

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND PERSONNEL

Questions & Answers

1. Q: Do teachers need to be highly qualified to teach Michigan Merit Curriculum Requirements?

A: Yes. Districts are required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to now have 100% of their teachers of core academic subjects highly qualified. This means that in addition to holding state certification, the teacher must hold a major or the equivalent of a major in the content, or pass the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) subject area content exam, or complete one of the High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) options for demonstrating that he/she is highly qualified.

Long before NCLB was passed, Michigan law required that teachers be appropriately assigned to teach within the grade level and subject area endorsement(s) indicated on their teaching certificates. For example, only a teacher with a secondary certificate with endorsements in Mathematics and Biology (grades 7-12) should be assigned to teach Math and/or Biology courses in grades 7-12. It would be inappropriate to assign this teacher to teach Chemistry, Physics, or General Science.

In order to assist local districts in the appropriate placement of teachers, the Michigan Department of Education has developed a document entitled "Classes Which Can Be Taught by Holders of Various Endorsements as Impacted by NCLB." This document is available at the following URL:
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/What_can_be_taught_composite_TQ_C107355_A112320_7_123436_7.doc

2. Q: Does a middle school teacher have to be "highly qualified" at the high school level in order for students to receive high school credit?

A: In order for a student to receive credit, a teacher must be appropriately endorsed and highly qualified in the subject, whether elementary or secondary certificated. The secondary teaching certificate authorizes a person to teach in subject area endorsements in grades 6-12, and the elementary certificate authorizes a person to teach in grades K-5 (all subjects) and grades 6-8 in subject area endorsements. For example, a teacher endorsed with an elementary math certificate could teach 8th grade Algebra I for high school credit, but could not teach 9th grade Algebra I for credit without a secondary teaching certificate.

3. Q: Does a teacher, teaching a math-related class such as Accounting need to be highly qualified in mathematics for students to receive their 4th math-related credit?

A: No. If the accounting or other math-related class is to be counted as a student's 4th math-related credit, the teacher does not need to be highly qualified in Mathematics. However, the school through their internal record keeping system should record that the student has fulfilled their 4th Math credit, given that the student's transcript would list the Accounting course

If a student wants to take a math course like Pre-Calculus and have it count as their 4th credit, the teacher would need to be highly qualified in Mathematics.

4. Q: Will there be enough highly qualified teachers available to meet the need in required course credit areas?

A: While schools currently have math and science teachers and require various math and science credits for graduation, the new law requires all students to complete specific math, science, and social studies credits. Hiring and scheduling continue to remain the responsibility of local schools and districts.

In addition, post-baccalaureate individuals enrolled in alternative preparation programs who can demonstrate competency in the content by holding a major in the content or passing the MTTC content examination can be employed to teach the merit curriculum. Such individuals would have three years to complete their teacher preparation programs and still be considered highly qualified under NCLB.

Teachers who are currently assigned to teach mathematics or science classes who need additional training to teach the more rigorous content can take advantage of professional development opportunities offered by various entities and programs such as Michigan Virtual University, Teacher-to-Teacher, Title II A(3) Higher Education Professional Development Grant projects, and courses offered online through institutions of higher education.

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER 8/07 ADDITIONS

5. Q: What types of technology-based programs are allowable in a classroom if the teacher is certified but not “highly qualified” in the area(s) he/she is teaching or facilitating.

A: The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) permits students to take courses online and does not require the online teacher to be highly qualified in the subject area being taught. It is therefore possible for a student in a public school classroom, technology lab, resource center, media center, etc. to be taking an online course or a multiple number of such courses for high school credit. The online teacher does not need to be “highly qualified” in the subject area(s) in which students are being instructed. .

For state aid purposes, there are some conditions under which online learning could occur and still be eligible for state aid. Please refer to the department’s *Pupil Accounting Manual* for additional information. A copy of this can be accessed online at the department’s website: www.michigan.gov/mde. In the column of options on the left, click on “Offices” than “State Aid and School Finance” and the document appears on the main page.

6. Q: Is there certification for foreign language at the elementary level for highly qualified teachers?

A: Yes. Certification to teach a foreign language is subject specific, and grade-level specific. If a teacher is certified to teach Japanese in grades K-12, for example, and that is all she/he is teaching, then the teacher would be considered highly qualified if she/he has a major in Japanese or has passed the MTTC content test in Japanese. If the teacher is certified in the language in grades 6-12, then she/he is not certified nor highly qualified to teach in any grade below grade 6.

7. Q: If a teacher does not have a major or minor in Earth Science, college level coursework, or prior teaching experience in Earth Science, can the teacher become HQ by simply taking and passing the General Sciences (DX) or the Earth Science Certification Tests?

A: No. A teacher, in addition to holding state certification, must have a major or the equivalent of a major in the content, or pass the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) subject area content exam, or complete one of the High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) options for demonstrating that he/she is highly qualified.

8. Q: Will there be any lessening of the HQ requirements with reduced staff because of budget cuts?

A: No, at present we do not anticipate any waiver of federal requirements regarding highly qualified teachers.

9. Q: What are the guidelines (including Highly Qualified) for the collaborative teaching model that will allow delivery of the new state high school graduation requirement within CTE programs?

A: This information has been included in Guidelines for Awarding Credit in Career and Technical Education (CTE), Humanities and Other Delivery presented and approved by the State Board of Education, June 12, 2007. These guidelines are available on the Michigan Department of Education web site at www.mi.gov/highschool.