



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

October 30, 2007

Dear Colleague:

Recently, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) was notified by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) of an exception to the process whereby secondary (grades 9-12) special education teachers may demonstrate competence as a highly qualified teacher. One of the options made available to demonstrate competence as a highly qualified classroom secondary special education teacher was passage of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) elementary education test. This allowed those teachers to demonstrate competence across the core academic subjects taught to secondary special education students. While the USDOE has determined that this test is appropriate for a teacher assigned to an elementary (grades K-5) or middle (grades 6-8) self-contained special education classroom, it has been deemed inappropriate for use by a secondary level special education teacher who is the exclusive provider of direct instruction to demonstrate competence across the core curriculum.

In accordance with Section 300.18 of the federal implementing regulations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education teachers who teach core academic subjects exclusively to children who are assessed by alternate achievement standards may continue to use passage of the MTTC elementary education test to demonstrate that they are highly qualified. In addition, secondary special education teachers who team teach with a highly qualified general education teacher, or those who work in a resource program in which they facilitate instruction that has been provided by a highly qualified general education teacher, are not required to further demonstrate that they are highly qualified in core academic content subjects.

Secondary special education classroom teachers who have used the MTTC elementary education test to demonstrate that they are highly qualified must now use one of the following options:

- Have earned an academic major, or the equivalent coursework of an academic major, in each of the core content areas assigned to teach.
- Have taken and passed the appropriate MTTC secondary content test for each core content subject assigned to teach.
- Have completed one or more of the following high objective uniform state standards of evaluation (HOUSSE) options:
  - Have at least three years of teaching experience and have completed, after receiving the Michigan Provisional teaching certificate, a minimum of 18 semester hours in a core academic subject program of study or towards a

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608 WEST ALLEGAN STREET • P.O. BOX 30008 • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde) • (517) 373-3324

