

Colorado's Definition of a "Highly Qualified" Teacher as Required Through NCLB (Updated November 2006)

Basic Definition

In accordance with Sec. 1119 of the No *Child Left Behind* Act (NCLB), Colorado defines "Highly Qualified" Teachers as teachers that are fully licensed and able to demonstrate subject matter competency in all core academic areas in which they are assigned.

Details on the Definition

Fully Licensed

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

- Professional Licenses
- Initial Licenses
- Interim Authorizations
- Alternative Teaching Licenses
- Teacher in Residence Authorizations

To obtain a valid license in Colorado, it is worth noting that the teacher must:

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

AND

- Complete an approved teacher preparation program. This includes
 - Completion of a Colorado State Board of Education approved 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 Alternative Teacher Licensing preparation program or a Teacher In Residence alternative preparation program.

Subject Matter Competency

In addition to being fully licensed, teachers must demonstrate content knowledge in all assigned core academic areas. How this demonstration occurs depends on the school level: elementary (K-6) or secondary (6-12).

Elementary

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

- Pass the adopted Elementary Education **content assessment**. This assessment must reflect the adopted Elementary Education Teacher Preparation Standards in English/ Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Humanities, Wellness and Physical Education. Colorado offers the PLACE or Praxis assessments. The National Board Certification assessment is also accepted. Teachers coming to Colorado from other states may consult the list of approved state assessments on the CDE website: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/NCLB/tiaa.asp>.

OR

- Be a **Nationally Board Certified Teacher** for the elementary level.

OR

- Pass the Veteran Teacher Elementary **HOUSSE** provision. Available to experienced Colorado teachers that had not taken the elementary content test, this HOUSSE provision outlined some alternative ways that teachers could provide evidence of

subject matter competency (e.g., previous elementary teacher experience, coursework, professional development). This provision is being phased out as teachers needing this provision have already used it.

Secondary

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

- Have at least a **Bachelor's degree** that matches the subject area assignment.
- OR
- Pass the subject area **content assessment** that matches the subject area assignment.
- OR
- Obtain a matching **endorsement** in the subject area assignment.
- OR
- Be a **Nationally Board Certified Teacher** in the subject area assignment.
- OR
- Acquire a minimum of **24-semester hours of coursework** or professional development in subject area assignment.
 - College/University credit
 - Coursework must be relevant and applicable to the subject area assignment.
 - College/University credit must be awarded by a regionally accepted two- or four-year institution of higher education.
 - Verification of the teacher's successful completion of this requirement is the responsibility of the educator's employing school district or BOCES.
 - Professional development activities
 - The activities must be relevant and applicable to the subject area assignment.
 - Credit may be awarded for district and other district approved professional development activities, inservices, workshops and education reform, such as, curriculum review and development/design.
 - 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.

Middle Schools

Because there is not a middle school license in Colorado, middle school teachers are considered to be secondary teachers. Sixth grade teachers are somewhat of an exception since they are sometimes housed within elementary schools. If the 6th grade teacher is teaching general elementary, he/she must meet the "elementary" requirements to be highly qualified. If she/he is teaching a content area, she/he may meet either the "elementary" or the "secondary" requirements to be highly qualified.

Multi-Subject HOUSSE

CDE is in the process of drafting HOUSSE provisions for (1) multi-subject teachers in rural areas, (2) special education teachers that are the sole deliverer of multiple subjects and (3) International teachers in this country on a temporary basis. These provisions should be available at the beginning of 2007.

Core Academic Areas

NCLB defines core academic areas as:

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

District Documentation

LEAs are required to keep all evidence that demonstrates that a teacher highly qualified -- electronically or in hard copy. This may include, but not be limited to, evidence that the teacher has a current license, has passed a content assessment, college transcripts and district transcript review, professional development and supporting evidence of its relevance.