

Highly Qualified Requirements for Special Groups of Teachers

Alternative School Teachers. Teachers in alternative schools, who are not the teachers of record for core academic subjects, do not need to meet the highly qualified requirements. Teachers in alternative schools who are the teachers of record for the core subject areas must meet the requirements. However, the state will seek further federal guidance to define more specific requirements for teachers in alternative schools.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher. An individual must hold a current teaching license and hold the ESL endorsement to teach ESL in Tennessee schools. In order to meet the requirements for the NCLB Act, a highly qualified ESL teacher is one who is fully licensed to teach in Tennessee, holds at least a bachelor's degree and has demonstrated competency by having:

- passed the Praxis ESL test designated on the test options list in Appendix A, or
- the coursework equivalent of an academic major for ESL (24 semester hours which can include up to six hours in a foreign language), or
- a master's degree in English, Education, Curriculum and Instruction, or Linguistics each of which must include an area of emphasis in teaching ESL or bilingual education, or
- National Board Certification in ESL.

ESL teachers who teach core academic subjects at the middle school or secondary level as the teacher of record must meet the highly qualified requirements for each core academic subject they are assigned to teach.

Out-of-State Teacher Applicants. Out-of-state teacher applicants seeking a Tennessee teaching license must meet Tennessee licensure requirements. Tennessee will accept an out-of-state applicant's highly qualified status achieved in another state (with appropriate documentation). Out-of-state teachers who are fully licensed in another state, but who do not meet the requisite Tennessee testing requirements, will be considered highly qualified for one year during which time they must pass the required test(s).

Special Education Teachers. While special education teachers who only provide consultative services are excluded from meeting the highly qualified requirements, the Title I guidance issued in December 2002 indicates special education teachers who teach core academic subjects at the middle or secondary level, must meet the requirements. For those special education teachers who teach core academic subjects, the U.S. Department of Education will soon issue guidance on how states can establish procedures for those teachers to demonstrate competency in the content area. The state will await further guidance and the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* to define more specific requirements pertaining to special education.