

Science: Highly Qualified Guidance

The following sciences are considered core academic subjects in Tennessee for purposes of NCLB: biology, chemistry, earth science, physics, and physical science. The state will consider individuals highly qualified for the purposes of meeting the content requirements of NCLB if they meet **one** of the following options:

1. Test Option.

- a. High School. Teachers are considered highly qualified to teach in grades 9-12 if they pass the NTE or Praxis examination in the subject(s) they teach. Teachers of physical science are considered highly qualified if they pass any one of the following NTE or Praxis examinations: chemistry, physics, or general science.
- b. Middle Grades. Science at the middle grades level has a broad-field emphasis in the areas of life, earth, and physical science. Teachers are considered highly qualified to teach any science in grades 7-8 if they pass any one of the following NTE or Praxis examinations: middle grades science or secondary tests in general science, biology, chemistry, physics, or earth science.

Note: Please refer to the detailed test list for the specific acceptable tests for all core subject areas.

2. Major Option.

- a. High School. Teachers of biology, chemistry, physics, and earth science are considered highly qualified if they have a major or have the equivalent of a major (24 hours) in the subject(s) they teach. Teachers of physical science are considered highly qualified if they have a major or the equivalent (24 hours) in physics or chemistry, or 24 hours combined in physics and chemistry.
- b. Middle Grades. Science at the middle grades level has a broad-field emphasis in the areas of life, earth, and physical science. Therefore, new teachers seeking to become highly qualified in middle grades sciences should focus their course taking on these areas. Teachers are considered highly qualified to teach any of the science areas in grades 7-8 if they have a major or the equivalent (24 hours) in biology, chemistry, physics, earth science or broad-field coverage in life, earth and physical science.

1. **Graduate Degree** in the content area.
2. **Advanced Certification or Credential**. National Board Certification (NBC) in the content area, including broad-field.
3. **Evaluation Option**. The evaluation option is available only to existing teachers. Teachers are considered highly qualified if they demonstrate competence in the subject matter based on a highly objective uniform state standard of evaluation. This option is under development by the state. (See section on Evaluation Option)

Note: A course that a school system offers as a substitute for a core academic area must be taught by a highly qualified teacher (i.e. Biology for Technology may substitute for Biology). See Appendix D for guidance on Substitute Credit Courses.