

Clarification for Meeting Highly Qualified Requirements For Special Education Teachers

The purpose of this communiqué is to explain/clarify how the term “highly qualified,” used in the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, impacts special education teachers in Michigan.

The act was signed by President Bush on December 3, 2004. Given the recency of this statute a number of questions and concerns remain at issue. However, the one fact about which there is absolute certainty is that:

All public elementary and secondary school teachers, including special education, bilingual education, and alternative education teachers who teach core academic subjects, must have met the “highly qualified” requirement by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.*

New special education teachers who teach multiple subjects and are highly qualified in Mathematics, Language Arts or Science at the time of hire, have two years after the date of employment to demonstrate competence in the other core academic subjects.

****Note: An extension through June 30, 2009 has been granted to Michigan Special Education teachers in order to meet the October 2007 revision in HQ requirements.***

What are the Core Academic Subjects?

English/Language Arts
Reading
Mathematics
Foreign Languages
The Arts: Visual Arts, Instrumental Music,
Vocal Music, Dance and Theatre
Science: General Science, Biology,
Chemistry, Earth/Space, Physical
Science, Physics
Social Studies: Social Studies, Civics
and Government, History, Geography,
Economics

What does “Highly Qualified” mean for Special Education Teachers?

“Highly Qualified” means the teacher holds a valid Michigan Teaching Certificate and an appropriate required special education endorsement and can demonstrate competence in each of the core subject areas taught or assigned to teach.

Special Education Teachers who are not required to meet the Highly Qualified requirement:

- Special education resource room program teachers who provide academic support, but **do not** teach the core academic subjects.
- Special education teachers who team teach in a general classroom, **regardless** of which teacher (general education or special education) gives the grade or credit.
- Special education teacher consultants.
- Early childhood special education teachers (birth to pre-K)

Considerations for Secondary Special Education Teachers Certificated at the Secondary Level or Teaching at the Secondary Level to meet the Highly Qualified Requirement

NOTE: Completing any ONE of these options will be demonstration of being highly qualified to teach core academic subject areas in special education.

Hold a major (or equivalent)

Secondary special education teachers who are providing direct instruction in a core subject area, to students with disabilities, may demonstrate competence to teach that subject in the special education setting by completing the equivalent to a major in that subject. A major is defined as thirty (30) semester credit hours or more.

Pass the Elementary Exam of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC)

This comprehensive examination is designed to cover the spectrum of core subject areas that define the curriculum that a certified elementary or secondary special education teacher can be assigned to teach at the **ELEMENTARY level** or to students who are exclusively assessed by alternative achievement standards.

Pass the appropriate subject exam of the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC)

Secondary special education teachers who are providing direct instruction to students with disabilities may take and pass the specific subject area MTTC in

order to demonstrate competence to teach that subject in the special education setting.

National Board Certification in Exceptional Needs

This is authorized by the “advanced certification provision” in ESEA/NCLB. Nothing additional is required.

HOUSSE Options

Both the ESEA/NCLB and IDEA allows the state to set High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (**HOUSSE**) as a process for teachers to meet the highly qualified requirement. The following options are available to secondary special education teachers.

HOUSSE OPTION #1

Since the issuance of the provisional certificate, has completed 18 semester hours* in a planned standards-based approved program or a masters or higher degree.

*The semester hours taken must be shown to reflect knowledge in the core academic subject area(s) being taught.

A Masters Degree in Special Education ALONE, will not meet the highly qualified requirement. However, courses taken toward a Master’s Degree in Special Education may be used to meet the HOUSSE standards, if those courses can be shown to reflect knowledge in the core academic subject(s) being taught. Courses within the master’s program may be used towards one’s demonstration of being highly qualified. For example, courses supporting the teaching of math, reading, science, social studies, the arts, etc., would be applicable toward meeting HQ requirements. Thus, teachers are urged to review transcripts for all classes which substantiate or support core content area(s).

HOUSSE OPTION #2

Have completed six semester hours in a SPECIFIC core area within the last five years. Teachers are urged to look at all courses completed during this time period that specify a core subject area in the title/course description and others that reflect knowledge in the core academic subject(s) being taught

or

Have completed 90 clock hours of professional development activities in core subject area(s) within the last five years including, for example, special seminars and training in Reading First, social studies content standards, instruction and assessment, etc.

*Semester hours can be converted into clock hours (1 semester hour = 15 clock hours) to meet an option objective.

*Other professional development experiences in the core subject area may be converted as applicable. See Attachment A.

HOUSSE OPTION #3

Both the ESEA/NCLB and IDEA allows the state to set High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) options as a process by which veteran teachers can meet the highly qualified requirement. HOUSSE Option #3 allows for the development and submission of a content area portfolio as a means of demonstrating competence. To structure this process, “Michigan Content Area Portfolio Guidelines” were developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education.

