

# Handbook for Districts



## Highly Qualified Teachers in Colorado

## Purpose

This resource has been created to inform educators and other interested parties about Colorado's implementation of the Highly Qualified teacher provisions of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act of 2001. This document is organized into four major components:

**Section I: General information** about Highly Qualified teacher requirements.

**Section II: Definitions** that describe the terms mentioned in the Highly Qualified teacher provisions of NCLB.

**Section III: Accountability and Compliance** implications for not meeting the Highly Qualified requirements, including notices to parents and financial consequences.

**Section IV: Frequently asked questions (FAQ)** with regard to the implementation of the Highly Qualified teacher provisions of NCLB.

## Colorado and the Highly Qualified provisions of NCLB

- NCLB requires that all teachers teaching in core-academic content areas meet the Highly Qualified requirements no later than the end of the 2006-07 school year.
- Core-academic content areas are defined as: English, Reading or Language Arts; Mathematics; Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics); Foreign Languages; Social Studies (Civics, Government, History, Geography, Economics); and the Arts (Visual Arts, Music).
- Colorado will consistently and sensibly apply the federal requirements to all teachers.
- The federal statute gives states limited flexibility in creating the Highly Qualified definition. The law requires that for each grade level, all teachers demonstrate competency in all applicable content areas and outlines multiple mechanisms for demonstrating that competency.

**Note:** This document should be viewed as a working document, to be updated and refined as the United States Department of Education (USDE) continues to clarify NCLB and states gain a better understanding of how to implement the law. The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) will provide ongoing clarification, as necessary.

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[http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt.asp)

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## Section 1:

## Setting the Context for Highly Qualified Teachers Under NCLB

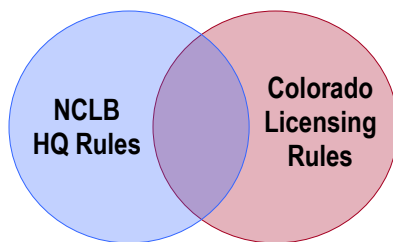
Because a well-prepared teacher is vitally important to a child's education, ensuring high-quality teachers for all students is a key tenet of NCLB. In fact, research provides a clear connection between student achievement and teacher quality. With this in mind, NCLB requires that all core content teachers be Highly Qualified (HQ) to teach their assigned area(s). While this requirement does not guarantee an effective teacher in every classroom, it does create a common set of expectations for teacher knowledge.

The legislation tasks states with designing the details, within certain parameters, of how their teachers will be Highly Qualified. Specifically, teachers must hold a degree, be fully licensed and demonstrate subject matter competency.

Colorado closely examined the state licensing system in creating its Highly Qualified requirements. While the Highly Qualified requirements and Colorado licensing rules overlap, they are not completely aligned. It would require changes in state and/or federal law to fully align the two systems.

### To be considered HQ under NCLB, all core content teachers must:

- 1 Hold a degree
- 2 Be fully licensed  
(except for teachers in some charter schools that have been waived from licensing by the State Board of Education)
- 3 Demonstrate subject matter competency



For example, an endorsement in a core content area does not necessarily mean that a teacher is Highly Qualified in that area. To be Highly Qualified, a teacher with an elementary endorsement must demonstrate subject matter competency by passing an elementary content test or by passing the elementary HOUSSE. In contrast, a high school teacher endorsed in English is considered Highly Qualified to teach English. In other words, an elementary endorsement does not equate to subject matter competency, while a secondary subject area endorsement does equate to subject matter competency for NCLB purposes. The next section explains in detail the NCLB Highly Qualified requirements as implemented by Colorado.

## **Section 2: Colorado's Definition of Highly Qualified Teachers as Required Through NCLB**

### **Basic Definition**

In accordance with section 1119 of NCLB, Colorado defines Highly Qualified Teachers as teachers that are fully licensed and able to demonstrate subject matter competency in each core content area in which they are assigned. This definition applies to both general and special education teachers that are responsible for providing instruction in core content subject areas.

### **Details on the Definition**

#### **Core Academic Areas**

NCLB defines core academic areas as:

- English, Reading, or Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)
- Foreign Languages
- Social Studies (Civics, Government, History, Geography, Economics)
- The Arts (Visual Arts, Music)

#### **Fully Licensed**

A fully licensed teacher holds a current valid license in Colorado. This includes:

- TCH licenses (previously Initial and Professional Licenses and Interim Authorizations)
- MTCH licenses (previously Master Teacher Licenses)
- ALT-P (previously Alternative Teaching Licenses)
- SUB5 (previously 5-Year Sub Authorizations)

To obtain a valid license in Colorado, a teacher must:

- Hold at least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited university

AND

- Complete an approved teacher preparation program. This includes:
  - Completion of a Colorado State Board of Education approved in-state teacher preparation program in elementary education or secondary education at a regionally accredited university, or
  - Completion of an approved out-of-state teacher preparation program, or
  - Participation in an approved Alternative Teacher Licensing preparation program.

For NCLB purposes, an endorsement matching the subject area assignment is encouraged but not required – except for special education endorsements. Teachers working with special education students must hold the proper special education endorsement(s) to meet the IDEA Special Education qualification requirements.

Charter schools can apply for a licensing waiver from the Colorado State Board of Education. If waived from licensing, charter school teachers must still hold a college degree and demonstrate subject matter competency in their subject area assignment(s) to be considered Highly Qualified. To see a list of charter school waivers, go to the CDE website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/datamgmt.htm> and click on "waivers."

While general education teachers in charter schools may be waived from the licensing requirement, this waiver does not extend to special education teachers working in those same charter schools. As mentioned earlier, special education teachers in charter schools must have a valid Colorado teaching license with the proper special education endorsements to meet the licensing component of the Highly Qualified requirements.

For more information on licensing, go to the [Colorado Education Licensing](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_license.htm) page at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/index\\_license.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_license.htm)

### **Subject Matter Competency**

All core academic content teachers must demonstrate content knowledge in all assigned areas. The way a teacher demonstrates content knowledge differs depending on the grade, subject area and school level assignment.

