TO: Illinois State Board of Education

FROM: Robert E. Schiller, Superintendent
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Agenda Topic: Illinois Criteria for Meeting the NCLB Requirements for “Highly Qualified” Teachers

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Purpose of Agenda Item

- To review the NCLB requirements for “highly qualified” teachers; and
- To consider the proposed Illinois Criteria for Meeting the NCLB Requirements for “Highly Qualified” Teachers

Expected Outcome of Agenda Item

- Final Board action on the proposed Illinois Criteria for Meeting the NCLB Requirements for “Highly Qualified” Teachers

Background Information

To support the goal of academic success for all students, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) established high expectations for teachers in core academic subjects and required each state to assure that all such teachers meet those criteria by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (see Attachment A). Each state is expected to take the following actions:

- Develop criteria for being “highly qualified” in relation to the NCLB requirements and the state certification system;
- Develop a system for collecting and reporting data on the percentage of classes that are taught by teachers who meet the “highly qualified” criteria; and
- Use federal funds, particularly Title II, at the state and local levels to increase the percentage of classes taught by teachers who meet the “highly qualified” criteria and move toward the goal of having all teachers of core academic subjects be “highly qualified” by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.
An important aspect of these requirements is that a teacher is “highly qualified” only in relation to his or her teaching assignment(s) – that is, the teacher’s qualifications meet specific criteria for teaching at specific grade levels and in specific subject areas. Equally important is the fact that the designation as “highly qualified” is not a judgment on the quality of the individual teacher as a professional educator. While it is focused on assuring that each student’s teacher of core academic subjects is knowledgeable about the subject her or she is teaching, it is not an evaluation of the teacher.

Congress and the U.S. Department of Education gave priority to assuring that the teachers of children in high poverty schools had immediate access to “highly qualified” teachers. Thus, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) required that after the first day of the 2002-2003 school year, all newly-hired teachers in programs supported with Title I funds had to be “highly qualified” according to the definition set forth in the Act. Thus, whether teachers who were newly hired in a Title I-funded program for the 2002-2003 school year were new to the profession or had many years of experience in other teaching roles, they were immediately subject to the NCLB. The same immediate requirement for “highly qualified teachers” will apply to teachers newly-hired in Title I-funded programs in 2003-2004, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.

By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, all teachers in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified” in each area of teaching responsibility. Core academic subjects are: English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography.

Under the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers are considered “highly qualified” if they meet three basic requirements:

- have a bachelor’s degree,
- have full State certification, and
- have demonstrated subject matter competence in the areas taught.

As indicated above, each state is responsible for determining the application of these requirements within its own certification system and as they apply to new and veteran teachers. The state is not required to submit its criteria for being “highly qualified” to the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), nor is the state’s action with respect to “highly qualified” teachers a required part of the state’s uniform system of accountability. However, when USDE makes an on-site visit to review state compliance with NCLB, the state must be able to justify the decisions it has made in aligning state criteria for “highly qualified” teachers with federal requirements.
The Illinois State Board of Education adopted draft criteria for “Illinois Certification Requirements Related to NCLB Definition of Highly Qualified Teacher” in September 2002. That document was based on preliminary federal guidance and was identified as a draft pending receipt of final guidance from the USDE. The final guidance was issued in December 2002 (see Attachment B), and it was immediately apparent that the draft Illinois criteria did not adequately align with federal expectations.

The primary areas of mismatch between the state draft and federal requirements were the criteria for teaching in middle grades, the criteria for special education teachers and the use of endorsements based on fewer than 32 semester hours of credit. Other topics of concern were the criteria for bilingual education teachers, the criteria for teachers coming to Illinois from other states and nations, and the criteria for current or veteran teachers to become highly qualified through the federal option of a “High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation” or “HOUSSE.”

The criteria being proposed for State Board action in May 2003 have been developed after countless hours of discussion among staff, with members of the Illinois education community, with representatives of the federal government and with state education agency staff in other states. These discussions with other state representatives have indicated that the greatest challenges for most are the middle grade and special education requirements. In addition, the only common themes guiding state actions appear to be to keep the criteria simple and as closely aligned to existing certification requirements as possible.