In summary, a portfolio developed to comply with the following guidelines is the purposeful collection/documentation of experiences, activities, events and opportunities that support professional learning and demonstrate competence in one or more of the core academic areas specified in ESEA/NCLB.

The secondary special education teacher must demonstrate competence in each core academic subject assigned to teach. Competence in each of the areas may be demonstrated in different ways (within these guidelines). Each experience, activity or event included in the portfolio must be documented, and; the required report form must be used where applicable.

Following are the components that must be used by special education teachers to develop a portfolio to demonstrate competence in one or more core academic subjects. The teacher must provide documentation of each component used.

Teaching Experience – See Attachment B

The teacher must have up to five years of successful teaching experience in at least one of the four appropriate core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Teaching experience must be documented by a valid Michigan teaching certificate and an experience report.

College Level Course Work – See Attachment C

The teacher must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 semester hours with at least 6 semester hours in **each** of the core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. These 30 semester hours must include at least 3 semester hours in the core academic area of reading, which is required for a Michigan secondary level teaching certificate. All course work may have been completed anytime during the teacher’s collegiate preparation program. Successful completion of course work must be submitted on required report form and documented by official transcript.

Content Specific Professional Development Activities – See Attachment D

As defined by ESEA/NCLB, the term professional development includes activities that:

- Improve and increase teachers’ knowledge of the academic subjects they teach and enable them to become highly qualified;
- Are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans;

- Give teachers and other members of the educational team knowledge and skills to enable students to meet and achieve state academic standards; and
- Involve many other experiences, activities and opportunities that are “not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences.”

With respect to this definition, the teacher must list at least **five** professional development experiences in which he/she has participated within the last five years that support teaching and learning in the core academic areas. This might include participation:

- To develop, select or evaluate content standards;
- To align local content standards with state standards;
- To develop, validate or evaluate content assessments;
- At local, regional or state professional development seminars/workshops;
- In action research study groups;
- or**
- In the completion of the portfolio assessment for National Board Certification.

In keeping with the State Board approved guidelines for a content area portfolio, this content specific professional development activities section of the multidisciplinary portfolio must also include a reflection statement on how the combination of professional activities has improved/impacted your teaching practice/classroom instructional strategies. See Attachment D-1.

(Attachment A provides a list of additional optional activities that may be used for professional development.)

Some activities classified as “professional development” may also be classified as “service to the profession in the content area” and may be interchanged to demonstrate competence for either component. Note: A given activity may not be used for both “professional development” and “service to the content area.”

Service to the Profession in the Content Area – See Attachment E

The sharing of content knowledge and pedagogical skill, and the application of principles and practices acquired by experience to the teaching and learning for the continuous improvement of schools is a critical means by which the teaching profession is sustained. For this reason, “Service to the Profession in the Content Area” is one of the four structural/functional categories of the multidisciplinary portfolio process.

Service to the Profession within the last five years, must relate to the core academic areas. Experience and opportunities that may be used to demonstrate competence in this category may include, but is not limited to:

- A department chair or team leader;
- A mentor teacher;
- A cooperating teacher for student teacher;
- An officer in a regional, state, or national professional content organization;
- A content instructor at an institution of higher education;
- A recognized content specialist at the district level;
- A National Board assessor;

- A member of a district/building school improvement team;
- An author/publisher of professional literature related to core academic areas;
- A participant in the development, selection, validation, or evaluation of standard in any of the cored academic areas;
- A participant in the development, pilot, evaluation of curriculum, instructional or assessment tools/procedures, etc., in any of the core academic areas; and
- A participant in the development/validation of state/national assessments.

Additional Information

The highly qualified mandate is not a “we/they” issue for teachers and management. Rather, it should be viewed as a collaborative partnership to meet a federal law.

It is expected that teachers and district personnel will work together to determine one’s highly qualified status, based on Michigan’s Definition for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers.

Teachers must understand that they are ultimately responsible for making sure they are highly qualified, similar to their obligation of meeting all certification requirements and maintaining a valid state certificate.