#### *Elementary*

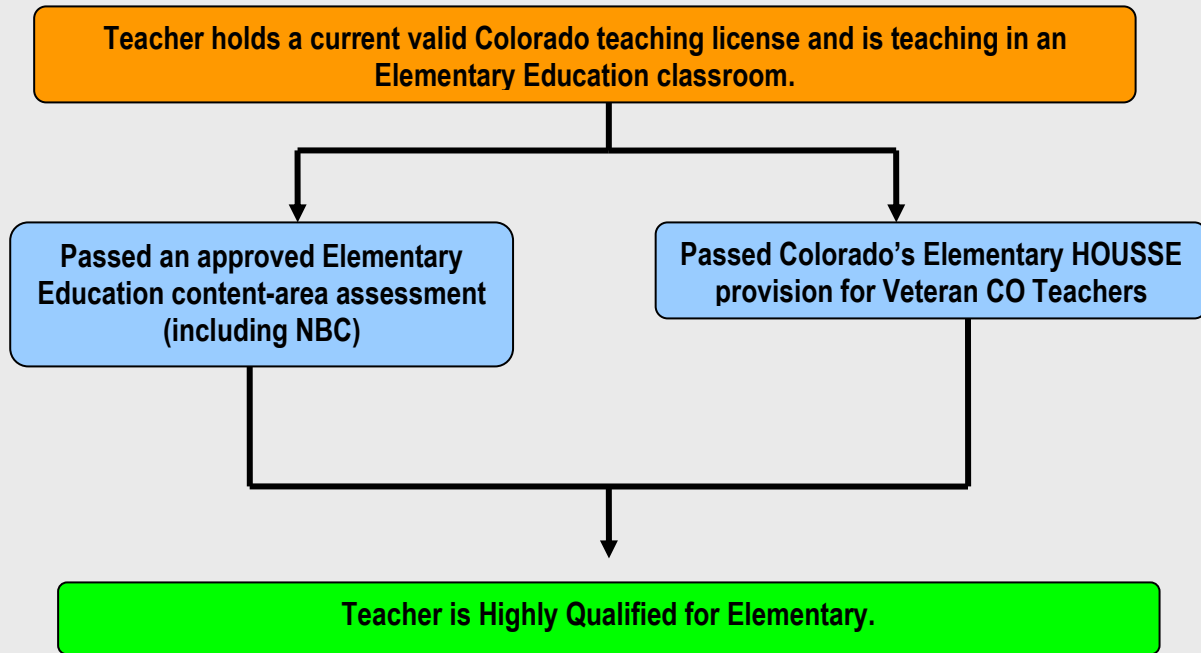
To demonstrate subject matter competency, elementary teachers (grades K-6) must:

- Pass a recognized Elementary Education **content assessment**.
  - Colorado recognizes the PLACE or Praxis II assessments. These assessments reflect the adopted Elementary Education Teacher Preparation Standards in English/Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Humanities, Wellness and Physical Education. Information on these assessments may be found on the CDE website at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/content\\_tests.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprof/content_tests.htm)
  - Teachers who move to Colorado may be able to use out-of-state elementary tests. The list of approved out-of-state assessments is available on the CDE website at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/dl/tii\\_a\\_hqt\\_listofoselemassessments.xls](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/dl/tii_a_hqt_listofoselemassessments.xls)
  - The National Board Certification elementary assessment is also accepted.

#### **OR**

- Pass the **Elementary HOUSSE** provision for Veteran Teachers. NCLB permits states to create High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) provisions that recognize a teacher's previous elementary teaching experience, coursework, and professional development as a means to show subject matter competency. Information on the Elementary HOUSSE provision may be found on the CDE website at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt\\_genresforhqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt_genresforhqt.asp)

## Paths for Elementary Teachers to Become HQ



### Secondary

To demonstrate subject matter competency, secondary teachers (grades 6-12) must:

- Hold a **Bachelor's degree** (or higher) that matches the subject area assignment
- OR
- Pass the subject area **content assessment** (Place, Praxis II, or National Board Content Assessment) that matches the subject area assignment
- OR
- Obtain an **endorsement** in the subject area assignment
- OR
- Obtain **National Board Certification** in the subject area assignment
- OR
- Acquire a minimum of **24-semester hours of coursework** or professional development in the subject area assignment to ensure knowledge and skills in the content area. The district must have documented evidence of that relevant coursework through:
  - College/University credit
    - Coursework must be relevant and applicable to the subject area assignment
    - College/University credit must be awarded by a regionally accredited two- or four-year institution of higher education
    - The LEA or BOCES is responsible for verifying and documenting the teacher's successful completion of this requirement.
    - The formula for determining credit is  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour =  $\frac{2}{3}$  (.66) semester hours

