EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) TRANSITION YEAR 2016-2017

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), passed by Congress in December 2015, is the newest version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), replacing No Child Left Behind. Congress also provided a transition period that will lead to ESSA's full implementation for the 2017-18 school year. In the interim most of NCLB will remain in effect.

Background

ESSA did not retain the language from NCLB Section 1119 outlining the qualifications for Arizona's core academic teachers, using the definition of "Highly Qualified" (NCLB Section 9101). Per ESSA Section 1112, LEAs receiving Title I funds must ensure all teachers meet "applicable State certification and licensure requirements." All other LEAs must follow State Board Rules and their own policies regarding hiring of instructional staff.

Transition in 2016-17 to Title I Qualified (TIQ)

The US Department of Education has indicated states and LEAs may transition to the ESSA requirement in 2016-17. While Highly Qualified attestations will no longer be required, Title I LEAs must ensure that teachers are qualified per Title I – TIQ.

Title I Districts: Teachers must meet AZ Certification requirements and may be assigned according to the approved content areas/endorsements listed on the certificate; includes teachers holding Intern certificates through an alternative pathway.

Title I Charter LEAs: Teachers must meet the Highly Qualified requirements in lieu of certification and may be assigned according to the content area(s) for which they are Highly Qualified. Alternately, teachers may meet the same requirements of AZ Certification as those teachers in district schools.

LEA Flexibility

Except as noted above, the end of Highly Qualified signals broader opportunities for LEAs and schools to select and assign teachers. LEAs now have the option to meet the needs of their students by setting their own additional criteria.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. ***Do all teachers need to be entered into the Teacher Input Application (TIA) regardless of whether the schools are Title I or not?***

   Yes. All Schools and LEAs must update all teacher data using the Highly Qualified Teacher Application link in Common Logon during the 2016-17 school year in order for the Teacher Input Application (TIA) to provide teachers with the 16-digit stakeholder identification number that is critical to Student-Teacher-Course Connection and access to AZ Dash. All Title I LEAs must update teacher data in the Teacher Input Application (TIA) for Title I monitoring purposes.

2. ***How will Appropriately Certified and Highly Qualified information be collected for Title I monitoring purposes?***

   All LEAs accepting Title I funds must enter their teacher information for every teacher into the Teacher Input Application (formerly called the Highly Qualified Teacher Application) on Common Logon. Teacher information must be entered prior to the ESEA Consolidated Application being approved by the Title I and Title II Specialist.

3. ***For the 2016-17 ESSA transition year, do all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) need to comply with Appropriate Certification or Highly Qualified Requirements?***

   School districts are required to hire Appropriately Certified teachers. Teachers in charter schools are not required to be certified unless they are teaching Special Education.

   Title I district schools are required to hire teachers who meet the applicable State certification requirements, and are therefore Appropriately Certified, by holding a Teaching Intern, Provisional, Reciprocal, or Standard certificate aligned with their teaching assignment. Alternately, teachers may meet the same requirements of AZ Certification as those teachers in district schools. During the ESSA transition year, Title I monitoring will verify that teachers in Title I LEAs, both district and charter, are Title I Qualified (either Appropriately Certified for the primary subject they are teaching or meet the previous Highly Qualified criteria for the subject).

4. ***Do teachers in non-Title I schools in a Title I LEA need to comply with Appropriately Certified or Highly Qualified requirements?***

   All teachers in a Title I LEA must comply with Title I Qualified (TIQ) requirements.

5. ***State Board Rule requires an approved area for the primary assignment for teachers in grades 6-12. Will Title I monitor for every teaching assignment or only the primary one? (R7-2-602J)***

   Title I will follow State Board Rule and only monitor for the primary assignment this year.

6. ***How does a teacher add an approved area to a teacher's certificate?***

   Most approved areas require passing a Subject Knowledge exam in the subject or qualifying for an exam waiver by having a Master's degree in the subject. If an exam is not offered in the subject, 24 semester hours of coursework is required. To add the approved area, the teacher should complete the application for certification available here and submit the application and fee to the Certification Unit at the Arizona Department of Education.

7. ***If teachers already have an approved area on their certificates, but have not passed the exams, do they still need to pass the exams?***

   Teachers who qualified for an approved subject area before the Arizona educator exams were implemented are not required to pass the subject knowledge exam as long as they maintain their certificate.

8. ***At what grade level does a teacher need an approved area on the certificate?***

   Teachers in grades 6-12 who teach a subject that is departmentalized, meaning that the teacher specializes in teaching that subject throughout the day, must have the approved area in the primary subject they are teaching.

