination, currently the California Subject Examination for Teachers: Multiple Subjects.

Single subject credential candidates are required to demonstrate subject matter competency by passing a CCTC-approved subject matter examination, currently the California Subject Examination for Teachers, in the subject for which the candidate wants to be authorized.

### What is the difference between the CSET and the MSAT?

Until 2002, the MSAT was the required subject matter competency assessment for multiple subject credential candidates. In 2002, the CSET replaced the MSAT. The most important difference between the two (2) tests is that the CSET is more closely aligned to the student content standards as well as the SB 2042 teacher preparation standards.

**I went through a credential program that waived the testing requirements. When I completed my waiver program, I was not required to take a subject matter exam like the MSAT or the CSET. Why do I have to take it now?**

Waiver programs do not require a subject matter competency test in order for a candidate to receive a credential; however, candidates who complete such programs are not NCLB compliant.

You must take the test to become ESEA/NCLB compliant.

**Since ESEA/NCLB was reauthorized while I was in my credential program, why didn't the credential program requirements change?**

To meet the requirements of the ESEA/NCLB, new teachers at the elementary school level must (1) hold at least a bachelor's degree, (2) be licensed by the State, and (3) demonstrate their competence by **PASSING A RIGOROUS STATE ACADEMIC SUBJECT TEST [SECTION 9101(23)(B)(II)]**.

Under SB 1307(EC §44252.1), candidates completing credential requirements under the Ryan Act by December 31, 2008 may be recommended for the credential without meeting the CSET requirement. After earning the credential, the candidate will be responsible for becoming ESEA/NCLB compliant by passing a rigorous test of subject matter knowledge and teaching skills such as the MSAT or the CSET.

SB 1307 (EC §44252.1) candidates who are currently enrolled in an SB 2042 blended/integrated program of undergraduate teacher preparation, and who remain continuously enrolled, may be recommended for the



credential if they complete the credential program by June 30, 2009. After earning the credential, the candidate will be responsible for becoming ESEA/NCLB compliant by passing a rigorous test of subject matter knowledge and teaching skills such as the MSAT or the CSET.

## How much do the certification tests currently cost?

### CSET Fees

- registration \$51
- additional fees:
  - \$72 Multiple Subject Tests
  - \$72 for all single subject tests, except for:
    - English \$54
    - Foreign Language \$125

### MSAT Fees

- registration \$35
- 1 hour constructed response \$70
- 2 hour constructed response \$85
- teaching foundations \$110

## Who pays for certification testing?

Districts may use Title II, Part A funds to support existing employees who must complete teacher certification activities such as testing. In most cases, however, teachers new to the profession will pay the costs for the CSET and other required tests.

**I work at a Title 1 school and have had a lifetime credential since 1975. I don't need to take a test, right?**

Correct. Any California teacher who graduated from an accredited institution of higher education and received a credential, or was enrolled in or had completed an approved intern program before July 1, 2002, is not required to take a test to demonstrate subject matter competence for NCLB compliance. Interns should remember to check with the program in which they are enrolled about the state requirements to be recommended for a preliminary credential.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS

How will California determine whether teachers of core academic subjects in grades 6, 7, and 8 must meet the subject-area competency requirements for elementary teachers, or, instead, for middle school teachers?

The intent of the law is to ensure that each teacher of a core academic subject has sufficient subject matter knowledge and skills to instruct effectively in his or her assigned subjects, regardless of whether the school is configured as an elementary or a middle school. For instance, 8th-grade algebra teachers must have the same requisite skills and knowledge whether they are located in elementary schools or middle schools.

In California, teachers who work in the middle school grades may either be credentialed as a "multiple subject" (elementary) teacher or as a "single-subject" (secondary) teacher. These credential authorizations (either departmentalized or self-contained) represent some of the challenges that districts face in meeting the ESEA/NCLB requirements.

To provide local flexibility, Title 5 regulations permit districts to select one of two options for determining if a teacher is assigned to an elementary or secondary (middle/high school) classroom for complying with the ESEA/NCLB teacher qualification requirements.