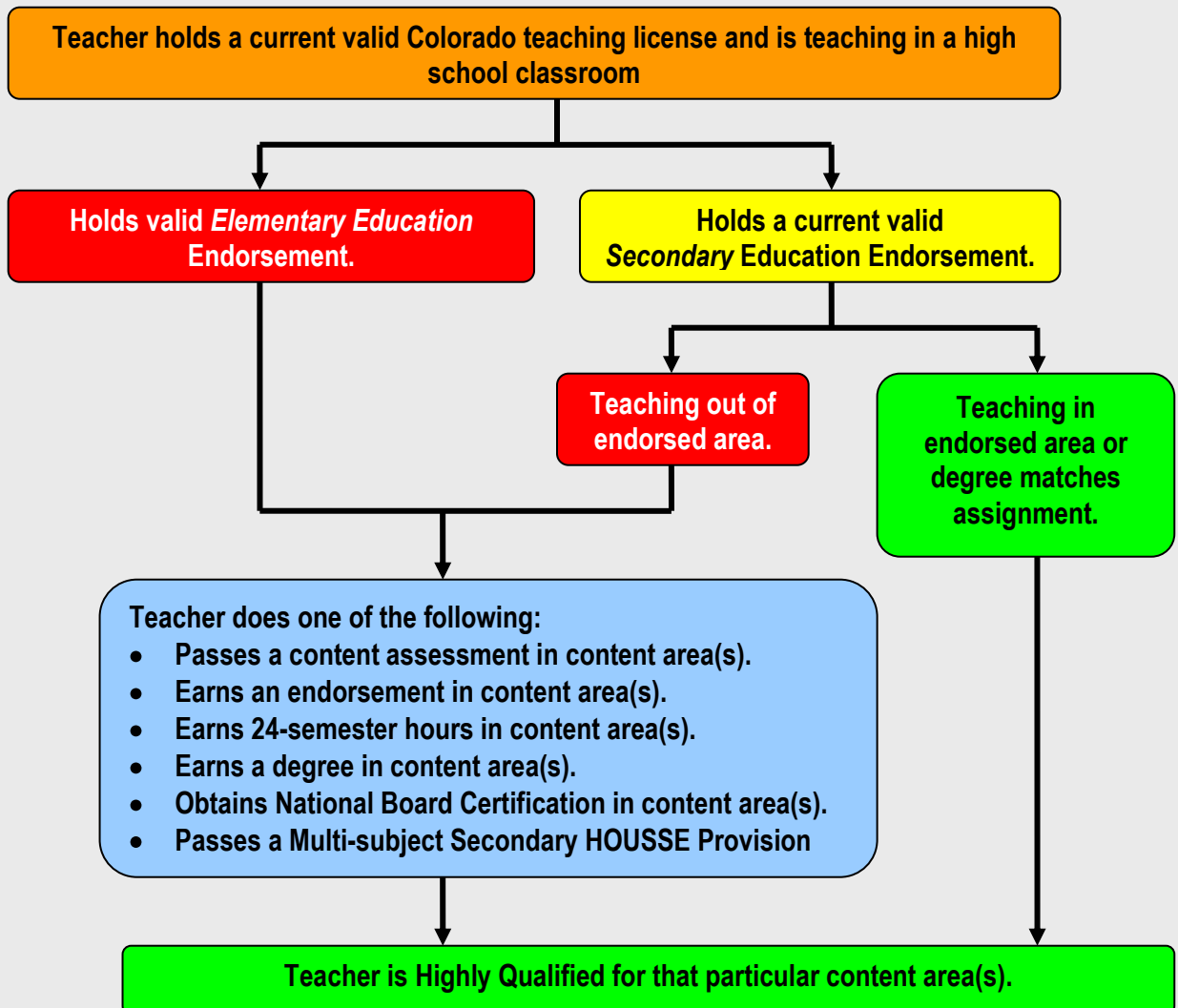
- Professional development activities
  - The activities must be relevant and applicable to the subject area assignment
  - Credit may be awarded for district provided or approved professional development activities, inservices, workshops and education reform, such as curriculum review and development/design
  - Professional development activities do not have to be exclusively “content.” They may include embedded pedagogy, as long as there is evidence of its applicability to content
  - The teacher must provide documented evidence that the professional development activities were relevant and applicable to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in the subject area assignment
  
- Relevant travel
  - The teacher must have approval from the LEA certifying that the travel is applicable to the enhancement of skills and knowledge in the subject area assignment.
  - One-semester hour of credit may be awarded for each 15-clock hours of documented travel, up to a maximum of 6-semester hours. Travel time to and from the intended destination cannot be included.
  - Documented evidence of increased content knowledge and skills must be provided to the district.

OR

- Pass a **multi-subject HOUSSE** (if applicable). Currently, Colorado offers HOUSSE provisions to: (1) secondary special education teachers who teach multiple subjects and (2) secondary teachers in rural settings who teach multiple subjects. Information on these two HOUSSE provisions may be found on the CDE website at: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt\\_genresforhqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt_genresforhqt.asp)



