

# Highly Qualified Teachers Workbook

**CASPA**  
**CDE**

## **PHILOSOPHY**

The intent of the highly qualified teacher portion of the “No Child Left Behind” Act (NCLB) is to assure that all teachers who teach in core academic subjects are well prepared in their content area. The Colorado Association of School Personnel Administrators (CASPA) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) have developed a philosophy of cooperation to develop resources designed to assist school districts in implementing the NCLB highly qualified teacher requirements. This resource has been jointly developed within that cooperative framework.

## **PURPOSE**

This publication is intended to be a resource for human resource directors and interested others to implement the highly qualified teacher requirements of the NCLB Act of 2001 in Colorado. Because a teacher’s highly qualified status in a specific core academic subject area, once documented, is portable and reciprocal throughout all Colorado school districts, one goal of this notebook is to develop greater uniformity in how teachers are determined to be highly qualified. As districts apply these guidelines for the evaluation of 24 credit hours earned, either through college or university course work, professional development, and/or relevant travel, greater consistency can be achieved.

It is important to note that although a teacher may be highly qualified in a particular content area, districts and administrators can apply a higher standard for license, endorsements or specific course work based on the needs of the teaching assignment, school or district.

This pamphlet is organized into four parts:

- Part I – Definitions: A list of terms mentioned in the highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB
- Part II – Guidelines for Content Evaluation: A list of content courses that may be used to determine highly qualified status based on college/university credit
- Part III – Professional Development and Travel Guides: Guidelines that may be used to determine highly qualified status based on professional development or travel
- Part IV – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): Sample questions and answers that pertain to implementation of the highly qualified teacher provisions of NCLB.

## PART I – DEFINITIONS

*Colorado offers the following alternatives for teachers to be considered highly qualified in compliance with Sec. 1119 of the No Child Left Behind Act and as part of Colorado's Consolidated State Plan submitted to the United States Department of Education in September 2003.*

**HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS** – Those who are licensed and endorsed in each/all core-academic content area(s) in which they are teaching. or if they are teaching outside of their licensed and endorsed core – academic content area(s) the teacher:

- Must provide documented evidence of having completed 24 semester hours or its equivalent in the core academic content area(s) being taught,
- OR
- A passing score on the state or national core content area test(s) (PLACE or Praxis) in the content area(s) being taught. Note: Also acceptable is a national certification content test in the additional content area(s) being taught, when applicable.

**FULLY LICENSED TEACHER** – One who has a current valid Colorado:

- Provisional (Initial) License,
- Professional License, or
- Alternative Teaching License,

with an endorsement in the core academic content area(s) in which s/he is teaching.

### **QUALIFICATIONS FOR COLORADO TEACHING LICENSE(S) AND ENDORSEMENT(S)**

1. Hold a Bachelor's degree, or higher, and
2. Have completed
  - An Colorado State Board of Education approved teacher preparation program, in Elementary Education or in a Secondary Education content area at an accepted institution of higher education, or
  - Be participating in an Alternative Teacher Licensing preparation program
    - For Elementary Education
      - The Elementary Education teacher shall have passed the adopted Elementary Education content assessment (based on the adopted Elementary Education teacher preparation standards, which include English/Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Humanities, Wellness, and Physical Education, at the Elementary Education level).
    - For Middle School Education (Note: Colorado does not have a Middle School endorsement)
      - If the Middle School teacher is a generalist responsible for teaching students up through the seventh grade in all or most of the core-academic content areas, s/he shall have passed the adopted Elementary Education content test (see above - Elementary Education teacher requirements).

- If the Middle School teacher is responsible for teaching a specific secondary core academic content area(s) and is teaching at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level or higher, s/he shall have passed the adopted Secondary or K-12 content-area test(s), (PLACE or Praxis) in the content area(s) being taught or shall have acquired the equivalent of 24-semester hours in the core academic content area(s) being taught.

For Secondary Education (Excluding Middle School – see above)

- The core academic Secondary Education content area teacher shall have passed the adopted Secondary or K-12 content-area test(s) (PLACE or Praxis) in each/all content area(s) being taught.

