

NJDOE News

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DOE Announces Results of Annual Survey of Teacher Content Expertise

New Jersey's continued progress in ensuring that its teachers meet the training and expertise required by NCLB was announced at today's regular monthly meeting of the State Board of Education.

According to the survey, 99 percent of New Jersey teachers meet the "highly qualified" designation while 1.2 percent do not meet the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) definition of "highly qualified" in every core subject that they teach.* Approximately 1,300 teachers surveyed in 2006-07 still must satisfy the requirements of the highly qualified teacher (HQT) definition.

New Jersey has also made dramatic gains in closing the gap between the number of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in high poverty schools and low-poverty schools. The size of the gap has narrowed from 10 percent in 2004-05, to just 1.6 percent in 2006-07.

In last year's survey, 95.9 percent of New Jersey teachers were reported to be highly qualified.

This year marks the fourth year that all states must report the HQT status of their teachers. To date, no state has met the federal HQT goal of 100 percent.

"The results of this year's survey indicate that with nearly 99 percent of our teachers meeting the NCLB definition of highly qualified, we are on track to have all teachers meet the HQT requirement," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "The results also show that there is a clear commitment by schools across the state to achieve this goal.

"I am particularly proud of the progress schools have made to ensure a more equitable distribution of highly qualified and experienced teachers in our high-needs districts," Commissioner Davy continued.

To satisfy the federal HQT definition, teachers must:

- Have a bachelor's degree;
- Have valid state certification for which no requirements have been waived; and
- Demonstrate content expertise in the core academic subject(s) they teach through federal criteria specified in NCLB.

Commissioner Davy noted that the NCLB definition of "highly qualified teacher" is based solely on whether the teacher has attained specific credentials to demonstrate subject content expertise.

In the early years of the implementation of NCLB, states were allowed to create an alternative method for teachers to demonstrate their content knowledge for the core academic subject(s) they teach. Use of the HOUSE (High Objective Uniform State Evaluation) standard expired on June 30, 2007 and can no longer be used as a method to achieve HQT.

According to the 2006-07 survey, the number of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in New Jersey continues to increase, with 99 percent of low-poverty classes and 97.4 percent of high poverty classes taught by teachers who meet the HQT criteria. At the elementary (K-8) level, 98.8 of classes in low-poverty districts and 97.9 percent of classes in high poverty districts were taught by HQTs. At the secondary level, 98.3 percent of the low-poverty classes and 93.3 percent of the high-poverty classes were taught by HQTs.

Classes with the lowest percent of HQT are special education and world languages. The state will continue to provide technical assistance to all districts that have not met the HQT goal. In addition, districts that have not met the goal must outline strategies they will use to assist teachers who are not yet highly qualified.

In the coming year, the New Jersey Department of Education will continue to implement an equity plan which focuses on increasing the number of experienced and highly qualified teachers in high-poverty districts and to monitor local HQT plans to ensure that they contain the recruitment and retention strategies necessary to ensure that teachers are highly qualified.

Key strategies in the state's equity plan include:

- Creating urban education programs at colleges of education;
- Conducting summer urban academies to introduce high school students to the rewards of teaching in high needs districts;

- Improving online recruitment services and tools in high needs districts;
- Increase training for mentors of new teachers;
- Providing district- and school-based professional development; and
- Collecting and analyzing data on working conditions in schools to inform teacher quality policy.

The United States Education Department will monitor New Jersey's ongoing efforts to meet the 100 percent HQT goal.

A summary of the 2007 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey results can be found here: <http://www.nj.gov/education/data/hqt/07/>. Reporters, DOE will host a reporters-only conference call on this issue today at 3:30 p.m. For information on how to access the call, please contact the DOE Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.

* In years prior to 2006, New Jersey has reported this information as "the percentage of classes taught by an HQT." However, NCLB requires that states report these data as the "percentage of classes that are not taught by an HQT."