## Paths for Secondary Teachers to Become HQ



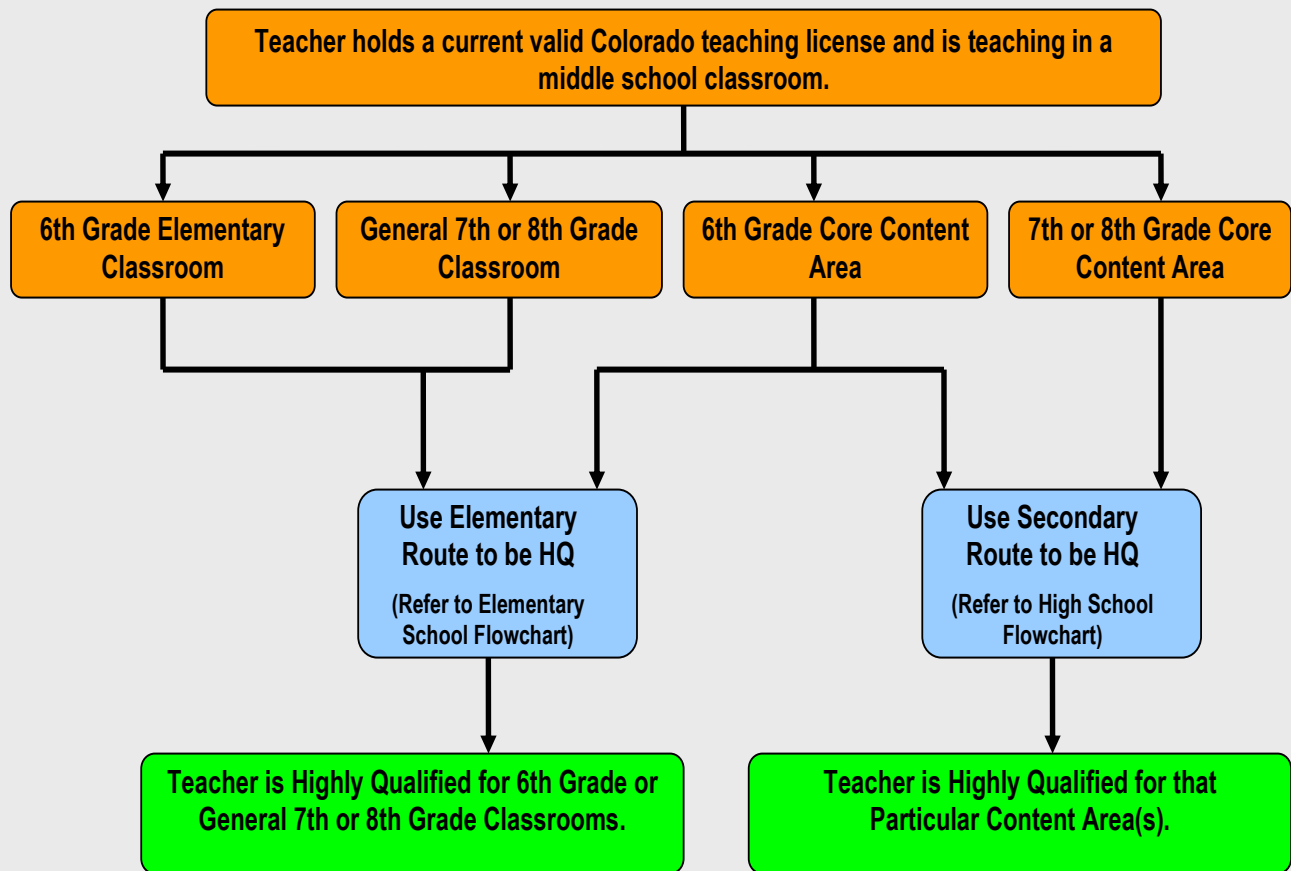
### *Middle Schools*

Although middle school teachers are considered to be secondary teachers, not all middle school teachers will need to be Highly Qualified as secondary teachers. The route and requirements for middle school teachers to be Highly Qualified depends on the type of school and classroom assignment.

If a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is teaching in a general elementary setting, the teacher must meet the elementary requirements to be Highly Qualified. In contrast, if a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher teaches in a traditional middle school setting, where the teacher is a content specialist, then the teacher has the option of meeting the elementary or secondary Highly Qualified requirements.

The Highly Qualified requirements for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers also depend on the type of school and classroom assignment. If a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is teaching in a setting similar to an elementary classroom (i.e., teaching three or more core content classes to the same set of students), then the teacher may meet the elementary Highly Qualified requirements. In contrast, if the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher teaches in a traditional middle school setting where the teacher is a content specialist, then the teacher must meet the secondary Highly Qualified requirements.

### Paths for Middle School Teachers to Become HQ



#### District Documentation

LEAs are required to maintain the evidence, either electronically or in hard copy, that demonstrates that a teacher is Highly Qualified. This may include, but is not limited to, evidence that the teacher has a current license; a copy of the score report from a content test assessment; college transcripts and the district transcript review; and documentation of participation in, and relevance of, professional development. The LEA is also responsible for determining whether a teacher’s coursework is related to the content area(s) being taught to fulfill the Highly Qualified subject matter competency requirement.

Once a teacher's Highly Qualified status for a certain grade and/or subject area is documented, that designation is portable and reciprocal throughout all Colorado school districts. The only exceptions to this are in special circumstances when a teacher is Highly Qualified through the use of the secondary rural or special education HOUSSE provisions. If a teacher is no longer in a rural or special education setting, then the teacher must show subject matter competency for the new assignment.

## **Teachers in Specialized or Alternative Settings**

### *NCLB-funded Teachers*

Any teacher whose salary is funded with NCLB funds must be Highly Qualified – without exception. This includes teachers paid out of Title IIA funds for class size reduction and Title I teachers. Title I teachers include all core content teachers (regardless of the source of funding) in Title I Schoolwide programs, as well as the Title I teacher in a Targeted Assistance program. A school cannot run a Title I Schoolwide program unless all core content teachers are highly qualified.

### *Special Education Teachers*

The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 clarified that special education teachers are expected to be NCLB Highly Qualified. All special education teachers must be fully licensed and hold the proper endorsements for the population of students that they are teaching. Furthermore, special education teachers that act as core content teachers must also meet the NCLB Highly Qualified requirements.

*Elementary.* All special education teachers in elementary school settings must meet the Highly Qualified requirements. This means that the teachers must:

- Hold a valid license with the appropriate special education endorsement

AND

- Demonstrate subject matter competency by:
  - Passing an elementary education content test (i.e., PLACE, Praxis II, elementary content assessment for National Board Certification, approved out-of-state test). Note: passing a special education test will not establish subject matter competency – it must be an approved elementary content test.

OR

- Passing the elementary HOUSSE provision

*Secondary.* A special education teacher in a secondary school setting must be Highly Qualified if the teacher is the "sole provider" of instruction in a core content area. This means that the teacher must:

- Hold a valid license with the appropriate special education endorsement

AND

- Demonstrate subject matter competency by:
    - Holding a Bachelor's degree (or higher) that matches the subject area assignment
- OR
- Passing the subject area content assessment that matches the subject area assignment. Note: passing a special education test will not establish subject matter competency. The test must be in the subject area assignment.

OR

- Obtaining an endorsement in the subject area assignment. Note: an endorsement in special education will not establish subject matter competency. The endorsement must be in the subject area assignment.

OR

- Obtaining National Board Certification in the subject area assignment.

OR

- Acquiring a minimum of 24-semester hours of coursework or professional development in subject area assignment to ensure knowledge and skills in the content area.

OR

- Pass a multi-subject HOUSSE (if applicable). Currently, Colorado offers HOUSSE provisions to: (1) secondary special education teachers who teach multiple subjects and (2) secondary teachers in rural settings who teach multiple subjects. Information on these two HOUSSE provisions may be found on the CDE website at:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt\\_genresforhqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt_genresforhqt.asp)

Determining whether a special education teacher is a core content teacher can be complex. CDE recommends that administrative units and district administrators work with others who fully understand the teacher's duties (e.g., school principal) to determine whether the teacher needs to meet the HQ requirements.

