



NJDOE News

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**Survey Shows 99.7 percent of NJ Classroom Teachers are Highly Qualified;
Gap Nearly Closes Between High Poverty and Low Poverty Schools**

The sixth annual survey of teachers in New Jersey shows that nearly all of the state's classroom teachers meet the federal definition of highly qualified teacher (HQT). The survey also reveals that a 10 percent gap in the percentage of highly qualified teachers between high poverty and low poverty schools first reported in 2004-05 is nearly non-existent today.

"We have had long-standing requirements for our teachers to be properly certified in the subjects they teach," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy, who announced the survey results at today's monthly meeting of the State Board of Education. "New Jersey's requirements pre-date federal HQT requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act, and represent one of the many ways we assure citizens that their children are receiving the best education possible.

"Today, we can proudly say that we are mere fractions of one percentage point away from an across-the-board HQT rate of 100 percent," Commissioner Davy said.

Commissioner Davy noted that many of the education reforms led by Governor Corzine since he assumed office are designed to ensure that New Jersey students acquire 21st century skills they need to succeed after they graduate from high school, with a special commitment to the state's most vulnerable students, such as economically disadvantaged students and students with autism. High quality teachers are a critical component to the success of these reforms, she said.

The survey of nearly 88,000 teachers in 10 content areas identified in the NCLB law shows that 99.7 percent of New Jersey teachers are highly qualified in the subjects they teach. In addition, the percentage of classes taught by highly qualified teachers in high poverty schools is 99.1 percent, which reflects a gap of only 0.8 percent between them and their HQT colleagues who teach 99.9 percent of the classes in low poverty districts. In 2004-05, the gap was a full 10 percentage points.

By grade category, the percentages of classes taught by highly qualified teachers were as follows:

In low poverty districts, 99.9 percent of elementary school classes and 100 percent of secondary school classes (grades 9-12) were taught by highly qualified teachers.

In high poverty districts, 99.4 percent of elementary school classes and 98.4 percent of secondary school classes were taught by highly qualified teachers.

Across all grades, the content areas posing the greatest challenges to teacher recruitment and retention activities continue to be special education, mathematics and world languages, with high poverty schools reporting greater difficulty in finding HQT candidates. School districts that do not meet the NCLB goal must develop and implement strategies to overcome obstacles, with technical assistance from the state.

NCLB requires the states to recruit and retain more highly qualified teachers and to develop and implement equity plans. Highlights of New Jersey' equity plan include creation of urban education programs at colleges of education to provide novice teachers with specific knowledge and skills they will need to teach a diverse student population; summer urban academies to introduce interested high school students to the challenges and rewards of urban teachers; and improved online resources and tools to assist high needs districts in their recruitment activities.

Retention strategies include increasing the emphasis on training talented mentors for new teachers; providing district- and school-based professional development opportunities, allowing teachers to work in collaborative teams to collectively improve practice; and collecting and analyzing data on working conditions in schools to

inform teacher quality policy.

For more information about the 2008 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey, visit:

<http://www.nj.gov/education/data/hqt/09/>