For clarification of Michigan’s Definition for Identifying Highly Qualified Teachers, please contact:

Frank Ciloski, Michigan Department of Education
517-373-6791 or CiloskiF@michigan.gov

Krista Ried, Michigan Department of Education
517-373-0699 or RiedK@michigan.gov

Linda Keway, Michigan Education Association
517-332-6551, ext. 6217 or lkeway@mea.org

Carolyn Logan, Michigan Education Association
517-332-6551, ext. 6212 or clogan@mea.org

Attachment A

Optional Professional Development Activities for the Michigan Multidisciplinary Portfolios

- Conducting action research projects
- Joining a cadre of in-house trainers and participating in the facilitation of professional development for other teachers
- Giving presentations on content at conferences – See Attachment F
- Leading a school-wide committee or project on curriculum reform for a period of not less than one full semester
- Coaching a colleague, being a mentor – being mentored – in a content area – See Attachments G and G-1
- Attending an in-depth institute in a content area
- Writing an article addressing instructional or content related topics
- Observing model lessons/visiting model schools/programs and providing a written summary of the relevance to the teacher's own practice or content knowledge
- Developing curriculum for the teacher's specific content area of assignment
- Doing school improvement planning focused on increasing the depth of content knowledge
- Examining new technological resources to supplement lessons and providing written analysis for effective classroom implementation and training
- Participating in Study Group Activities—must be in a content area – See Attachment H
 - ★ Analyzing teaching cases
 - ★ Training/planning lessons with a teaching colleague
 - ★ Examining student data and implementing curriculum and or change in instructional strategies and practice to improve student achievement
 - ★ Participating/leading a book study
 - ★ Participating in a study or support group
 - ★ Reading and summarizing journals, educational magazines, books
 - ★ Critique and analyze educational videos
 - ★ Studying content standards for your state and providing a written summary

NOTE: Appropriate documentation must be submitted to support participation in these activities for meeting NCLB portfolio requirements.

Attachment B

Teaching Experience Report for Michigan Multidisciplinary Portfolio

In order to meet the ESEA/NCLB highly qualified requirement through the Michigan Multidisciplinary process, the secondary special education may count up to five years of successful teaching experience in at least one of the five core academic areas (English/language arts, math, science, social studies and reading). This form is required as verification of work experience. Experience listed must be verified by the employing district(s).

Personal Information
Name of Teacher _____
Contact Information _____

Teaching Credential Information: Check the type of Michigan certificate you hold:
<input type="checkbox"/> Provisional Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Education Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> 30 Hour Continuing
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Hour Continuing <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent
Identify the level of certificate you hold: <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary
Identify the subject area endorsement(s) indicated on you Michigan teaching certificate:

Teaching Assignment(s):
District name: _____
District address: _____

Taught full time under appropriate supervision: from _____ to _____
Subject(s) _____
To students in grade(s) _____

Teaching Assignment(s):	
District name:	_____
District address:	_____ _____
Taught full time under appropriate supervision from	_____ to _____
Subject(s)	_____
To students in grade(s)	

Teaching Assignment(s):	
District name:	_____
District address:	_____ _____
Taught full time under appropriate supervision from	_____ to _____
Subject(s)	_____
To students in grade(s)	

Additional teaching assignments may be included by following the same format as above.

Printed Name of Teacher: _____

I hereby certify that this teacher has fulfilled the teaching experience as noted above.

Signature of Superintendent or designee

Date

Misrepresentation or falsification of information may result in suspension or revocation of the teaching certificate.

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS FORM TO YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT, ISD, OR PSA SUPERINTENDENT OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR BY JUNE 30, 2006 (or prior to placement).

Mandated by Federal *No Child Left Behind* Legislation

Attachment C

College Level Course Work Report for the Michigan Multidisciplinary Portfolio Guidelines

In order to meet the ESEA/NCLB highly qualified requirement through the Michigan Multidisciplinary process, the secondary special education teacher must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 semester hours with at least 6 semester hours in each of the core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. These 30 semester hours must include at least 3 semester hours in the core academic area of reading, which is required for a Michigan secondary level teaching certificate. All course work may have been completed anytime during the teacher's collegiate preparation program.

This form is required as verification of the successful completion of course work in each of the core academic areas and must be documented by official transcript.

Name of teacher _____

District where employed _____

Building where employed _____

Current teaching assignment _____

Number of years in current assignment _____ Date _____

Using the following format, identify at least six semester hours of course work that was successfully completed in each core academic area listed.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

College/University Name	Course Title	Year Completed	Credit Earned

MATH

College/University Name	Course Title	Year Completed	Credit Earned

SCIENCE

College/University Name	Course Title	Year Completed	Credit Earned

SOCIAL STUDIES

College/University Name	Course Title	Year Completed	Credit Earned

READING

College/University Name	Course Title	Year Completed	Credit Earned

Signature of Teacher _____ Date _____

Signature of School District Authority _____ Date _____

Print Name of School District Authority _____

Attachment D

HIGH OBJECTIVE UNIFORM STATE-STANDARD OF EVALUATION

RECORD OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS WHO MUST MEET NCLB HIGHLY QUALIFIED REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

This document is to be used to determine whether a teacher meets the high objective uniform state-standard of evaluation (HOUSSE) as part of the process for identifying a highly qualified teacher (defined in Section 9101 of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). Record all professional development activities that are content related and aligned to the district/building school improvement plan for improving student performance. The teacher must also have an individual professional development plan that is approved by the local school improvement team on file with the employing school district. Professional development activities must be within the last five years and recorded by date, title, purpose addressed and in hour increments. The form should be submitted to the Superintendent/chief executive office and kept on file in case of an audit.