As background for the State Board’s consideration of this proposal, several key issues will be discussed in depth.

**Definitions**

- “New” and “Veteran” or “Current” Teachers

NCLB allows states to establish somewhat different criteria for teachers who are new to the profession and those who are not. This recognizes that teachers who have been in the profession for several years may not have been required to take a test in order to qualify for a certificate, and that the insights teachers gain through experience in the classroom can be an important factor in developing competence.

There are no specific definitions in NCLB for “new” and “veteran” or “current” teachers and although that may not seem necessary, providing such a definition will assure clarity about the demarcation between these groups. Therefore, this proposal includes the following definitions:
Current or Veteran Teachers: Teachers who were certified for the first time in Illinois on or before June 30, 2002 and who retain a valid certificate.

New Teachers: Teachers who were certified for the first time in Illinois on or after July 1, 2002.

• Primary Responsibility

Throughout the proposed criteria, the requirements for consideration as “highly qualified” are linked to the teacher’s primary assignment and whether he or she has “primary responsibility” for providing content instruction. For the purposes of determining “highly qualified” status, “primary responsibility” will be defined as being the sole teacher or the instructor of record. This definition is particularly important for special educators, but it has relevance to the middle grades, special subject areas, bilingual education, and team-teaching situations.

• Academic Major

Federal requirements allow states to define an academic “major” for use in determining whether a teacher can be considered “highly qualified.” Although institutions typically have their own definitions of an academic major, depending on the subject area, current State Board rules define a major as 32 semester hours of credit.

Staff research regarding the practices in other states indicates that the definitions for a major range from 28 to 34 semester hours. This proposal defines an academic major as 32 semester hours, which is consistent with the current state rules.

• Arts

NCLB includes the Arts as a core academic subject but allows states to define that term. In Illinois, the fundamental learning area of the Arts includes art, music and dance; however, dance is typically taught by a physical education teacher whose overall subject area responsibility is not included in NCLB.

For this reason, the requirements for teachers of dance will be guided by state regulations but not included in the official requirements for “highly qualified” teachers.

The proposed Illinois criteria for “highly qualified” teachers are based on a definition of the Arts as music and art.
• Sciences and Social Sciences

NCLB has identified several specific subject areas under each of the general areas of the sciences and social sciences. The Illinois criteria treat these subject areas consistent with the new state certification structures and the standards for these academic areas. This includes an expectation for core competencies and specific designations related to subject areas.

Middle Grades

NCLB states that the term “highly qualified” when used with respect to a middle or secondary school teacher who is new to the profession “means that the teacher holds at least a bachelor’s degree and has demonstrated a high level of competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches by –

1. passing a rigorous State academic subject test in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches …; or
2. successful completion, in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches, of an academic major, a graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an undergraduate academic major, or advanced certification or credentialing…”

The December 2003 federal guidance spoke to this subject at length, clarifying that a “generalist” test is not sufficient to establish subject area competence for middle grade teachers and that a “minor” in an academic subject is not sufficient by itself to establish the middle grade teacher as “highly qualified.” (See Sections C18 and C19 in Attachment B.)

The guidance document (Section C-27 in Attachment B) also clarified that if a K-8 school is designated by the State as an elementary school, the middle grade teachers in that school will be able to meet the NCLB requirements for elementary schools. If the middle grades are organized as a “school within a school” (e.g., departmentalized), the teachers must meet the more specialized middle grades requirements.

