

**Illinois Criteria
for Meeting the NCLB Requirements for
Highly Qualified Teachers**

Illinois State Board of Education

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The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that, by the end of the 2005–2006 school year, all teachers in *core academic subjects* must be highly qualified in the areas of teaching assignment. All teachers in programs supported with Title I funds who were or are newly hired after the first day of the 2002–2003 school year are required to be highly qualified at the time of employment.

According to the definition set forth in NCLB, teachers are considered to be highly qualified if they (1) have a bachelor's degree; (2) have full State certification; and (3) have demonstrated subject-matter competence in the area(s) taught.

The following criteria define the specific requirements that Illinois teachers must meet to be considered highly qualified for NCLB purposes. The criteria define “full certification” and the options available for “demonstrating subject matter competence” for two groups: *current* teachers and teachers who are *new to the profession*.

This document is designed to serve as a resource that can be used by teachers, administrators, and others to identify the options for being considered highly qualified at a given grade level, for a specific student population, and for special circumstances.

These criteria do not replace state requirements for teaching assignments; all such rules remain in place and must be observed by local districts in placing teachers into the classroom. The criteria for being considered highly qualified represent baseline qualifications necessary to meet the NCLB requirements.

Terms used in these criteria are defined as follows:

Academic Major – Federal requirements allow states to define an “academic major” for use in determining whether a teacher can be considered highly qualified. Illinois defines an academic major as 32 semester hours or as otherwise indicated by the institution on the individual's official transcript.

Arts – NCLB allows states to define the core academic area of the “Arts.” The Illinois criteria for highly qualified teachers are based on a definition of the “Arts” as music and art.

Content Area Test – A test that assesses subject-matter knowledge specific to each certificate or endorsement; this excludes the Test of Basic Skills and the Assessment of Professional Teaching (APT). The Elementary/Middle Grades Test, the Mathematics Test, the French Test and the LBS I Test are examples of Content Area Tests.

Core Academic Subjects – NCLB defines “core academic subjects” as including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography. Note: NCLB has identified several specific subject areas under the general areas of the sciences and social sciences. The Illinois criteria treat these subject areas consistent with the new state certification structure and the standards for these academic areas. This includes an expectation for core competencies and specific designations related to subject areas.

“Current” Teachers – Teachers who received their first certificate in Illinois on or before June 30, 2002 are considered “current” teachers for NCLB purposes.

Elementary/Middle Grades Test – This is a new name for the Illinois Certification System Elementary Test. The name change is designed to more accurately reflect the content of the test and the range of grades covered; there has been no change in the content of the test.

Full Certification – Certificates, including alternative certificates, issued by the State of Illinois consistent with the law are considered “full” certificates. This excludes certificates issued to individuals when certification or licensure requirements have been waived, such as provisional vocational certificates and full-time substitute certificates. It includes provisional certificates issued to teachers coming into Illinois from another state and the Short-Term Emergency Certificate in Special Education.

“New” Teachers – Teachers who received their first certificate in Illinois on or after July 1, 2002 are considered “new” teachers for NCLB purposes.

Primary Responsibility – The requirements for consideration as highly qualified are linked to the teacher’s assignment and whether he or she has “primary responsibility” for providing content instruction. For the purposes of determining highly qualified status, “primary responsibility” is defined as being the sole teacher or the instructor of record. In team teaching situations, the district will identify the teacher or teachers with primary responsibility, except that teachers must be highly qualified for the subjects for which they have full teaching responsibility.

The term highly qualified indicates that a teacher has the certification and subject matter competence required to teach a particular subject area, grade level and/or group of students. It is linked directly to the teacher’s specific teaching assignment, so a teacher may be highly qualified for one assignment and not for another. Use of the term highly qualified should not be construed as an evaluation of the professional teaching abilities of the teacher.

Additional information about Illinois certification requirements and the No Child Left Behind Act can be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/teachers.htm> and <http://www.isbe.net/nclb/default.htm>.

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Part I

Criteria for Current Teachers to Be Considered Highly Qualified

All Illinois teachers must meet requirements of the *Illinois Administrative Code* for their specific teaching assignment.

To meet NCLB requirements, teachers who were first certified to teach in Illinois on or before June 30, 2002, and who retain a valid certificate are considered highly qualified in the area of teaching responsibility if they meet the following requirements. These requirements represent the Illinois "High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation" or "HOUSSE" as authorized by NCLB.

"Current" teachers must hold a valid Illinois teaching certificate that is appropriate to the grade level and meet one of the following options.

1. Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test or the Content-Area Test for the area of teaching responsibility.
2. Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major in the area of teaching responsibility.
3. Have a master's degree or other advanced degree/credential in the area of teaching responsibility.
4. Be certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the area of teaching responsibility.
5. Have an endorsement or its coursework equivalent that is sufficient to meet the Illinois minimum requirements for the area of teaching responsibility, have teaching experience in the area of teaching responsibility, and have engaged in continuing professional development in the area of teaching responsibility.