   In a fifth grade departmentalized situation, a teacher is Appropriately Certified with either an elementary certificate or with a secondary certificate that includes the appropriate approved area and a Middle School Endorsement.

9. ***May teachers be reimbursed for the exams required to add an approved area?***

   Title II funds may be used to reimburse teachers for any Arizona exam or deficiency that is required for State licensure or to meet Highly Qualified requirements for charter schools. The teacher must first pass the exam prior to reimbursement. Exams not passed are not reimbursable. LEAs must have a line item expenditure listed for NES/AEPA reimbursement within the ESEA Consolidated Application. See Title II Guidance for further information.

10. ***May teachers be reimbursed for fees to add an approved area and/or an endorsement to their certificates?***

    Yes, Title II funds may be utilized for this expense.

11. ***If district teachers met Highly Qualified subject knowledge requirements using the HOUSSE, HQT Reciprocity, AEPA exam, NBCT, or 24 credits, do they now need to meet the State Board Rule with an approved area for their primary assignments?***

State Board Rule requires teachers in district schools to be Appropriately Certified for their primary teaching assignment. However, during the transition year, Title I monitoring will verify that teachers in Title I LEAs, both district and charter, are **either** Appropriately Certified for the primary subject they are teaching or meet the previous Highly Qualified criteria for the subject. Without the approved area denoted on their certificate, teachers are not considered Appropriately Certified.

For this transition year only, these district teachers are exempt from the 4-week letter and Corrective Action Plan requirements. However, LEAs are expected to help their teachers in reviewing the alignment of their certifications to their assignments and their plan for meeting Appropriately Certified requirements for 2017-18 school year. Title II funds can be used to support these teachers to meet Appropriately Certified requirements.

12. ***Must teachers from out of state meet Appropriately Certified requirements for district hire?***

Out of state teachers who hold a valid comparable teaching certificate from another state may be given an equivalent standard Arizona teaching certificate with the same approved area currently on their out of state certificate. Teachers from out of state who are not certified must meet Arizona educator exam requirements.

13. ***Must teachers from out of state meet Highly Qualified requirements to teach in a Title I charter school?***

During the 2016-2017 transition year, Title I charter school teachers from out of state must meet the highly qualified requirements for their teaching assignment or be appropriately certified for the position. Current highly qualified attestation forms are available here.

14. ***What are the academic content areas Title I and Title II will monitor for Appropriately Certified (districts) or Highly Qualified (charters) teachers?***

Under ESSA, the term “core content” is no longer applicable. It has been expanded to include all subjects leading to a “well-rounded education”. This would include: English, reading or language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, computer science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, music, history, geography, career and technical education, health, physical education, computers, gifted, and others as designated by the State.

For this transition year, Title I and Title II will monitor only the previous "core content areas" as listed in NCLB. Those "core content" teachers in Title I LEAs that do not meet TIQ requirements (see question 11 above for exceptions) must develop and complete a Corrective Action Plan to correct the deficiencies. Parents must be notified using the 4-week letter (see question 30).

15. Does a Kindergarten teacher need the Early Childhood Endorsement?

A Kindergarten teacher with an Elementary Certificate (K-8 or 1-8) must hold an Early Childhood Endorsement per R7-2-615(N). A Kindergarten teacher with an Early Childhood Certificate meets the requirements to teach Kindergarten.

16. Does a Reading Specialist still need the Reading Endorsement?

A teacher who works with students who are more than six months behind in academic progress in English Language Arts must hold a Reading Endorsement. Therefore, any teacher in a position termed as a "Reading Specialist, Reading Consultant, Remedial Reading Teacher, Special Reading Teacher," or in a similar position, must hold a Reading Endorsement. R7-2-615(G).

17. Does a Math Interventionist still need the Math Endorsement?

In order to meet TIQ requirements, a Math Interventionist must show an approved area of Middle Grades Math (6-8) or Mathematics (6-12) or a Mathematics Endorsement on their certificate.

18. Do Special Education teachers serving as the Teacher of Record in grades 6-12 need an approved area on their certificates?

According to State Board Rule (R7-2-607-J), all teachers in grades 6-12 must have the appropriate approved area on their certificates for their primary teaching assignment. Please see question #11 for further information as it relates to this question.

19. What are the requirements for SPED teachers in an elementary setting serving as Teacher of Record?

Current State Board Rule requires that all SPED teachers must hold the appropriate SPED Certificate. Under Highly Qualified criteria, SPED elementary teachers were also required to demonstrate elementary subject knowledge. For this transition year, LEAs should continue to require their elementary SPED teachers to meet the Highly Qualified subject knowledge requirements, including using Title II funds to support the passing of the Elementary Subject Knowledge Exams. Teachers in this situation are exempt from the 4-week letter and Corrective Action Plans.

