

## **Federal Requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers**

As the 2009-10 school year begins, the purpose of the September 23, 2009, Official E-mail is to remind Montana administrators of the key points relating to the federal Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements. Each district is responsible to annually collect, maintain and retain highly qualified records for all teachers teaching core academic subject classes and report these data to the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). While it is vitally important for Montana school districts to employ qualified teachers, one of the school administrator's pivotal roles is to ensure all core academic subject classes are taught by highly qualified (HQ) teachers. As the instructional leader, the administrator must match teacher qualifications with teaching assignments to reach 100 percent HQT status.

Beginning this fall, the HQT information is being collected electronically as part of the Annual Data Collection (ADC). This process provides to the OPI the data needed to report accurate HQT data to the U.S. Department of Education. The OPI will conduct a follow-up desk audit to verify the 2008-09 HQT data.

### **Key Points Relating to the Federal HQT Requirements**

#### **Definitions**

- "Core academic subjects," as defined by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Act, means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography.
- "Experienced" means a teacher with one or more years of teaching.
- "HOUSSE," as defined by ESEA, means high objective uniform state standard of evaluation. Each state is permitted, under ESEA, to develop standards for HOUSSE by which its experienced teachers will determine Highly Qualified status.
- ETS Praxis II content test means the Educational Testing Service (ETS) content test for specific subject areas, e.g., mathematics, biology, history. Secondary teachers new to the profession holding a minor in a core academic subject must pass the Praxis II content test to meet the HQ requirements.
- ESEA Title II, Part A, Section 2141 (a). If a school district has failed to meet the 100 percent HQT annual measurable objective (AMO) requirement for two consecutive years, the district shall develop an improvement plan to correct the HQT deficiency.
- ESEA Title II, Part A, Section 2141 (c). If after three consecutive years the school district has failed to meet the 100 percent HQT AMO requirement and failed to make adequate yearly progress the OPI will enter into an agreement with the school district on the use of the district's funds to correct the HQT deficiency.

#### **ESEA HQT Requirements for Elementary Teachers New to the Profession**

- A teacher candidate new to the profession must complete an accredited elementary program and be recommended for licensure by that accredited preparation program.

- A teacher with a Class 5 Alternative License teaching at the elementary level (grades K-8) must take the Praxis II elementary content knowledge test prior to teaching elementary curriculum. A Class 5 Alternative License is not sufficient by itself to allow a teacher to teach the elementary curriculum to one or more elementary students (grades K-8). (See the OPI Educator Licensure Web page at [www.opi.mt.gov/cert](http://www.opi.mt.gov/cert) for specific Class 5 Alternative License requirements.)

#### ESEA HQT Requirements for Experienced Elementary Teachers

- A teacher who holds an active elementary license and teaches at the elementary level (grades K-8) meets the ESEA HQ requirements.
- A teacher who holds an active elementary license endorsed in PK-12 special education and teaches at the elementary level (grades PK-8) meets the ESEA HQ requirements.

#### ESEA HQT Requirements for Secondary Teachers New to the Profession

- A secondary level (grades 9-12) teacher new to the profession must hold a major in a core academic subject, **or course work equivalent to a major**, or take the Praxis II content knowledge test to teach core academic subject classes and be recommended for licensure by an accredited education preparation program.
- A secondary level (grades 9-12) special education teacher new to the profession teaching multiple "core academic subjects" exclusively to secondary students with disabilities must hold a major, **or course work equivalent to a major**, in language arts, mathematics, or science at the time of hire to teach core academic subject classes.
- Regular and special education teachers teaching core academic classes in rural districts have two years from the date of hire to meet the HQT requirements. Those teachers teaching in a rural district that qualifies under the Small Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA) have three years from date of hire to meet the HQT requirements. See the SRSA policy letter from the ED at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/secletter/040331.html>. The list of eligible LEAs for the 2009-10 school year is located at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/reapsrsa/eligible09/index.html>.

#### ESEA HQT Requirements for Experienced Secondary Teachers

- At the secondary level (grades 9-12), a minor in a core academic subject is not sufficient by itself to allow the teacher to meet the ESEA HQT requirements to teach a core academic subject class. The teacher must complete the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) to determine HQ.
- At the secondary level (grades 9-12), experienced special education teachers teaching core academic subject classes as the "sole provider" or "teacher of record" must complete the HOUSSE to determine HQ status.
- A teacher who holds an active elementary license endorsed in PK-12 special education and teaches core academic subject classes at the secondary level (grades 9-12) must complete the HOUSSE to determine HQ status.

#### District Responsibilities

- Ensure all teachers newly hired meet the HQ requirements and are assigned to teach classes.
- Ensure all experienced teachers teaching core academic subject classes complete the HOUSSE to determine HQ status and fulfill HQT requirements as soon as possible.
- Assure that the district complies with the HQT requirements of ESEA/ESEA Title II, Part A; Section 2141 (a) and (c).

For more detailed information go to the 2009 updated Highly Qualified Teacher Frequently Asked Questions and the Montana ESEA HQT Data Collection Manual located on the OPI Web page at [www.opi.mt.gov/federalprograms](http://www.opi.mt.gov/federalprograms).

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