

Highly Qualified Teachers

Section 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) focuses on improving teacher quality at the local level. To achieve this goal, the act requires all teachers teaching core subject academic areas to meet specific competency and educational requirements. Teachers who meet these requirements are considered "Highly Qualified."

Teachers are required to be highly qualified if they are the Teacher of Record providing direct instruction to students in any core academic subject area, including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages (languages other than English), civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Highly qualified teachers must:

- Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
- Be fully certified to teach in Texas; and
- Demonstrate competency in their core academic subject area.

Parent Notification Requirements: The following requirements apply.

Parents' Right to Know: At the beginning of each school year, an LEA receiving Title I, Part A funds must notify the parents of each student attending any Title I, Part A campus that the LEA will provide to the parents upon request (and in a timely manner), information regarding the professional qualifications of the student's classroom teachers, including, at a minimum, the following information:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which state qualification or licensing criteria have been waived.
- The baccalaureate degree major of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Parent Notification Requirement: Any campus that receives Title I, Part A funds must provide to each individual parent timely notice in the event that the parent's child has been assigned, or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not "highly qualified." The notice and information provided to parents must be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand. Any teacher who works in a Title I, Part A program and teaches in the core academic subject areas must be "highly qualified."

- On a Title I, Part A schoolwide campus, this means any teacher teaching one or more classes in the core academic subjects.
- For a Title I, Part A targeted assistance campus, this means any teacher teaching one or more classes in the core academic subjects whose salary is paid either in full or in part with Title I, Part A funds.

In addition, the parent notification required under the Texas Education Code § 21.057 is very different from the notification related to "highly qualified" teachers. However, state legislation (HB 673; 2003 session) eliminated the need for duplicate notifications concerning the same

teacher. If the teacher falls under the NCLB requirements (i.e., is teaching in a Title I program), the state notification requirements under TEC §21.057 do not apply. However, for teachers at non-Title I campuses and for teachers at Title I targeted assistance campuses who are not paid with Title I funds, the state notification requirements under TEC §21.057 do apply (except that TEC §21.057 does not apply to charter schools).