20. What requirements are needed for SPED teachers who are not the Teacher of Record?

SPED teachers serving in a supplemental support capacity as a Non–Teacher of Record meet Certification requirements by holding the Appropriate SPED Certificate for the position in which they are teaching.

21. Does a teacher in the State mandated 4-Hour SEI block need to meet the content requirement of English Language Arts in addition to the SEI Endorsement?

District teachers in the State mandated 4-hour block must meet English Language Arts requirements. For an elementary self-contained setting (1-8), the teacher will need the Elementary/Early Childhood Certificate, aligned to the grade level being taught, with the SEI Endorsement or 45 hours of SEI training. For grades 6-12 departmentalized, the teacher will need the appropriate teaching certificate with the SEI Endorsement or 45 hours of SEI training, along with either the Middle Grades ELA or English approved area, aligned to the grade level being taught.

22. What may a teacher with an approved area of Social Studies teach?

A secondary certified teacher with an approved area of Social Studies may teach Middle Grades Social Studies. The teacher may also teach any of the four high school content areas under the Social Studies umbrella: History, Economics, Government, and Geography. For example, it is not necessary to have the approved area of History in addition to the approved area of Social Studies to teach History; the teacher already meets Appropriately Certified requirements with the approved area of Social Studies.

23. May a teacher with an approved area of History, Government, or Geography teach Middle Grades Social Studies?

Yes, a teacher with an approved area of History, Government, or Geography may teach Middle Grades Social Studies.

24. What may a teacher with an approved area of General Science teach?

A teacher with an approved area of General Science may teach Middle Grades General Science and High School General Science. The teacher does not meet the requirements to teach other science content areas such as Biology, Physical Science, Physics, or Chemistry. The teacher would need to pass the individual subject knowledge exam and have the appropriate approved area added to the certificate to teach any of the other science areas.

25. ***If a teacher has a Secondary Certification with an approved area of Biology, Physical Science, Physics, or Chemistry, can he/she teach Middle Grades General Science?***

Yes, the content knowledge in Biology, Physical Science, Physics, and/or Chemistry is sufficient to teach Middle Grades General Science.

26. ***Does a teacher with a Career and Technical Education Certificate teaching a dual credit course of CTE and another content area such as math, economics, science, etc. need an approved area on the CTE certificate for the other content area?***

Approved areas are not added to CTE Certificates. To teach a core class needed for graduation credit, a Secondary Certificate with the appropriate approved area would also be needed.

27. ***What are the requirements for Paraprofessionals under ESSA?***

Paraprofessionals are held to the same previous requirements of Highly Qualified. A paraprofessional working in a Title I school must pass one of the acceptable paraprofessional exams, hold an AA degree, or have the equivalent 60 credits. Paraprofessionals in non-Title I schools do not need to meet Highly Qualified requirements. See the Paraprofessional Attestation here.

28. ***Does the supervising teacher for a Title I paraprofessional need to meet TIQ requirements?***

All supervising teachers of Title I paraprofessionals must meet TIQ requirements.

29. ***Will there be any Title I or Title II requirements if teachers are not TIQ for the position in which they are teaching?***

Both Title I and Title II will monitor for teachers who do not meet TIQ requirements for State licensure. These teachers must complete a Corrective Action Plan through their LEAs (refer to question #11 exceptions for the 2016-17 transition year only). The Corrective Action Plan is to be signed and uploaded into the ALEAT system by LEA personnel.

30. ***Are the 4-week letters still required for non-Appropriately Certified or non-Highly Qualified teachers?***

Parents must be given timely notice that a student has been assigned, or has been taught for 4 or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned. A sample copy of the 4-week letter sent home is to be uploaded into the ALEAT filing cabinet. This includes Substitutes Filling Vacant Positions, Emergency Substitutes, and Long-term Substitutes. It also includes Emergency Teaching Certificates and teachers on Teaching Certificates who are not Appropriately Certified.

31. Are Teachers with Emergency Teaching Certificates considered Appropriately Certified in Title I schools?

Emergency Teaching Certificates are considered a waiver of certification requirements and therefore do not meet the criteria for appropriate certification in a Title I school or in any SPED setting.

Teachers with Emergency Certificates will need a 4-week letter sent home and a Corrective Action Plan filed in ALEAT.

32. Do LEAs still need to notify parents of the Parents Right-To-Know about teacher certification?

ESSA continues the Parents Right-To-Know provision, which is different than the 4-week letter requirements. LEAs are expected to continue to respond to parents' requests for information regarding the qualifications of their child's teachers and paraprofessionals.