The "sole provider" of content at the secondary level is defined as:

- Teacher introduces core content and provides full lessons on key concepts to students
- OR
- Teacher makes instructional decisions for students (e.g., assessments, curricular design).

The following situations are *not* included in the definition of sole provider. Therefore, these secondary teachers do not need to meet HQ requirements:

- Teacher co-teaches with another HQ teacher: The classroom teacher and special education teacher are jointly responsible for the primary instruction of a student or group of students, including curriculum planning and student assessment.
- Teacher provides consultation: The special education teacher provides support or consultation to the classroom teacher. Such support may take many forms, such as: providing guidance or modeling in instructional techniques, resources, or accommodations that will enable a particular student to access the curriculum and succeed in the general education classroom. The classroom teacher, however, remains the primary instructor responsible for curriculum planning and student assessment.
- Teacher pre-teaches or re-teaches concepts.
- Teacher provides additional practice opportunities (e.g., second dip).

A secondary special education teacher who works **exclusively** with students who are working toward alternate standards and assessed with an alternate assessment (i.e., students that participate in CoAlt) must meet the elementary Highly Qualified requirements.

#### *Other Specialty Teachers*

Teachers who work with certain populations of students (e.g., ESL, bilingual, gifted and talented, interventionists) need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements if they are responsible for delivering the key concepts in a core content area. For example, an ESL teacher who pulls out a group of elementary students to provide all of their reading instruction would need to meet the elementary HQ requirements. In contrast, an interventionist that provides additional practice opportunities for struggling students after the

students have received their initial instruction from a highly qualified instruction would not need to meet the HQ requirements.

#### *Charter School Teachers*

As mentioned earlier, charter schools may apply to the Colorado State Board of Education for a waiver from licensing requirements. If waived from licensing, general education teachers do not need to meet the licensing requirement for NCLB HQ. However, teachers must still hold a Bachelor's degree (or higher) and demonstrate subject matter competency for their assignment(s).

Special education teachers in charter schools are not included in the licensing waiver. Even if the charter school has a licensing waiver, the special education teacher must hold a current teaching license (with the appropriate special education endorsement) and meet subject matter competency requirements.

To see a list of charter school waivers, go to the CDE website at: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/datamgmt.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/datamgmt.htm) and click on "waivers."

#### *Teachers in Facilities Serving Neglected or Delinquent Youth*

Section 1119 of Title I requires each state educational agency (SEA) that receives Title I, Part A funds to develop and implement a plan to ensure that all teachers teaching core academic subjects within the state are Highly Qualified. This requirement extends to all teachers of core academic subjects who are employed by agencies or entities under the authority of the SEA (e.g., state operated programs, Charter School Institute), as well as those employed by LEAs (e.g., teachers employed by the district housed in a detention center).

#### *Teachers in Online Schools or Programs*

Teachers in online schools or programs who are responsible for assessing, making curriculum decisions, assigning grades and/or answering content questions need to be HQ. Teachers assigned solely to ensure that students are on task, however, do not need to be HQ. While online education systems are becoming more sophisticated every day, all students must still have an HQ teacher who has responsibility for the mastery of curriculum in the core content areas. The HQ teacher does not have to be physically present to provide support, but a teacher with demonstrated content knowledge must still be available to the students. In other words:

- **Teacher** – This is a teacher that is providing instruction, answering questions and ensuring that students are making adequate progress in the class. All courses should have a teacher associated with it, and this teacher must meet the HQ requirements.
- **Monitoring Supervisors** – The role of this teacher is to ensure that students remain on task. They do not provide any instructional content to students and therefore do not need to meet the HQ requirements.

**Section 3:****Accountability and Compliance Issues Regarding Highly Qualified Teachers Under NCLB**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Reference</b>
What if all core content teachers are not HQ in an LEA?	<i>HQ Teacher Deadline.</i> All Title I teachers must be HQ – plans cannot be accepted. For any other non-HQ teacher, an LEA must submit an individual plan to CDE. All Title I teachers must be HQ and all other teachers must be HQ or at least have an approved plan before NCLB funds will be released to the LEA.	HQT State plan, NCLB Sec. 1119, NCLB Sec. 2141
What if a core content teacher or paraprofessional paid for with NCLB funds is not HQ?	<i>Teachers/Paraprofessionals on NCLB Salary.</i> NCLB funds will not be released to the LEA. Additional time to get these teachers and paraprofessionals HQ can no longer be granted. Plans cannot be accepted.  Note: all teachers and paraprofessionals in a Title I Schoolwide program are considered Title I teachers, and all must be Highly Qualified. Schools will not be able to operate Title I Schoolwide programs unless 100% of core content teachers and instructional paraprofessionals are HQ.	HQT State Plan, NCLB Sec. 1119
How must schools ensure that they only hire HQ teachers?	<i>Principal Attestation.</i> Principals in Title I schools need to attest annually that they are complying with the HQ rules. This document needs to be made available to the public, upon request.	NCLB Sec. 1119(i)
What do LEAs need to let parents know about teacher qualifications?	<i>Parents Right to Know.</i> All LEAs receiving Title I funds must notify parents of their right to request information on their child's teacher's qualifications. This is to be done at the beginning of every school year.	NCLB Sec. 1111(h)(6) (A)
What if a teacher in a Title I school is not HQ?	<i>Four-Week Rule.</i> If a student is being instructed -- for longer than four weeks -- by a teacher/substitute teacher who does not meet HQ requirements, a letter informing the students' parents of this information must be sent in a timely manner.	NCLB Sec. 1111(h)(6) (B)
What if a LEA is accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan?	<i>2141 Sanction.</i> LEAs accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan must enter into a financial agreement with CDE on its use of Title IIA funds.	HQT State Plan, NCLB sec. 2141

## **Detailed Description of NCLB HQ Sanctions**

### *Teachers and Paraprofessionals on NCLB Salaries*

All core content teachers that receive their salaries through NCLB funds (e.g., Title I teacher, teacher through Title IIA class size reduction) must be Highly Qualified at time of hire. Extensions cannot be provided for Title I teachers and plans will not be accepted. The United States Department of Education recently clarified that all core content teachers and instructional paraprofessionals in a Title I Schoolwide program are considered Title I teachers (even if not salaried with Title I funds) and must be HQ. If an LEA cannot ensure that all core content teachers and instructional paraprofessionals in a Title I Schoolwide program are Highly Qualified, the school will not be able to operate a Title I Schoolwide program.