- Option A: Districts may designate an entire school as either secondary or elementary.

- Option B: Districts may designate an entire grade as either secondary or elementary based on the curriculum taught. This option also permits a district to designate an entire grade at a particular school as elementary or secondary, but to designate that same grade differently at other schools with different curriculum.

Districts will need to review the curriculum, instruction, and master schedule at each middle school to determine whether middle school teachers would be considered secondary or elementary for the purposes of ESEA/NCLB requirements. Federal guidance on this issue is expected in the next few months.

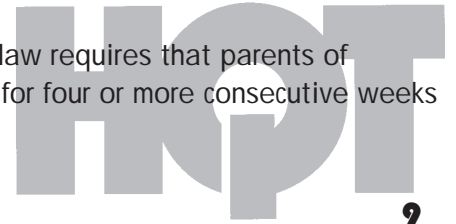
## **SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

### **Do short- and long-term substitute teachers need to meet the highly qualified requirements?**

Short-term (day to day) substitutes do not need to meet the highly qualified teacher requirements.

A long-term substitute teacher who teaches a core subject must meet the requirements for a highly qualified teacher as defined in Section 9101(23).

In understanding a definition for a long-term substitute, keep in mind that the law requires that parents of children in Title I schools must be notified if their child has received instruction for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified [Section 1111(h)(6)].



## **HIGH OBJECTIVE UNIFORM STATE STANDARD OF EVALUATION (HOUSSE)**

What is meant by High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) procedures?

California has developed a method by which current teachers can demonstrate competency in each subject they teach on the basis of a "high objective uniform State standard of evaluation" (HOUSSE). This standard must be one that, among other requirements, "provides objective coherent information about the teacher's attainment of core content knowledge in the academic subjects in which a teacher teaches" [Section 9101(23)(c)(ii)(III)]. California's HOUSSE procedures involve multiple, objective measures of teacher competency (i.e., teaching experience, additional coursework, observations, etc.).

Is it true that the site administrator determines if a teacher is highly qualified?

Not necessarily. Although Section 6103 of California's regulations for HOUSSE require a supervising administrator to oversee the HOUSSE evaluation, an LEA may designate staff knowledgeable in formative assessment such as a mentor, coach, or support provider - who is also NCLB compliant - to participate in the review process.

Does the evaluator have to be highly qualified in subject matter(s) as well?

Administrators have to be knowledgeable about formative assessment and academic content standards. LEAs have the flexibility to develop local policies for certifying the competence of supervisory personnel who do evaluations. If the LEA also designates certificated bargaining unit members such as peer coaches, mentor

teachers, consulting teachers for this purpose, those teachers must be ESEA/NCLB compliant for the core subjects or teaching assignments they will consult with or review.

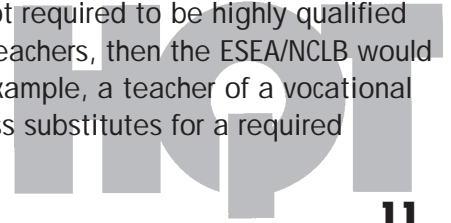
### **Is HOUSSE from California portable to other states? ...and vice versa?**

Per HOUSSE: Once a teacher has been certified to meet the ESEA/NCLB teacher requirements for the grade span or subject taught, the teacher will not be required to demonstrate that they have met the ESEA/NCLB requirements again for the same grade span or subject taught - even if they are later hired by another school district or move to another state.

However, teachers who come to California must meet all other California teacher credentialing requirements for assessment and subject matter preparation. The same would be true for California teachers who move to other states.

**Does ESEA/NCLB require that those teachers who teach outside the defined "core subjects" also be "highly qualified?" (i.e., physical education teachers, business teachers, family & consumer sciences, etc.)**

Generally, no. However, when courses that are normally taught by teachers not required to be highly qualified are substituted for courses that are required to be taught by highly qualified teachers, then the ESEA/NCLB would require that the teachers of the substitute course(s) be highly qualified. For example, a teacher of a vocational class in American Business History would need to be highly qualified if the class substitutes for a required American history course.



