



**Highly Qualified Teachers Questions & Answers
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001
February 11, 2009**

NOTE: The first step in verifying a teacher's Highly Qualified status is to ensure that they are properly state certified, endorsed or authorized in the subject area they are assigned to teach. Certification records are public information and are available on the Michigan Department of Education website at <https://mdoe.state.mi.us/teachercert/>

See the Michigan Definition for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers at:
www.michigan.gov/documents/definitionofhighlyqualifiedteachers_63281_7.pdf.

Section I: General Questions about the Michigan Definition of Highly Qualified Teachers

1. What is meant by "core academic subjects"?

A. Core academic subjects, as per ESEA/NCLB are English, language arts, reading, science, mathematics, arts, foreign languages, government and civics, history, economics and geography.

2. What is included in "arts"?

A. In Michigan "arts" refers to instrumental music, vocal music, visual arts, dance, and theatre.

3. What is included in "science"?

A. Congress has determined that science means physics, chemistry, biology, earth science, and physical science – as a combination of chemistry and physics.

4. "HOUSSE" is frequently used in writing about Highly Qualified teachers. What does this mean?

A. HOUSSE refers to the High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation, which is referenced in the ESEA/NCLB Act.

5. If a teacher has a master's in an area related to his/her teaching (for example, a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction), can that Master's be used as a demonstration of being Highly Qualified (HQ) in multiple core academic areas?

A. A master's degree in curriculum and instruction may be used to demonstrate being Highly Qualified for core academic subject(s) under HOUSSE option #1. Michigan's High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) option #1 may be used to demonstrate HQ status in multiple subjects.

Once a teacher has designated a given master's as Highly Qualified demonstration, however, that master's degree may not be used in the future as HQ demonstration for another subject area.

6. What is the timeline for compliance with the Highly Qualified teacher requirement?

A. Teachers must be Highly Qualified for the core subject area(s) prior to placement in the classroom.

7. Who gets to determine which option a teacher will pursue to demonstrate he/she is Highly Qualified?

A. It is the teacher's choice. All options are available to teachers.

8. What is the school districts' parental notification requirement?

A. Parental notification is required in a building designated as a targeted-assistance program for those core subject area teachers (and paraprofessionals) who are supported by Title I funding. For buildings designated as school-wide programs all core academic teachers (and paraprofessionals) are affected by the requirement. If a teacher of a core academic subject is not Highly Qualified after four weeks in the placement, notification must be sent to the parents of the students in that classroom placement. The requirement went into effect at the beginning of the 2002-2003 academic year and impacts new and experienced teachers equally. A sample of this letter can be found at:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Four_Weeks_Notification_231812_7.doc

9. Who is the final authority as to whether a teacher has demonstrated that he/she is Highly Qualified?

A. The employing school district or public school academy (PSA) has the responsibility of only assigning teachers that they know to have verified HQ status. The Michigan Department of Education is available to provide guidance and technical support.

10. Can a teacher with a minor in a core academic subject teach that subject, under ESEA/NCLB?

A. A teacher with a minor in a core academic subject may teach that subject, if he/she has the appropriate endorsement on his/her Michigan Teacher Certificate , and if he/she has passed the appropriate Michigan Test for Teacher Certification subject area exam. If a teacher has not passed the appropriate MTTC subject exam, have a minor in a core academic subject, and is authorized by the state to teach the core academic area, he/she must meet the HQ requirements by way of testing or one of Michigan's High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) requirements which defines a Highly Qualified teacher.

11. How does the Highly Qualified requirement for teachers in core academic subjects impact a teacher in a dual enrollment course?

A. If the teacher of a dual enrollment course, and that would include an advanced placement course, is employed by an institution of higher education to teach the course, he/she does not need to meet the definition of a Highly Qualified teacher. If the teacher is employed by the local education agency, then the teacher must be Highly Qualified, which includes full state certification and endorsement in the subject area.

12. Do adult education teachers need to be Highly Qualified?

A. No. Adult education teachers are not required to meet the definition of a Highly Qualified teacher as defined by ESEA/NCLB.