CDE verifies the HQ status of all core content teachers in the Consolidated Application before NCLB funds will be released to LEAs. CDE also reviews the status of all Title I paraprofessionals (including new hires) listed in the Consolidated Application before funds will be released.

### *HQ Teacher and Paraprofessional Deadlines*

All core content teachers were expected to be Highly Qualified by the end of the 2006-07 school year. While the state gets closer to this target every year, some core content teachers still do not meet the HQ requirements. In the HQT State Plan (approved by the USDE in November 2006), Colorado specified that extensions would be granted to districts if reasonable plans were submitted (e.g., completing coursework, taking a content test) for each non-HQ teacher. These extensions are only available for a short time and do not apply to Title I teachers (or any teacher in a Title I Schoolwide Program). All Title I teachers must be Highly Qualified. In the meantime, CDE will not release NCLB funds until (1) all core content teachers in the LEA are HQ, or (2) each non-HQ teacher at least has an approved HQ teacher plan.

All Title I instructional paraprofessionals were expected to meet HQ requirements by 2004-05. HQ plans for paraprofessionals will no longer be accepted. Any non-Highly Qualified Title I instructional paraprofessionals reported in the annual Regular HR or Special Education HR collections will have to be removed from the classroom immediately and cannot resume instructional duties until the Highly Qualified requirements are met.

### *Principal Attestations*

Principals in Title I schools need to attest annually that they are complying with the HQ rules. Copies of attestations must be kept at each school and at the LEA's main office. This document also needs to be made available to the public, upon request. Sample forms are available on the CDE website (listed below).

### *Parents Right to Know*

At the beginning of each school year, each LEA receiving Title I funds must notify parents of their right to know the qualifications of their child's teacher(s). Often, this is done through a newsletter to parents. The communication is expected to be done in a format and language that parents can understand. Upon request from a parent, the district must provide information about specific teachers' qualifications, including:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and licensing criteria for their assignment
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status or licensing criteria have been waived
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the degree

Note: This sharing of information should not violate the confidentiality rights of a teacher (e.g., it is inappropriate to provide parents with/show teachers' official transcripts). A sample notification is available on the CDE website (listed below).

#### *Four Week Rule*

If a student in a Title I school is being instructed -- for longer than four weeks -- by a teacher/substitute teacher who does not meet the HQ requirements, a letter informing students' parents of this information must be sent, in a timely manner. This sanction applies to core content teachers in all Title I schools -- regardless of whether the school runs a Targeted Assistance or Schoolwide program. Sample notifications are available on the CDE website (listed below).

#### *2141 Sanctions*

LEAs accredited with a Priority Improvement or Turnaround Plan must enter into a financial agreement with the LEA on its use of Title IIA program funds. Title IIA funds should support professional development strategies the district will use to address its Priority Performance Challenges and Major Improvement Strategies.

Identified districts must develop plans using the Unified Improvement Plan template and Title IIA addendum (<http://www.schoolview.org/UnifiedImprovementPlanning.asp>). When the LEA is accredited with an Improvement Plan or better (Accredited or Accredited with Distinction), the LEA will no longer be required to enter into this financial agreement.

For more information, including templates and samples, visit the CDE website at:  
[http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt.asp).



**General Highly Qualified (HQ) Questions****1. Is a teacher's Highly Qualified status portable between Colorado school districts?**

Once a teacher's Highly Qualified status for a certain grade and/or subject is documented, that designation is portable and reciprocal throughout all Colorado school districts. Thus, if a Highly Qualified secondary math teacher transfers to another Colorado school district, the teacher will continue to be Highly Qualified to teach math. If, however, that teacher is assigned to a different content area when that teacher transfers to another district, the teacher would have to work with the new district to establish Highly Qualified status for the new subject area.

There are two HOUSSE provisions that are not portable: the rural HOUSSE for secondary multi-subject teachers and the special education HOUSSE for secondary multi-subject teachers. If a teacher is no longer a rural or special education teacher, then the teacher must show subject matter competency like any other teacher.

**2. Does Colorado take a teacher's experience into account, when defining State requirements for Highly Qualified teacher qualification?**

No. Experience is very important to teaching "quality," but does not, in and of itself, meet the NCLB Highly Qualified requirements. For example, previous teaching experience is not counted toward the 24 semester hours. However, experience is a component of the HOUSSE provisions available for certain teachers.

**Subject Matter Competency****3. A teacher has an elementary endorsement – why is she not considered highly qualified?**

This is an example of how federal and state law are not always fully compatible. Federal law (NCLB) requires that elementary teachers show subject matter competency by passing a content test. NCLB allows states to write HOUSSE provisions in order to provide certain populations of teachers some flexibility in how they show subject matter competency. Unfortunately, an endorsement in elementary education does not always ensure that a teacher has taken the content test or is eligible for the HOUSSE provision. Thus, for NCLB purposes, an elementary endorsement is not sufficient to show subject matter competency. To change our state licensing system to align with NCLB requirements, state law would need to be amended. Short of changing state law, we have two overlapping but not completely aligned systems.

**4. Does a Master's degree in Education count toward demonstrating subject matter competency?**

No. A general Master's degree in Education will not satisfy the subject matter competency requirement. NCLB specifically states that an educator may demonstrate competence through a Master's degree in the core academic subject(s) in the assigned areas, but not through a generalized degree. Furthermore, a degree in the assignment area can be used to demonstrate subject matter competency at the secondary level, but not at the elementary level.