Current Illinois certification and assignment requirements, which apply the middle grade endorsement/requirements only to departmentalized middle grade schools, reflect this philosophy. However, there are two problems that make it unworkable for NCLB. First, the Illinois middle grade endorsement and the coursework requirements on which it is based do not establish a major (i.e., 32 semester hours) in any subject area and would thus not meet the NCLB requirement. Second, this approach appears to be discriminatory, allowing students to be taught by teachers with different credentials depending on the organization of the school. With attention focused on leaving no child behind, it seems inappropriate to allow a seventh grade student to be taught by teachers with differing qualifications based only on the organization of the school.
The proposed criteria for Illinois allow middle grade teachers, regardless of school organizational pattern, to be considered “highly qualified” if they hold an elementary certificate, which covers grades K-9, and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test. That test, which has been called simply the “Elementary Test,” was developed to be job-related and to assess the content knowledge required of a K-9 teacher across the core academic areas.

- The test assesses content knowledge in: Language Arts, Mathematics, Sciences, Social Sciences, Health, Physical Education and Fine Arts.
- The test framework, or set of objectives upon which the test is based, represents the content that is eligible for testing. The framework was aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards for this grade range.
- The framework was reviewed/revised/validated by a committee of educators (public school teachers--including those at lower and upper grades--and college faculty involved in the preparation of K-9 teachers.)
- The framework was also validated by a larger group of public school and college faculty through a job analysis (or content validation survey). In both instances, individuals verified the content was important to the job of an educator K-9 and also that it was inclusive, i.e., that it represented the content necessary to teach across the grade range up through 9th grade and in those fundamental learning areas (or core academic areas).
- The test items which assess those objectives also reflect the range and depth of knowledge required of the K-9 educator across the grade range and in the core academic areas.

Discussion with officials in Washington indicated that they would be “more comfortable” with the use of this test for NCLB purposes if it was clearly identified as a test for middle grade teachers. Therefore, the proposed Illinois criteria refer to the “Elementary/Middle Grades Test” and, in a future discussion of proposed rulemaking, the Board will be asked to officially rename the test. This involves no change in the content of the test, but it does clarify its existing purpose and scope.

The proposed criteria for middle grade teachers provide other options if the teacher holds a Secondary Certificate (Type 09 which covers grades 6-12), or the Special K-12 Certificate. However, the critical policy decision relates to the Elementary Certificate holder. This proposed criteria are based on the belief that the Elementary/Middle Grades Test is an appropriate assessment of subject area competence and meets NCLB requirements.
Special Education

Special educators who do not directly instruct students in any core academic subject or who provide only consultation to other teachers are not required to meet the NCLB requirements for subject area competence. However, NCLB does require that special education teachers who are providing content instruction meet the same requirements for subject area competence as their peers who are teaching core academic subjects.

Although response to the preliminary guidance on this requirement was heated, with many educators nationwide expressing concern about the implications on already serious shortages of special education teachers, the federal response was ambiguous. No changes were made in the requirements but, in recognition of critical teacher shortages, states were told to “work to meet” the high standards set by NCLB.

“The statute provides a certain amount of flexibility in how the standards are met. Teachers can demonstrate competency by taking a test, and states have flexibility to tailor the tests to the subjects taught by teachers, including special education teachers and teachers of LEP students. This issue will be addressed further in guidance.”

States are still waiting for that additional guidance. However, the debate over qualifications needed by special education teachers has intensified as a result of federal plans for reauthorization of the IDEA. Although there is wide agreement that students with disabilities must be provided with educational opportunities that will enable them to study the same curriculum and meet the same standards as their peers, there remains a great deal of debate about what subject area requirements for teachers are necessary to meet this goal.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has advocated for a balanced approach to this issue. The following CEC position statement establishes important parameters.

“Because of the significant role that content specific subject matter knowledge plays at the secondary level, special education teachers should routinely teach secondary academic subject matter content classes in consultation or collaboration with one or more general education teachers appropriately licensed in the respective content area. When a special education teacher assumes sole responsibility for teaching an academic subject matter class at the secondary level, the special educator should have a solid subject matter content knowledge base sufficient to assure the students can meet state curriculum standards.”

Illinois has several options. The first is to defer action on criteria for “highly qualified” special education teachers until the federal government provides more
explicit guidance. This option would allow the State of Illinois to have a better understanding of what is required by Congress and the USDE.

