



## NJDOE News

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### **DOE Releases *NCLB*-Required Teacher Content Expertise Data**

Only 4 percent of New Jersey's public school classes are being taught by teachers who do not meet the federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* definition of "highly qualified" in every core subject they teach\*, DOE officials announced today in unveiling the results of the state's third annual report required by the federal law.

"In 2005, 6.5 percent of the classes were not taught by a teacher who met the 'highly qualified teacher' (HQT) definition, so we are pleased to report that we are making significant progress," said acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy.

Despite these gains, New Jersey and 29 other states have not met the *NCLB*-imposed deadline that required that all public school classes be taught by an HQT by the end of the 2005-06 school year. All 30 states requested one-year extensions from the US Department of Education (USDE). Approval of those requests, and of each state education department's plan to ensure that the remaining teachers meet the HQT definition by the end of the 2006-07 school year, is pending, acting Commissioner Davy said.

"New Jersey's own standards for teacher certification are among the highest in the country, so it is not surprising that we are very close to the 100 percent goal," she said.

The 2006 data also show a significant decrease in the number of classes in high-poverty districts that are not taught by HQT and a narrowing of the gap between high-poverty and low-poverty districts in terms of the number of HQT-taught classes.

In 2005, 13.7 percent of the classes in high-poverty districts and 3.7 percent of the classes in low-poverty districts were not taught by HQTs. By 2006, the percentages had declined to 9.3 percent in high-poverty districts and 2.3 percent in low-poverty districts.

At the elementary school level, where all classes are self-contained, 96.7 percent of the state's teachers meet the federal definition. At the departmentalized middle and high school levels, where students change classes and have different teachers for different subjects, 95.4 percent and 96.3 percent of the teachers, respectively, meet the federal definition.

"It's important for parents and the public to understand that the *NCLB* definition of 'highly qualified teacher' is based solely on whether or not the teacher has attained of specific credentials to demonstrate subject content expertise," acting Commissioner Davy said.

If the extension is granted, the approximately 3,100 affected teachers will have until the end of the 2006-07 school year to satisfy the requirements of the HQT definition. All new and newly-hired teachers in schools receiving Title I funding must satisfy the definition when they are hired.

During the coming school year, department officials will provide technical assistance to school districts and charter schools in which less 100 percent of the teachers have met the HQT definition.

In accordance with the federal law, DOE has also submitted a plan to USDE outlining the steps the department is currently taking and will take in the future to assure the equitable distribution of highly qualified teachers in New Jersey's schools, as well as the measures the state will use to evaluate and publicly report progress towards the 100 percent goal.

Under *NCLB*, in order to meet the HQT definition, a teacher must demonstrate content expertise by either passing a required content exam in the subject he or she teaches, holding an undergraduate major in the subject, attaining 30 undergraduate credits (the equivalent of a major) in the subject, holding a graduate degree in the subject or holding an advance credential, such as a National Board certification, in the content.

Elementary school teachers satisfy the content requirement as generalists because they must demonstrate

knowledge across the range of subjects taught in elementary school. Teachers who have passed New Jersey's National Teachers Exam (NTE) or the Praxis II Elementary Content Knowledge Test, which have been required since 1985, have satisfied the *NCLB* HQT requirement.

If the extension is granted, veteran elementary, middle and high school teachers will continue to have the option of demonstrating content expertise through the High Objective Uniform State Evaluation (HOUSE) Standard Content Knowledge Matrix, developed by the state in accordance with *NCLB* rules, under which teachers receive credit for professional development activities, college course work and years of content teaching experience.

Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in core academic content, either as replacement teachers in resource settings or in self-contained classrooms, must meet the same HQT requirements as other teachers.

Other findings from the 2005-06 report:

- **Low-poverty schools have the highest percentage of HQT.** Low poverty schools are defined as the 25 percent of the schools in the state with the smallest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch; high-poverty schools are the 25 percent of the schools in the state with the largest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

At the elementary level, 97.8 percent of the teachers in low-poverty schools meet the definition, compared to 93.5 percent in high-poverty schools. At the middle school level, the numbers are 96.7 percent versus 89.7 percent, and at the high school level, the percentage of HQT in low-poverty schools is 98.4 percent and 93.3 percent in high-poverty schools.

- **More elementary school teachers meet the definition than do middle and high school teachers.** This reflects the federal expectation that all teachers be highly qualified in each content area they teach. Many middle school teachers are N-8 (nursery through eighth-grade) certified yet have been teaching specific subject areas, such as math and science, in a departmentalized setting. Those teachers do not need to show content expertise in both areas in order to be highly qualified.
- **School districts and the state face the greatest recruiting and retaining challenges in the areas of special education, world languages, bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL), mathematics and science teachers.** For that reason, classes in these areas are less likely to be taught by teachers meeting the HQT definition, particularly in high-poverty areas.
- **Classes with the lowest percentage of HQT are special education and ESL (English as a Second Language), particularly in middle and high schools.** This reflects the federal expectation that all teachers be highly qualified in each content area they teach, and the fact that special education and ESL teachers in self-contained settings are often responsible for teaching several subjects to students at different levels.

A summary of the 2006 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey results can be found by clicking [here](#).

- Two DOE Powerpoint presentations containing a set of charts highlighting key findings in the report can be found by clicking [here](#) and [here](#). One reflects the number of classes taught by highly qualified teachers; the other reflects the number not taught.
- District-by-District and school-by-school HQT information can be found by clicking [here](#) and [here](#), respectively
- New Jersey's plan for meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher Goal can be found by clicking [here](#).

\* In previous years, for the purposes of clarity and simplicity, New Jersey has reported this information as "the percentage of classes taught by an HQT." However, *NCLB* requires that states report this data as the "percentage of classes that are not taught by an HQT."