Part II

Criteria for New Teachers to be Considered highly qualified

All Illinois teachers must meet requirements of the Illinois Administrative Code for their specific teaching assignment.

To meet NCLB requirements, teachers who were certified in Illinois on or after July 1, 2002 are considered highly qualified in the area of teaching responsibility if they meet the following requirements.

Elementary Grades (K–4)

Teaching assignment: Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a self-contained classroom.

Options to be considered highly qualified

1. Hold Elementary Certificate (Type 03) that is endorsed for self-contained general education and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test
2. Hold Elementary Certificate (Type 03) that is endorsed for self-contained general education and hold a National Board Certificate as a Middle Childhood Generalist (ages 7–12) (applicable only through grade 6)
3. Hold Early Childhood Certificate (Type 04) and pass the Early Childhood Test (option is applicable only through grade 3)
4. Hold Early Childhood Certificate (Type 04) and hold a National Board Certificate as an Early Childhood Generalist (ages 3–8) (option applicable only through grade 3)
5. Hold a Provisional Early Childhood or Elementary Certificate that is based on certification in another state or nation and pass the Early Childhood Test or the Elementary/Middle Grades Test within 9 months of certification
6. Hold a Special K–12 Certificate (Type 10) and pass the Content-Area Test (option applicable only for the subject for which the certificate is endorsed – e.g., art or music)

Middle Grades (5–8)

Teaching assignment: Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a middle grades setting, whether self-contained or departmentalized.

Options to be considered highly qualified

1. Hold Elementary Certificate (Type 03) and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test
2. Hold Elementary Certificate (03) and a middle grades endorsement or the coursework equivalent, and pass the Elementary/Middle Grade test.
3. Hold a Secondary Certificate (Type 09) and meet one of the following options:
 - Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for grades 6–8)
 - Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major
 - Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for grades 6–8)
 - Pass the elementary/middle grade test.
4. Hold a Special K–12 Certificate (Type 10) endorsed in the area of teaching responsibility and pass the Content-Area Test
5. Hold a Provisional Elementary, Secondary or Special K–12 Certificate (as listed above) based on certification in another state or nation and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test or the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility within 9 months of certification.

Secondary Grades (9–12)

Teaching assignment: Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a secondary setting.

Options to be considered highly qualified

1. Hold a Secondary Certificate (Type 09) and meet one of the following options:
 - Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility
 - Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major in each area of teaching responsibility
 - Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility
2. Hold an Elementary Certificate (Type 03) and meet one of the following options:
 - Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test and the Content-Area Test in the area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for grade 9)
 - Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test and have a major or coursework equivalent to a major (applicable only for grade 9)
 - Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only to grade 9)

3. Hold a Provisional Elementary (applicable only to grade 9), Secondary or Special K–12 Certificate (as listed above) based on certification in another state or nation; and pass the required tests for each area of teaching responsibility (see above) within 9 months of certification

Special Education

The criteria for determining whether a special education teacher is highly qualified for his or her assignment will be defined when additional guidance is provided by the federal government (e.g., through the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Until that time, special education teachers will not be included in school, district or state data regarding highly qualified teachers.

Bilingual Education and English-as-a-Second Language Education

Teaching Assignment –Primary responsibility for teaching content to students with Limited English Proficiency in a Bilingual or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program.

Options to be considered highly qualified

- Hold an Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary, Special K–12 or Special Preschool–Age 21 Certificate appropriate for the grade level of the teaching assignment and hold the Bilingual or ESL credential (Approval or Endorsement) appropriate to the certificate and meet one of the following options:
 - Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility
 - Hold a major or coursework equivalent to a major in each area of teaching responsibility
 - Hold a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility

Special Circumstances

Charter school teachers – No certification is required but to be highly qualified, the teacher must hold a bachelor's degree and demonstrate competence in the area of teaching responsibility by passing the content test(s).

Alternative Certificate Holders – Hold an Illinois Alternative Certificate through an Illinois approved alternative program and demonstrate competence by passing the appropriate content test(s).

Resident Teacher Certificate Holders – Hold Resident Teacher Certificate through an Illinois-approved resident teacher program and demonstrate competence by passing the appropriate content test(s).

International Visiting Teacher Certificate Holders– Hold a valid International Visiting Teacher Certificate.

Vocational Certificate Holders – Only vocational teachers who teach core academic courses are required to meet the federal definition of highly qualified.

Transitional Bilingual Certificate Holders – Must meet all three of the following:

1. Hold a Type 29 Certificate and demonstrate subject-area competence through one of the following options:
 - Have a major or coursework equivalent to major in the content area; or
 - Within 9 months of Type 29 certification, pass the Content-Area Test for the area of teaching responsibility (would include, as appropriate, the Elementary/Middle Grades test); and
2. Participate in an induction/mentoring/professional development program; and
3. Be continuously enrolled in a program to fulfill state requirements for certification at the early childhood, elementary, secondary or K–12 level.