**5. How can 7th and 8th grade teachers in a K-8 school be highly qualified?**

Seventh and eighth grade teachers who act as generalists (i.e., teaches three or more core content classes) may show subject matter competency as an elementary teacher or as a secondary teacher in each subject area assignment.

To go through the elementary determinations in this scenario, make sure to code the subject area as a "general 7th/8th grade" in the Human Resources (HR) Collections. If this variable is not indicated, then that teacher's record will run through the secondary level HQ determinations for each subject area assignment.

**6. How can a teacher covering multiple grade spans (e.g., grades 4-8) be highly qualified?**

A teacher in multiple subjects and multiple grade areas is still responsible for being HQ in each of those subject areas and grade levels -- but it may look different depending on the teacher's assignment:

- Elementary classes + 6th grade\* = elementary requirements
- Secondary classes + 6th grade = secondary requirements
- Elementary classes + secondary classes + 6th grade\* = elementary AND secondary requirements
- 6th grade\* only in elementary = elementary requirements
- 6th grade\* content specialist = elementary OR secondary requirements

\* or General 7th-8th Grade

**7. Once teachers have demonstrated subject matter competency in the core subject(s) they teach, do they have to continue to demonstrate competency in subsequent years?**

Technically, once a teacher has demonstrated subject matter competency, the teacher does not need to continue to demonstrate that competency to maintain the HQT designation (as long as data is submitted accurately in the HR collection). However, the HR collection is a "point-in-time" collection and does not build on past data. Districts should maintain data systems to ensure the proper variables are present to activate HQ status. If an educator's teaching assignment and/or the scope of subject matter changes, the individual may need to demonstrate subject matter competency in the new subject area assignment.

**8. Does a social studies teacher who teaches several of the individual content areas (e.g., economics, history, geography, civics and government) that comprise social studies need to demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the individual content areas?**

No. Colorado does not have separate endorsements or content area exams for the individual content areas (e.g., economics, history, geography, civics and government) that comprise social studies. Accordingly, a licensed teacher teaching any of the individual content areas that comprise social studies meets the subject matter competency component of the Highly Qualified requirements by:

- Holding a current valid license with a social studies endorsement; or
- Providing documented evidence of the equivalent of 24-semester hours in social studies; or
- Holding a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in social studies; or
- Passing an approved social studies content-area test (PLACE or Praxis II); or
- Earning National Board Certification in social studies; or
- Passing a National Board Core Content Assessment in social studies.

**9. Does a science teacher who teaches several of the individual content areas (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics) that comprise the sciences need to demonstrate subject matter competency in each of the individual content areas?**

No. Colorado does not have separate endorsements or content area exams for the individual content areas (e.g., biology, physics, chemistry) that compose the sciences. Accordingly, a licensed teacher teaching any of the individual content areas that comprise the sciences meets the subject matter competency component of the Highly Qualified requirements by:

- Holding a current valid license with a science endorsement; or
- Providing documented evidence of the equivalent of 24-semester hours in science; or
- Holding a Bachelor's degree (or higher) in science; or
- Passing an approved science content-area test (PLACE or Praxis II); or
- Earning National Board Certification in science; or
- Passing a National Board Core Content Assessment in science.

**Who Needs to be HQ?**

**10. Are physical education, health, business, and instructional technology considered core academic subjects?**

No. NCLB does not consider these core academic subjects. Therefore, these teachers do not need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements. This does not mean, however, that these subjects are any less important to the academic success of students throughout the state. Teachers who teach these subjects must continue to meet the state's laws and regulations related to licensure and re-licensure and should continue to participate in professional development activities that strengthen their professional knowledge and skills.

**11. Do early childhood and preschool teachers need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements?**

No. In Colorado, early childhood and preschool teachers do not need to meet the NCLB Highly Qualified requirements. However, ECE and preschool special education teachers must still meet the IDEA special education qualification requirements (i.e., must hold proper endorsements).

**12. Do teachers who primarily teach English language learners need to meet the Highly Qualified requirements?**

Yes, ELA, ELS, and bilingual teachers must meet the HQ requirements if they are sole providers of core content. For example, if the ELA teacher is the primary provider of reading instruction for a group of students, then that teacher must be highly qualified. However, if the teacher is focusing on language skills or providing additional practice opportunities in reading, then the teacher does not need to meet the HQ requirements.

**13. Do online teachers need to be highly qualified?**

It depends on the role of the teacher. Core content teachers that are responsible for assessing, making curriculum decisions, assigning grades and/or answering content questions need to be HQ. However, teachers assigned solely to ensure that students are on task do not need to be HQ. While online education systems are becoming more sophisticated every day, all students must still have an HQ teacher who has the responsibility for mastery of curriculum in the core content classes. The HQ teacher does not have to be physically present to provide support, but a teacher with demonstrated content knowledge must still be available to the students.

**14. Do long-term substitutes have to meet the Highly Qualified definition? How do they become Highly Qualified?**

Technically, a substitute needs to be HQ after four consecutive weeks (20 days) in the classroom. Title I of NCLB requires that parents be notified if their child has received instruction for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher, including a long-term substitute, who is not Highly Qualified.

A substitute can meet the HQ requirements in the same manner as other teachers. Districts should be particularly aware of the type of license or authorization that the substitute holds. Remember that 1-year and 3-year substitute authorizations do not count as valid licenses for NCLB HQ. However, a 5-year substitute authorization is a valid license for NCLB HQ. per U.S. Department of Education guidance, CDE recommends encouraging substitutes to meet the Highly Qualified requirements if there is a chance that the assignment will be long-term.

**15. Do teachers hired by an LEA to provide Title I services to nonpublic school students need to be HQ?**

Yes. Teachers hired by an LEA to provide Title I services to nonpublic school students must meet the Highly Qualified teacher requirements of NCLB. The teacher can only be employed for Title I purposes, and must teach under the direct supervision of the LEA with respect to all Title I activities.