13. When a teacher reports to the district that he/she is Highly Qualified, how will that data be used?

A. The district reports that information via the Register of Education Personnel (REP) to the Center for Education Performance and Information (CEPI). This data is used to audit certification records and for federal reporting.

14. What is the penalty if a teacher does not demonstrate, by the compliance deadline, that he/she is Highly Qualified?

A. Beginning fall, 2006, a district or PSA may not assign a teacher to a core academic subject assignment unless that teacher has been determined to be Highly Qualified for the assignment.

Monitoring of compliance via the REP and technical assistance through the Michigan Technical Assistance Project (MiTAP) will be an on-going process. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has received guidance from the US Department of Education as to what action is required of the district when a teacher has not demonstrated competence HQ status for an assignment. The district or PSA must file an action plan with MDE and use Title II resources to assist the teacher in becoming HQ. Special Education teachers

have until June 30, 2009 to meet the Highly Qualified requirements due to changes that went into effect in October 2007.

The district or PSA must follow the parental notification guidelines as outlined in question #8 in this section.

To not comply with the NCLB/ESEA requirements could jeopardize federal funding, not only for a district, but for the entire state.

Also note that districts or PSAs may be subject to State Aid penalties where a teacher is placed in an assignment for which he/she does not hold appropriate Michigan certification, endorsement or state authorization (permit).

15. Is there funding available to districts to assist teachers in demonstrating they are Highly Qualified?

A. Yes, districts are permitted to use all of the Title II award to support teachers (and paraprofessionals, if needed) in demonstrating they are Highly Qualified.

16. Can you tell me how to find the Michigan Content Area Portfolio Guidelines?

*A. See the Michigan Highly Qualified Teacher Content Area Portfolio Guidelines posted at:
www.michigan.gov/documents/Portfolio_Assessment_82163_7.doc.*

17. What is a standards-based SBE approved program?

A: Programs offered by approved teacher preparation institutions.

18. Do ESL teachers need to be Highly Qualified?

A. An ESL teacher is not impacted by the Highly Qualified requirements unless his/her students are receiving direct instruction for a core academic class. If so, the teacher must be Highly Qualified in the core academic area for which direct instruction is being given.

19. Do bilingual teachers need to meet the Highly Qualified teacher requirements?

A. Bilingual teachers only need to be Highly Qualified if they provide the direct instruction in a core academic subject.

20. Do alternative education teachers need to be Highly Qualified?

A. Alternative education teachers who provide the direct instruction to students must be Highly Qualified in each of the core academic subjects they provide the direct instruction.

21. Do alternative education teachers in a supporting/reinforcing or facilitator role, when the instruction is via a distance learning arrangement, need to meet the Highly Qualified definition?

A. If a teacher assigned to an alternative education program has a role of facilitating, supporting or reinforcing instruction of students, and the primary source of instruction is provided through distance learning, that teacher does not need to meet the definition of Highly Qualified teacher. However, they still must hold certification for the grade level(s) that the program is offered.

22. How does the Highly Qualified requirement impact distance learning program teachers?

A. In distance learning programs, the person providing the instruction, if a public school teacher, needs to be Highly Qualified. A local site facilitator or monitor does not need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements.

If the distance learning provider is a private company, the teacher providing the instruction does not need to be Highly Qualified, because he/she is not a public school teacher.

23. How does the Highly Qualified requirement impact substitutes?

A. Long-term, permanent subs (under the Full-Year or 1233b Permits), that are the teachers of record in core academic subjects, need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements. Day-to-day subs and those working for less than 90 calendar days in a placement do not need to meet the requirement. However, the district must follow the parental notification guidelines as outlined in question #8 in this section.

24. What is the Highly Qualified status of a teacher who is teaching a core academic subject(s) on a Full-Year Permit?

A. A Full-Year Permit will not be issued unless the teacher has demonstrated competence as a Highly Qualified teacher of the subject. If a district employs a non-certified teacher under a Full-Year Permit and that teacher is enrolled in a teacher preparation program and demonstrating adequate academic progress toward certification, the teacher must be provided a mentor and be supervised by a university faculty member in order to be considered Highly Qualified under ESEA/NCLB. Completion of the certification program must not take longer than three years.

