



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PO Box 500
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

CHRIS CHRISTIE
Governor

KIM GUADAGNO
Lt. Governor

CHRISTOPHER D. CERF
Commissioner

February 25, 2014

TO: Chief School Administrators
Charter School Lead Persons

ROUTE TO: Human Resources Directors and Staff

FROM: Robert R. Higgins, Ph.D., Director
Office of Certification and Induction

SUBJECT: **Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements for Grade 6**

A regulatory amendment effective as of July 2013 expanded the range of grades covered by the elementary endorsement from grades K-5 to K-6. In response to this change, the Department of Education (“the Department”) has received several questions from educators as to what constitutes “highly qualified” status for 6th grade teachers of core content in a departmentalized middle school setting.

Current regulation N.J.A.C. 6A:9-9.1(a)3 requires “All elementary school teachers certified to teach in grades kindergarten through five after January 20, 2004, and hired to teach in grades six through eight must hold either the elementary school with subject matter specialization or the subject matter endorsement.” In order to teach a content area in departmentalized middle grades (6-8), teachers who hold the K-8 or N-8 instructional certificate must have attained highly qualified status for that content area by meeting one of the following four federal requirements:

1. Passing the appropriate Praxis II content-knowledge exam;
2. Having 30 credits (with at least 12 of the 30 at upper division level) or an undergraduate major in the content area;
3. Holding a graduate degree in the content area; or
4. Holding an advanced credential, such as National Board Certification, in the content area.

Please see the attached chart for clarification.

Teachers holding the K-6 credential are licensed for 6th-grade assignments in the same way that N-8 teachers are eligible to deliver instruction in all grade levels reflected in their endorsement. Both groups of teachers are highly qualified to deliver instruction in a self-contained setting, as they have passed an elementary education content knowledge exam.

According to current policy, in order to teach core subjects in a departmentalized grade six classroom, a K-6 endorsement holder must:

1. Hold an appropriate middle school endorsement; or
2. Hold a subject matter endorsement; or
3. Use the same highly qualified options that apply to N-8 teachers assigned to departmentalized middle grade classrooms.

The Department is examining this policy and considering potential changes to account for the expansion of the K-5 endorsement to K-6. We will share any additional information as it becomes available.

If you have any questions regarding the Highly Qualified Teacher requirements, please contact the program coordinator at (609) 777-4482 or by email at HQTeachers@doe.state.nj.us.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

RRH/JP/022514 Highly Qualified Teacher Status Memo.doc

Attachments

c: Members, State Board of Education
Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner
Senior Staff
Diane Shoener
Amy Ruck
Executive County Superintendents
Executive Directors for Regional Achievement Centers
Executive County School Business Administrators
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group

How to Demonstrate Status as a Highly Qualified General Education Teacher

Prior to July 2013

Elementary Generalists Elementary Teacher (Grades K-3, K-5, K-8) Self-contained	Middle Grades Content Specialists (Grades 6-8) Departmentalized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass Praxis II Elementary Content Knowledge Test • Pass National Teachers Examinations (NTE) (effective 1985-1994) 	<p>Teachers holding N-8 certificate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass Praxis II Middle or P-12 Content Test • Or Undergraduate/graduate major in the content • Or 30 credits in the content (12 at junior/senior or graduate level) • Or National Board Certification in the content <p>Teachers holding K-5 certificate: Must obtain the Middle School subject matter endorsement (language arts, math, science, or social studies)</p>

After July 2013

Self-contained Elementary Generalists Elementary Teacher (Grades K-3, K-5, K-6, K-8)	Departmentalized Middle Grades Content Specialists (Grades 6-8), (Grades 7-8)
<i>Special Education and World Language HQT guidelines will be revised accordingly</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass Praxis II Elementary Content Knowledge Test • Pass National Teachers Examinations (NTE) (effective 1985-1994) <p><i>Note: In accordance with prior Department policy, all 5th grade classrooms can be taught by an elementary education generalist, whether departmentalized or self contained.</i></p>	<p>Teachers holding K-8/N-8 certificate teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass Praxis II Middle or P-12 Content Test • Or Undergraduate/graduate major in the content • Or 30 credits in the content (12 at junior/senior or graduate level) • Or National Board Certification in the content <p>Teachers holding K-5/K-6 certificate for grade 6 only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to K-8/N-8 options above <p>Grade 7&8 teachers must obtain the middle school subject matter endorsement for assignment</p>