**16. Do foreign exchange teachers need to meet the HQ requirements?**

Teachers participating in the Fulbright Scholars Program do not need to meet the HQ requirements. They have received a special waiver from the U.S. Department of Education. This waiver may also apply to other exchange programs in which the visiting teacher remains the employee of the home school during the exchange period. Otherwise, core content teachers from other countries -- even on a temporary basis -- need to meet all of the HQ requirements.

**17. Do paraprofessionals need to be Highly Qualified?**

Only Title I instructional paraprofessionals working with students in PK-12 need to be Highly Qualified. This includes all instructional paraprofessionals in Title I Schoolwide programs. An instructional paraprofessional is an individual who provides instruction and support for classroom teachers. Aides, assistants or tutors who engage in instructional support are considered to be instructional paraprofessionals as defined by NCLB.

## **HOUSSE Provisions**

**18. What is HOUSSE?**

HOUSSE stands for High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation. NCLB requires teachers to be Highly Qualified by possessing a teaching license and demonstrating subject matter competency in the core academic assignment area(s). States were allowed to create HOUSSE provisions as an alternative way for certain categories of teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency. Currently, Colorado has created (1) an Elementary HOUSSE for Veteran Teachers, (2) a Secondary HOUSSE for Multi- Subject Special Education Teachers, and (3) a Secondary HOUSSE for Multi-Subject Rural Teachers.

**19. Is the elementary HOUSSE for veteran teachers still available? Who can use it?**

Yes, the elementary HOUSSE is still available for teachers who have yet to go through the HOUSSE process. The eligibility requirements include:

- Valid teaching license on or before July 1, 2006 (in or out of state), and
- One or more years of teaching experience (in or out of state).

More information on the elementary HOUSSE may be found on the CDE website at:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a\\_hqt\\_genresforhqt.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt_genresforhqt.asp)

**20. Who is eligible for Colorado's Multi-Subject Rural HOUSSE?**

Based on NCLB and guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, the following are the eligibility criteria for teachers in rural schools to use this HOUSSE provision. Candidates must meet all criteria to be eligible for the HOUSSE provision:

- District is eligible for the most recent Small Rural School Achievement Program (SRSA).
- Candidate has been assigned to teach two or more core content classes in a secondary grade (i.e., 6th through 12th grade).
- Candidate has a valid Colorado license and at least one year of teaching experience (in or out of state). If hired in a charter school where licenses have been waived, candidate has at least a Bachelor's degree.
- Candidate is already Highly Qualified in at least one core content subject without the use of this HOUSSE provision.

**21. Who is eligible for Colorado's Multi-Subject Special Education HOUSSE?**

Based on NCLB, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and guidance from the U.S. Department of Education, the following are the eligibility criteria for special education teachers to use this HOUSSE provision. Candidates must meet all criteria to be eligible for the HOUSSE provision.

- Candidate is the sole provider of instruction for two or more core content classes in a secondary grade (i.e., 6th through 12th grade).
- Candidate has a Colorado license with the proper special education endorsements.
- (If a new teacher licensed on or after July 1, 2007) Candidate is already Highly Qualified in at least language arts, math or science without the use of this HOUSSE provision.

**22. What types of professional development experiences count towards credit (for the 24 semester hours and for use in the HOUSSE provisions)?**

Fifteen (15) contact hours of professional development equates to one semester hour. The professional development must be focused on deepening content knowledge. Examples of professional development include participation in professional conference/seminar/training in the assignment area, participation in study group focused on the identified subject, and receiving coaching or mentoring in the identified subject. LEAs should maintain documentation that includes at least the following: length of time involved in activity, role in that activity and demonstration of deepening content knowledge.

**23. What needs to be in place for coaching or mentoring to count as PD?**

The coaching or mentoring received should be through a formal relationship (e.g., mentoring through an approved induction program, coaching with pre- and post-conferences and observations) and it needs to be documented (e.g., contract that outlines expectations, contact hours log). Also, remember that the activity needs to be focused on deepening content knowledge in the subject area assignment.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**24. What are the responsibilities of the Colorado Department of Education in implementing the NCLB HQ requirements?**

- Provide districts with accurate information on the Highly Qualified teacher and Title I instructional paraprofessional requirements.
- Provide a State-wide HQT Reporting System for districts and administrative units.
- Provide technical assistance to districts in identifying and reporting Highly Qualified teachers and Title I instructional paraprofessionals.
- Monitor districts for compliance with federal requirements.
- Ensure that all non-HQ teachers have plans in place to become HQ in a reasonable amount of time.

**25. What are the responsibilities of Colorado school districts and administrative units in implementing the NCLB HQ requirements?**

- Gather and maintain Highly Qualified teacher and Title I instructional paraprofessional data (including teachers and Title I instructional paraprofessionals in charter schools) through the annual HR and Special HR collections. This also includes participating in the online HQ system if any teachers are flagged as non-HQ.
- Assist and monitor non-HQ teachers' progress in completing their approved HQ Teacher Plan.
- Ensure that any core content teacher paid for with NCLB funds meets the HQ requirements.
  - All core content teachers and instructional paraprofessionals must be Highly Qualified for a school to operate a Title I Schoolwide program.
- Provide resources to support teachers and Title I instructional paraprofessionals in meeting the federal requirements.
- Ensure that Title I principals are completing their Principal Attestations annually. This form should be filed at the district office and be made available to the public, upon request.
- Notify parents of students who are enrolled in Title I Schoolwide programs and Title I Targeted Assistance programs if the students have a teacher, for four weeks or more, who does not meet the Highly Qualified requirements established under NCLB.

**26. What are teachers' responsibilities in implementing the NCLB HQ requirements?**

- Maintain a valid Colorado teaching license.
- If necessary, complete additional coursework and/or professional development in content area.
- If necessary, take appropriate content area test.