## **AVENUES FOR ACCUMULATING 24 SEMESTER HOURS OF CREDIT**

1. College/university credit
  - Course work must be relevant and applicable to each/all of the teacher's non-endorsed core academic content area(s) being taught.
  - College/university credit must be awarded by an approved two or four-year institution of higher education.
2. Professional development activities
  - Activities must be relevant and applicable to each/all of the teacher's non-endorsed core academic-content area(s) being taught.
  - Credit may be awarded for, but does not have to be limited to, content-relevant district and other district approved professional development activities, inservices, workshops and education reform activities, such as but not limited to, curriculum review and development/design.
  - The teacher must provide documented evidence that the professional development activities were relevant and applicable to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in each/all of the non-endorsed core academic content area(s) taught.
3. Relevant travel
  - The teacher must have documentation from the school district certifying that the travel is applicable to the enhancement of skills and knowledge in the non-endorsed core academic content area(s) being taught.
  - The teacher must provide evidence, including but not limited to reports, materials or work products documenting the relevance and applicability of the travel to increasing the educator's knowledge and skills in the relevant non-endorsed core academic content area(s) being taught.
  - One-semester hour of credit may be awarded for each 15-clock hours of documented travel up to a maximum of 6-semester hours. (Travel time to and from the intended destination is not to be included.)

The above options for documenting the 24 semester hours are based on the Colorado Code of Regulations 301-37. These Rules establish the standards and criteria for the issuance of Colorado licenses and authorizations to teachers, special services providers, principals and administrators.

## **SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Verification of the teacher's 24 credits and determining highly qualified status is the responsibility of the educator's employing school district. Therefore, districts are required to keep all related transcripts, course work, professional development credits, and/or relevant travel documentation on file either electronically or in hard copy.
- Note: Once a Colorado teacher has been designated as highly qualified in a particular content area by any Colorado school district, that designation shall be reciprocal throughout the State.

## PART II – GUIDELINES FOR CONTENT EVALUATIONS

The following content evaluation guidelines are used in the licensing department of the Colorado Department of Education to determine qualification for license endorsements. It is suggested that these same guidelines be used by school districts to determine highly qualified status based on college/university credit.

It is important to note that CDE requires course work in each of the categories on the content evaluation form to award an **endorsement**. The same standard does not apply to highly qualified consideration. To be highly qualified in a content area, a teacher must have 24 hours in that content area; the hours do not have to be evenly distributed or distributed at all across the course categories.

As mentioned in this notebook's purpose statement, although a teacher may be highly qualified in a particular content area, districts and administrators can apply a higher standard for license, endorsements or specific course work based on the needs of the teaching assignment, school or district.

The NCLB core content areas include:

- Elementary Education
- Language Arts (English, Reading)
- Math
- Social Studies (Civics, Government, History, Geography, Economics)
- Science
- Arts (Visual Arts, Music, Drama)
- Foreign Language

The CDE Guideline for Content Evaluation sheets for these endorsements follow.

## **PART III – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL GUIDELINES**

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Four conditions that must be met for professional development to be counted toward making a teacher highly qualified:

1. The name of the content area must be included in the title of the professional development.
2. There must be evidence of what the teacher learned from this professional development.
3. There must be evidence of how the teacher's content knowledge increased and deepened.
4. There must be evidence of how the teacher's learning impacted the students in the classroom.

It is suggested that school districts require teachers to submit the following form for professional development activities to be considered as part of the 24 semester hours for highly qualified teachers. We suggest you make this form available electronically so teachers can word process their responses.

*School District Name*

### **NCLB PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTATION FORM**

Complete and submit this form to the district human resource department for consideration of professional development credit for NCLB highly qualified teacher status.