25. Do the 90 clock hours or 6 semester hours required for HOUSSSE option #2 need to be in the content of the core academic subject in which the teacher is demonstrating he/she is Highly Qualified?

A. Yes

26. Do the 6 semester hours noted in question #23 have to be graduate credits?

A. No. The credits may be from an accredited post-secondary institution (including community colleges; however, they must be earned AFTER the issuance of the teacher's initial teaching certificate.

27. If a teacher wants to demonstrate he/she is Highly Qualified by obtaining National Board Certification, where can the teacher get information on the National Board Certification process?

A. There is a wealth of information on the certification process at the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards website at www.nbpts.org.

For financial assistance, contact Krista Ried at the Michigan Department of Education, 517-373-0699 or riedk@michigan.gov.

MEA members may contact MEA Headquarters, 800-292-1934 for additional information. MFT members may contact MFT head-quarters at 800-638-8868 for additional information.

28. How does the Highly Qualified requirement impact the journalism teacher where students receive English elective credit?

A. Journalism is not defined as a core subject area by NCLB; therefore, the teacher does not need to be Highly Qualified. NCLB does not distinguish between required and elective classes.

29. If a math teacher chooses to demonstrate he/she is HQ by taking the Math Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC), what determines which test (elementary or secondary) is appropriate?

A. Generally the teachers with elementary certificates take the elementary test and secondary certificate holders take the secondary exam. However, it may be appropriate for a middle school math teacher or a special education teacher with a secondary certificate to take the elementary math test. In a special education setting, the district must determine the appropriate test based upon the content being taught and the needs of the students. (The same holds true with respect to the Integrated Science MTTC.)

30. If a teacher demonstrates Highly Qualified status in one Michigan district, is he/she considered Highly Qualified in all Michigan districts?

A. Yes, HQ status should be portable from one Michigan school district to another provided the appropriate documentation is made available to each employing school district.

Section II: Elementary School Questions

1. Are elementary teachers Highly Qualified if they have full Michigan elementary certification?

A. Completion of an Elementary Education program is not considered equivalent, by the USDOE, to having a MAJOR in all the core content areas. Those elementary teachers who gained initial Michigan certification after 1993 were required to take the Elementary Education MTTC and, with the appropriate documentation, should identify such on their HQT Reporting Form. Those elementary teachers certified prior to testing should have completed an 18 – hour planned program (HOUSSE option #1) in order to remain certificated in the state of Michigan. Either option can be utilized to verify HQ.

2. Two elementary certified teachers are “teaming” with two 6th grade classes. How is a “teaming” arrangement impacted by the Highly Qualified requirement?

A. A determination would need to be made as to whether such an arrangement is a “self-contained” classroom or a subject specific departmentalized format. As defined in Michigan’s rules for Teacher Certification (390.1101(r)), a self-contained classroom is “a classroom in which one teacher provides instruction to the same pupils for the majority of the pupils’ instructional day.” A majority is anything more than 50%.

Teachers in a departmental assignment would then need to first verify they are appropriately certified and then demonstrate they are Highly Qualified, for each of their assigned core academic subjects.

Teachers in the self-contained setting must verify HQ status for an elementary assignment (see question #1 in this section for further clarification).

3. Can elementary teachers who are in grades 4-6 teach specific subjects?

*A. An elementary teacher may teach ALL subjects, grades **K-5**, based upon his/her certificate. He/she would need to verify Highly Qualified status as an elementary teacher (see question #1 in this section for further clarification). For grade 6, the elementary teacher must be endorsed to teach a specific subject. This is in accordance with Michigan School Code. The teacher would also be required to be Highly Qualified for that specific subject in accordance with NCLB.*

4. If a teacher holds the “K-8 All Subjects” designation on his/her teaching certificate and he/she has passed the MTTC in a particular subject area, is he/she Highly Qualified for that subject without taking additional coursework?