Deferring action would also allow Illinois to complete work on strengthening the content base of the special education teacher standards. Proposed rules for general education subject knowledge for special educators have recently been published to elicit public comment, and once adopted, these rules will be used as the basis for strengthening preparation programs and certification testing. It is expected that the tests for special educators (which have traditionally emphasized pedagogy over content) will be revised to reflect this greater emphasis on content. These tests may then serve as an appropriate demonstration of subject area competence.

Alternatively, Illinois could apply the same criteria to special education teachers as to their peers. This strict interpretation of the NCLB requirements would assure a high level of subject area knowledge and skills by all special education teachers with direct instructional responsibilities. However, this approach would require more of special educators than their peers, discourage special education teacher candidates who are already facing five-year preparation programs, and exacerbate the shortage of special educators in Illinois.

A third option, as represented in this proposal, strikes a middle ground. Current teachers will be considered “highly qualified” if they hold certification as a special educator. New special educators will be considered “highly qualified” if they hold a certificate for special education (e.g., Type 10) and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades test. New special educators can also be considered “highly qualified” if they hold a certificate for special education and, for each area of teaching responsibility, pass the Content-Area Test or have a major (or the equivalent of a major) or have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS). This approach establishes a high level of expectation for special educators while the State of Illinois completes work on strengthening the content base for special education certification. It will also provide a basis for “moving toward the NCLB goal” while this state and others await clearer guidance from the federal government.

**Provisional Certification**

NCLB requires full certification for teachers of core academic subjects and prohibits waiving of certification or licensure requirements on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis.

In Illinois, several types of certificates are designated as “provisional certificates” including certificates for some vocational educators and for teachers who come to Illinois from other states. However, there is a significant difference in these credentials. Provisional vocational certificates are issued with the understanding
that state requirements are waived for the certificate holder and that he or she is will not be expected to meet them.

In contrast, the provisional certificate issued to out-of-state candidates is based on the expectation that candidates will meet all Illinois requirements within a limited period of time. This practice acknowledges that many of out-of-state teachers have taken similar tests in their previous places of residence but are unable to take the Illinois tests in time to begin teaching in the state. This certificate gives the candidate up to nine months to pass the state test in Illinois, briefly deferring but not waiving the certification requirement.

The proposed criteria allow provisional certificate holders from another state to be considered “highly qualified.” This is based on the belief that this type of provisional certificate is consistent with NCLB requirements. The proposed criteria do not include other types of provisional certificate holders.

As an aside, it should be emphasized that the purpose of NCLB cannot be met if there are no teachers available to provide highly qualified instruction. Teachers who move to Illinois are important to the supply of candidates, and it would be counterproductive to exclude them from consideration as “highly qualified” based on the name of the certificate (i.e., provisional) or the fact that the certificate holders are given a relatively brief period in which to meet the testing requirement.

**Transitional Bilingual Certificate Holders**

Holders of the Transitional Bilingual Certificate (Type 29) are an extremely mixed group, representing such diversity that it is difficult to find a common denominator other than proficiency in languages. These speakers of other languages have been educated in the United States or in other countries, and they may or may not have participated in a teacher preparation program. Each holds at least the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor’s degree but they have a wide variety of subject matter backgrounds.

The draft guidance issued by the State Board in September 2002 indicated that holders of Type 29 certificates could not be considered as “highly qualified.” However, federal officials have informally encouraged states to use the NCLB provisions for “alternative programs” (see Section C-3 in Appendix B) to address difficult issues.

The proposed criteria “highly qualified” teachers in Illinois have taken advantage of this opportunity by considering Type 29 certificate holders as highly qualified if they are participants in a program that meets the NCLB alternative program requirements. These requirements call for intensive support and professional development for the teacher as he or she moves toward full certification as a
bilingual teacher and they allow differentiation of support depending on the needs of the teacher.