**Under ESEA/NCLB, do requirements for teaching special education change? How does HOUSSSE apply, if it does?**

California requirements to earn a special education credential have not changed. Special education teachers who provide instruction in core academic subjects must meet the highly qualified teacher requirements for the core academic subjects that they teach. These requirements apply whether a special education teacher provides core academic instruction in a regular classroom, a resource room, or another setting.

Like elementary, middle school, or high school teachers, special education teachers may use HOUSSSE as an option to meet the subject matter competency requirement.

**I have a special education credential but I do not teach core classes. How do I meet the highly qualified teacher requirement?**

There are many activities that special education teachers may carry out that would not, by themselves, require those teachers to be highly qualified in a particular subject matter. Special educators who do not directly instruct students in any core academic subjects or who provide only consultation to highly qualified teachers of core academic subjects in adapting curricula, using behavioral supports and interventions, or selecting appropriate accommodations do not need to demonstrate subject-matter competency in those subjects. These special educators could also assist students with study skills or organizational skills and reinforce instruction that the child has already received from a teacher who meets the highly qualified requirements in that core academic subject matter.

## **SUBJECT MATTER COMPETENCY**

**I have a credential in science. Am I considered to be highly qualified to teach any science course (i.e., biology or chemistry)?**

No. Content knowledge in one scientific discipline does not necessarily mean that a teacher will have sufficient subject-matter competency in another. Middle and secondary school science teachers must demonstrate subject-matter competency appropriate to the specific courses they are teaching. For example, a teacher who majored in biology is not, on that basis alone, considered highly qualified to teach physics.

**Do teachers who primarily teach English Language Learners need to meet the highly qualified requirements?**

Yes. If teachers of English Language Learners provide instruction in core academic subjects, they must meet the requirements of the law for highly qualified teachers in the core academic subject(s) taught, in addition to meeting ESEA/NCLB Title III requirements for teachers of English Language Learners (an English proficiency test on oral, listening and reading comprehension, and on writing skills).

A teacher who does not teach a core academic subject must still meet the Title III requirements in order to instruct English Language Learners.

## Are charter school teachers required to be highly qualified under ESEA/NCLB?

Yes. In California, charter school teachers still must meet the same credentialing and subject matter competency requirements in the core academic areas in which they teach as they would if they taught in non-chartered schools.

## How do the teacher quality requirements apply to individuals working in after/before school and/or summer programs?

If services offered outside of regular school hours in a Title I extended learning time program provide instruction in core academic subjects designed to help students meet State or local academic standards, the persons providing such core academic instruction must meet the highly qualified teacher requirements. In extended learning time programs (which can include summer school), the school's regular teaching staff extend or continue the school's instructional day using the same or similar curricula, and therefore must be highly qualified. However, if the instructor is not an employee of the school district, the teacher quality requirements do not apply.

## Are early childhood or pre-kindergarten teachers subject to the highly qualified teacher requirements?

Teacher qualification requirements do not apply to early childhood or pre-kindergarten teachers unless early childhood or pre-kindergarten are included as part of the elementary and secondary school system.

## Does HOUSSE include supplementary authorizations as a demonstration of subject matter competence?

Yes. Teachers can receive a significant amount of credit (consideration) in the HOUSSE process for having a supplementary authorization in the core subjects for which they are assigned to teach.

## How many units are needed for a supplemental authorization?

Supplemental authorizations are issued to teachers who already have a credential. Teachers have earned supplementary authorizations either by:

- documenting the minimum 18 units of upper division coursework
- completing the requisite university course of study in a subject matter program
- taking and passing a subject matter test such as the NTE, Praxis, or CSET.

**HOT**

California Teachers Association  
1705 Murchison Drive  
Burlingame, CA 94010