A. Yes, the teacher would be considered Highly Qualified to teach the subject in grades K-8 only.

Section III: Middle School/Secondary Level Questions

1. Do middle level/secondary teachers have to hold a master's in the core academic content area in which they are teaching or will a master's in related areas, such as a Master's in the Art of Teaching or a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction or a Master's in Education Technology meet the requirement?

*A. Yes, a master's in a related area will meet the requirement of HOUSSE option #1, if the master's had a content-focus. The above examples would meet the requirement (see also the March 2004 Flexibility Update document). A Master's in Guidance and Counseling, Educational Leadership or Educational Psychology **typically do not** meet the requirement, as they may not be content-focused.*

2. Is a secondary certified teacher with a Science (DX) endorsement based upon a minor, but having taken and passed the Science (DX) MTTC, Highly Qualified to teach a general/integrated science class at the secondary level? Is the teacher Highly Qualified to teach a **specific** science subject (chemistry or biology) at the 6-12 level?

*A. This teacher is Highly Qualified to teach a general science or integrated science class as well as all sub-areas of science because he/she holds the endorsement and passed the DX (science) exam. He/she is Highly Qualified for science **and** each of the individual subjects covered by the endorsement.*

See question #18 below for important additional information.

3. Could a high school teacher who is secondary certified with a science minor (DX) use a college course in engineering to establish a 30 semester credit hour equivalent to a major?

A. Yes, these engineering courses may be counted towards a major equivalent (30 semester credit hours). Engineering is applied physics. The content of the engineering classes is related to the content taught in physics.

4. Could a secondary MATH teacher count computer classes towards the 30 semester credit hour equivalent to a major?

A. Yes, if the teacher can document the computer classes are required for a math major program. Documentation might be information from a college catalogue.

5. Would a master's in science education demonstrate Highly Qualified status for biology endorsed teacher?

A. A master's in science education will make the biology teacher Highly Qualified in biology under HOUSSE option #1. This master's would include an

exploration of the biology content, thus, make the teacher Highly Qualified in biology.

6. If a teacher holds the "7-8 All Subjects" designation on his/her teaching certificate and he/she has passed the MTTC in a particular subject area, is he/she Highly Qualified for that subject without taking additional coursework?

A. Yes, the teacher would be considered Highly Qualified to teach the subject in grades 7-8 only.

7. If a teacher has a BS in biology and a group science minor, is the minor of any use in teaching at this point?

A. Assuming that the teacher holds the group Science (DX) endorsement, the minor would not meet the definition of Highly Qualified. The teacher would need to demonstrate Highly Qualified status in science and may be able to do so by demonstrating they have a 30 semester credit hour major equivalent. Combining the credit earned for the biology major and the credit for the group science minor would more than likely equal more than 30 semester credit hours in the area of science..

(See Reminder at the end of Section III)

8. Does a master's degree in reading demonstrate Highly Qualified status for a middle school teacher to teach English, reading and/or language arts?

A. A teacher may be considered Highly Qualified for English, reading AND language arts utilizing HOUSSE option #1 and a master's degree in reading.

9. If the middle school has a course in general science that covers several science subjects, is a teacher Highly Qualified if certified in one area of science?

A. No, the first step in demonstrating HQ status is to hold the appropriate Michigan endorsement or certification for a subject. A teacher who is certified in ONE area of science is only authorized by the state to teach THAT area of science and he/she cannot become HQ for any other area. If the teacher is endorsed in general science, then he/she would be considered Highly Qualified for middle school general science as long as the endorsement is based on having completed a major in science.

(See Reminder at the end of Section III)

10. If a teacher is endorsed and has a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, is the teacher Highly Qualified in chemistry?

A. No. Only biology unless he/she has passed the chemistry subject area MTTC exam or demonstrates Highly Qualified status in chemistry via one of the other options within Michigan's Definition for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers.

11. Do secondary science and math teachers need to meet the requirements for every area of math or science they are teaching? For example, if a secondary science teacher is teaching biology, chemistry, and earth science must he/she meet state Highly Qualified requirements in each of these separate areas? For math... algebra, geometry, etc.?