This approach should result in better local district support for Type 29 certificate holders. In addition, since NCLB alternative program participants must achieve full certification in three years, this approach should encourage the certificate holders to complete the requirements for full certification within three years rather than the six years (plus the opportunity for a two-year extension) now allowed by state law.

**Veteran Teacher Requirements – HOUSSE**

NCLB requirements for veteran teachers establish broad parameters within which states can identify options for experienced teachers to be considered as “highly qualified.” As is true throughout the NCLB guidance, the parameters are tied to demonstrating competence in the subject area of teaching responsibility and they permit states to develop a “High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation” (HOUSSE) as a way to assess that competence.

This Illinois HOUSSE criteria include six options that assure “automatic” qualification as a highly qualified teacher, plus a seventh option that allows teachers to use various strategies to accumulate a 120-point total. The first six options are similar to the requirements for new teachers but do not require testing. Key aspects of the seventh option include points for experience (which is specifically allowed in NCLB guidance), coursework in amounts less than the 32-hour major, and high-quality professional development.

This proposal's consistent linking of the options for becoming highly qualified to the area of teaching responsibility may be of concern to the education community. For example, the proposal allows teachers with 24-semester hour endorsements (which have been common in Illinois) to be considered as highly qualified in the given content area if they have had five years of teaching experience in that field. The Board can expect that some individuals and groups will argue for allowing the veteran teacher to be considered highly qualified with only the 24-semester hour endorsement.

Similarly, the master’s degree option in this proposal is limited to a master’s degree in the area of teaching responsibility. Some educators will urge that the master's degree be allowed to “count” regardless of its relationship to the area of teaching responsibility – i.e. for any area of education (e.g., administration as well as teaching), or any area of teaching, or in a related area (e.g., a master’s degree in math could be used to meet the criteria for teaching science.)

The implementation of the seventh option under the Illinois HOUSSE (point accumulation) will require careful attention to the quality of professional development activities engaged in by the teacher and a procedure for verifying...
that the requirements for chosen option have been met. This will require additional discussion.

**Data Collection and Reporting**

In September 2003, the State Board must submit data to the USDE regarding the percentages of classes taught by “highly qualified” teachers in 2002-2003 -- in the aggregate and in “high poverty” schools. State Board action on the proposed criteria for “highly qualified teachers” is essential to conducting a planned survey of local school teachers before the end of the school year.

State Board staff have used the proposed criteria to examine teacher credentials on file in the state agency in relation to their 2002-2003 teaching assignments as reported by district staff. This review has determined that more than 70% of Illinois teachers are meeting the criteria for their assignments during the current school year. These teachers will not be asked to complete the survey.

Instead, the proposed survey will focus on teachers whose credentials in the State Board’s data system do not yet show that they were “highly qualified” for their assignments (up to three assignments) during the 2002-2003 school year. They will be asked to provide the State Board with records of accomplishments that would make them highly qualified for their assignments – e.g., additional master’s degrees, coursework, etc. Evidence to support the teacher’s responses (such as a copy of a degree or a transcript) must be submitted to the State Board and sign-off by the local administrator will be required.

When this information has been received and entered into the data base, the State Board should be well positioned to submit the baseline data to the USDE in September.

A survey has been drafted that aligns with the proposed criteria so that, as soon as the Board takes action, the final survey could be mailed within a few days. This is imperative since some school districts will be finishing their school year within a few weeks.

**Complexity of the Criteria**

The Illinois certification structure is extremely complex, with many different, broad and overlapping certificates. In addition, endorsements have been added to these certificates based on a variety of different criteria (e.g., 32 hours, 18 hours, 24 hours, etc.).

This proposal identifies, as simply as possible within the state’s complex certification system, the options for determining whether an individual teacher is highly qualified for a specific assignment.
Despite the attempt to be comprehensive in this proposal, it is understood that specific questions will arise that are not addressed by the proposed criteria. These will be discussed and brought to the Board as appropriate.