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE RETAINED BY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT/SCHOOL.
DO NOT RETURN THIS FORM TO THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.
(Teacher – Keep copy for personal records.)**

Name of Teacher: _____

Name of School District Where Employed: _____

Name of Building Where Assigned: _____

Content Area of Focus: _____

Number of Years as a Contractual Teacher: _____

Number of Years with Current School District: _____

Current School Year: 20__ - 20__

CONTENT SPECIFIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

DATE	TITLE/ACTIVITY	PURPOSE ADDRESSED	NUMBER OF HOURS ENGAGED

(over)

Attachment D-1

Michigan Content Area Portfolio

Reflection on

Content Specific Professional Development Activities

In keeping with the State Board approved guidelines for a content area portfolio, this content specific professional development activities section of the multidisciplinary portfolio must also include a reflection statement on how the combination of professional activities has improved/impacted your teaching practice/classroom instructional strategies.

Following is a tool that can be used to guide your reflection. The following questions may be used to prompt your thinking and writing about your professional development experience.

- **Description:**
 - What did you do for professional development?
 - What was going on in your practice/with your students/at your school/in your district that influenced your professional development decision(s)?

- **Analysis/interpretation:**
 - Why did you participate in the professional development activities listed?
 - What did you expect to learn?
 - What prior knowledge/experience did the professional development activities relate to?
 - What new knowledge, practices, strategies, insights did you experience/learn?
 - What are your impressions about the information/tools, etc., shared/learned?

- **Application**
 - Exactly how will the information/tools, etc., from the professional development activities be used to improve student learning?

Source: Tools for Schools, National Staff Development Council, April/May 2002

Attachment F

Michigan Content Area Portfolio

Content Specific Professional Development Activities Conference Presentation(s)

Name: _____

School: _____

Content Area of Focus: _____

Provide the following information for each content specific presentation made:

- Title of presentation/session
- Name and date of conference/meeting/session
- Description of target audience
- Objectives of the presentation
- Content covered
- Expected outcomes for the participants as a result of attending your presentation
- Identify how this presentation experience enhanced your teaching practice in the content/core academic area of focus.

Attachment G
Michigan Content Area Portfolio
Content Specific Professional Development Activities
or Service to the Profession
Mentoring a Teacher in the Content Area

Name: _____

School: _____

Content Area of Focus: _____

Name of Mentee: _____

School District: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

Explain your philosophy of mentoring.

Identify several skills you feel are basic to being an effective mentor.

Identify how the mentoring experience in this core academic area has enhanced your teaching practice.

Identify the content specific resources that you have shared or assisted the mentee in using, developing, etc.

Record the conferences held with your mentee on the form that follows.

Attachment G-1
Michigan Content Area Portfolio
Mentor/Mentee Conference Record

Name: _____ Date: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

(over)

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Conference Date: _____

Comments: _____

Mentee signature: _____

Mentor signature: _____

Attachment H

Study Group

For professional development, and as a means of demonstrating competence in a specific content area, a teacher may choose to participate in a study group. A study group is a collection of people who gather together to examine a topic they have agreed to explore. In this forum, colleagues have a common vision and examine the factors that influence teaching and learning. Study groups promote the construction of knowledge by examining selected materials and engaging in meaningful professional dialogue around a chosen topic. Study groups acknowledge the expertise and contribution of each member of the group. A study group is useful when a teacher wants a forum for learning and applying new teaching techniques.

A Study Group is a type of job-embedded professional development in which individuals join efforts to enhance their capacity to improve students learning. **This process involves the following steps: (Summary information on each step must be provided.)**

- Analyzing student data to identify their needs.
- Forming the teacher group with interest in these needs.
- Developing an action plan on how the identified student needs will be addressed.
- Identifying what each teacher/group of teachers will do/learn to do to address the students' needs.

It is important to note that the “what” is the content of the study group. What teachers do is preceded by identifying students' needs, and teachers get direction for what they are to do based on student data that is collected and analyzed.

In addition to the other information provided, the teacher involved in this professional development activity must clearly explain:

- What he/she did to develop greater understanding of the core academic subject area of focus.
- What he/she has done to become more knowledgeable of the core academic subject area of focus.
- What he/she has done to become more skillful in the classroom with students in the core academic area.
- How has the group benefited the staff/grade/school, etc. in the core academic area.

Reference: Powerful Designs for Professional Learning