A. Teachers must be Highly Qualified in each subject they teach. Teachers with the DX or DI science endorsement, based on a major, are Highly Qualified in each of the individual subjects within that endorsement that they are assigned to teach, i.e., biology, chemistry, physics, earth science. Holders of DX or DI, based on a minor, and who have passed the general science MTTC exam are also Highly Qualified for each of the individual science subjects.

*The math endorsement is valid for teaching **the entire** mathematics curriculum and teachers are Highly Qualified if they have a math major. If they have only completed a minor, they must demonstrate that they are Highly Qualified to teach math by way of the math MTTC or HOUSSE options.*

(See Reminder at the end of Section III)

12. For ESEA purposes, the congressional definition of science (biology, chemistry, physics and earth science) does not include physical science. Do physical science teachers need to demonstrate they are Highly Qualified?

A. Yes, because physical science is a combination of chemistry and physics.

13. Is a Social Studies (RX) endorsed teacher assigned to teach 7th grade social studies considered Highly Qualified?

A. Michigan certification alone does not demonstrate HQ status. A teacher would be considered Highly Qualified to teach social studies if he/she has a major (or equivalent) in social studies; has taken and passed the Social Studies MTTC; OR completed one of the HOUSSE options. Note that Michigan School Code requires a teacher of a course titled "social studies" to have either an RX or CX endorsement

(See Reminder at the end of Section III)

14. Is a teacher of high school chemistry (or biology, physics, and earth science) with a DX endorsement considered Highly Qualified?

A. Michigan certification alone does not demonstrate HQ status. A teacher would be considered to be a Highly Qualified chemistry teacher if his/her DX endorsement was based on a major, he/she has taken the DX test, OR completed one of the HOUSSE options.

(See Reminder at the end of Section III)

15. If a middle school teacher wants to demonstrate competency in math by taking the MTTC, is the elementary or secondary math test the appropriate exam?

A. Either test may be appropriate. The same holds true for Integrated Science.

16. What can teachers teach if they have a group DX, BX, CX endorsement?

A. A teacher with a group endorsement may teach a general or survey course in the subject area. (DX-science, general science, etc.; RX or CX – social studies; BX – language arts.)

*In addition, middle school and high school experienced/veteran and new teachers who hold the Science (DX) or the new Integrated Science (DI) endorsement based on having completed a major meet the NCLB Highly Qualified designation for each of the individual subjects covered by the endorsement. Those teachers who hold either endorsement based on having completed **a minor and have passed the MTTC** general science subject area examination are also considered Highly Qualified under NCLB. Those teachers who hold the science endorsement based on having completed a minor, **but were not required to pass the MTTC general science test**, may take the MTTC general science test OR use one of the HOUSSE options for demonstrating that they are Highly Qualified to teach the science classes to which they are assigned.*

*REMINDER: It is **inappropriate** to assign a teacher with an individual science subject endorsement such as chemistry, or biology to teach a general science class. Only a teacher with the general science (DX or DI) endorsement can be assigned to teach a general science class or course.*

Social studies teachers in Michigan either have the newer Social Studies (RX) or Social Science (CX) endorsement. The social studies endorsement program replaced the social science endorsement program in 1995 with revised standards and is limited to four core academic subjects (history, geography, economics, and political science/government/civics).

Middle and high school experienced and new teachers who hold the Social Studies (RX) endorsement based on having completed a major or minor meet the NCLB Highly Qualified designation for each of the individual subjects covered by that endorsement (these teachers were required to pass the MTTC social studies examination prior to certification/endorsement). Those teachers who hold the Social Science (CX) endorsement based on having completed a major, which included content coursework in history, geography, political science and economics are also Highly Qualified to teach in each of the subjects covered by that endorsement.

Teachers who hold the Social Science (CX) endorsement based on having completed a minor may take the MTTC social studies test OR use one of the

HOUSSE options for demonstrating that they are Highly Qualified to teach the social science/social studies classes to which they are assigned.

*REMINDER: it is **inappropriate** to assign a teacher with an individual social studies or social science subject endorsement such as history, or geography to teach a general social studies class. Only a teacher with the Social Studies (RX) or Social Science (CX) endorsement can be assigned to teach a general social studies class or course.*

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