Today's Date:	
Teacher Name:	Employee ID# or SS#
School / Location:	Principal:
Current License Type (Professional, Provisional, etc.)	
Current Endorsement(s):	
Content area for which you'd like this professional development to be considered:	
Professional Development Course Title:	
Institution / Agency Providing the Professional Development:	
# of Course Contact Hours:	
Please respond to the following questions:	
1. What did you learn from this professional development?	
2. How was your content knowledge increased and deepened?	
3. How did your learning impact the students in the classroom?	
Teacher Signature	HR Signature
NCLB Credit Approved: YES NO	Date

## PART IV – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Question* - Does a sixth grade teacher with a current valid Colorado teaching license with an Elementary Education endorsement who is teaching in any, or in a combination of, core content areas have to meet the NCLB requirements for Secondary core academic content endorsement?

*Answer* - No. Teachers who teach 6<sup>th</sup> grade are still considered to be Elementary teachers despite teaching in middle school, and therefore do not necessarily have to be endorsed in any of the specific content areas in which they may be assigned to teach.

2. *Question* - Does a teacher of Geography, History, and Economics need 24-semester hours or an endorsement in each of the individual content areas that comprise the Social Studies to be highly qualified under NCLB?

*Answer* - No. Colorado does not have separate endorsements for the social studies (civics and government, economics, history and geography). A licensed endorsed teacher teaching any of the social studies meets the NCLB “highly qualified” requirements by:

- Holding a current valid license with a social studies endorsement; or
- Being able to provide documented evidence of the equivalent of 24 semester hours in that content area; or
- Having passed an approved social studies content-area test (PLACE or Praxis).

3. *Question* - Under NCLB, does a teacher of biology, physics and chemistry need 24 semester hours, or an endorsement in each of the science content sub-areas to be deemed highly qualified?

*Answer* - No. Colorado does not currently have separate endorsements for each of the sciences. A teacher teaching in any of the sciences meets the NCLB “highly qualified” requirements by:

- Holding a current valid license with a science endorsement on it; or
- Being able to provide documented evidence of the equivalent of 24-semester hours in that content area; or
- Having passed an approved science content-area test (PLACE or Praxis).

4. *Question* - Is there portability of highly qualified status?

*Answer* - The highly qualified status, once documented for a particular content area, is portable and reciprocal throughout Colorado. If a teacher achieves highly qualified status in a core academic subject area(s) in one school system, his/her highly qualified status carries over for the same content area when the teacher transfers to another Colorado public school system.

5. *Question* – May a substitute teacher be considered a highly qualified teacher?  
*Answer* – Yes. Teachers who hold a five-year substitute authorization are considered highly qualified teachers if they are assigned to teach in the content area that is consistent with their preparation.

**VERIFICATION OF “HIGHLY QUALIFIED  
TEACHER” – NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND**

The purpose of this document is for you to provide verification of (1) the successful completion of the PLACE or Praxis test in your teaching content area or (2) the successful completion of 24 semester credit hours in a content area.

**Personal Information:** Please Print

_____	_____	_____	_____
Last Name	Middle Initial	First Name	School
_____		_____	
School Phone Number or Extension		Social Security Number	
Core Academic Subject _____			

**PLACE or Praxis Test Verification**

Please attach documentation verifying successful completion of PLACE or Praxis test.
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**24 Semester Credit Hour Verification**

Please attach documentation verifying successful completion of 24 semester hours of university or Staff Development credit hours in your content area. If you submit a transcript, please highlight the courses you believe apply. Should you need to make copies of your transcript or Professional Development courses in your personnel file, come to the Office of Human Resources between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. With proper identification, any member of our staff will be happy to retrieve your file for you.

	<u>Class Title</u>	<u>Institution</u>	<u>Credit Received</u>	<u>Date Taken</u>
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____

9.	_____	_____	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Attach additional sheets, if needed.  
 Complete a form for each Core Academic Subject for which these hours will apply.

I verify the attached information is accurate and meets the criteria for English, Reading, Math, Science, Foreign Language, Social Studies or Arts (Please circle the appropriate subject area.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

The Office of Human Resources will review your application within 30 days and will notify you of its approval or disapproval.

Number of Semester Hours Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Semester Hours Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Human Resources Director

Cc: Employee  
 Principal  
 Employee File