**State Designation as “Highly Qualified”**

State Board staff have been asked whether the Board will issue any kind of official designation to teachers who meet the criteria as “highly qualified.” This suggestion has some positive aspects, but since the designation as “highly qualified” is specific to the teaching assignment – which could change from year to year – it might be very difficult to track this information. This topic should be discussed further in the months ahead.

**State Requirements for Teaching Assignments**

Illinois has extensive rules that identify the minimum requirements for teaching in specific grades or subjects. The middle school requirements are a good example of this situation, as is the requirement that teachers whose primary assignment is reading must have at least 18 semester hours in reading.

These requirements are not changed by the proposed criteria for meeting the NCLB requirements for “highly qualified.” All existing rules regarding the minimum requirements for teaching assignments will remain in effect until they are officially changed by the State Board.

Staff will provide a matrix for local district use that will show the adopted requirements for “highly qualified” teachers in relation to state minimum requirements for each grade level and subject area.

**Superintendent’s Recommendation**

- The State Board should review the issues presented in this background information and the comments/recommendations from the State Teacher Certification Board.
- The State Board should take final action to adopt criteria for Illinois teachers to be considered “highly qualified” in relation to NCLB.

**Next Steps**

- Based on State Board action, the criteria will be widely disseminated.
- Staff will immediately distribute the survey that is needed to provide comprehensive 2002-2003 data for submission to USDE in September.
Proposed
Illinois Criteria for Meeting the NCLB Requirements
for “Highly Qualified” Teachers

Part I

Criteria for Current Teachers to be Considered “Highly Qualified”

All Illinois teachers must meet requirements of the Illinois Administrative Code for their specific teaching assignment.

To meet NCLB requirements, teachers who were first certified to teach in Illinois on or before June 30, 2002 and who retain a valid certificate are considered “highly qualified” in the area of teaching responsibility if they meet the following requirements.

Hold a valid Illinois teaching certificate that is appropriate to the grade level and meet one of the following options.

1. Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test or the Content-Area Test for the area of teaching responsibility.

2. Have an endorsement that has been earned through completion of an approved program or completion of 32 semester hours of credit in the subject area of teaching responsibility. For the elementary and middle grades, the Elementary Certificate (Type 03) with a general education endorsement meets this criterion. For special educators, the Type 10 Certificate with a special education endorsement will meet this criterion.

3. Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major in the area of teaching responsibility.

4. Have a master’s degree or other advanced degree/credential in the area of teaching responsibility.

5. Be certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards in the area of teaching responsibility.

6. Have a 24-semester hour endorsement in the area of teaching responsibility and five years of teaching experience in the area of teaching responsibility.
7. Accumulate 120 points through any combination of the following:

- Teaching experience – 5 points per year with a maximum of 25 points
- Teaching experience in the area of teaching responsibility – 5 points per year with a maximum of 25 points (can be the same 5 years as above)
- Hold 24 semester hour endorsement in the area of teaching responsibility, or have equivalent coursework but without an official endorsement – 70 points
- Hold 18 semester hour endorsement in the area of teaching assignment, or have equivalent coursework but without an official endorsement – 40 points
- Have semester hours of credit in the area of teaching responsibility that are above the 24- or 18-semester hour endorsement requirements but are not sufficient to meet the next level – 5 points per credit hours with a maximum of 90 points
- Have Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) earned through high-quality professional development in the area of teaching responsibility. The professional development must meet identified criteria – one point per CPDU with a maximum of 60 points

Part II

Criteria for New Teachers to be Considered “Highly Qualified”

All Illinois teachers must meet requirements of the Illinois Administrative Code for their specific teaching assignment.

To meet NCLB requirements, teachers who were certified in Illinois on or after July 1, 2002 are considered “highly qualified” in the area of teaching responsibility if they meet the following requirements.

Elementary Grades (K-4)

*Teaching assignment:* Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a self-contained classroom.

Options to be considered “Highly Qualified”

1. Hold Elementary Certificate (Type 03) that is endorsed for self-contained general education and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test
2. Hold Early Childhood Certificate (Type 04) and pass the Early Childhood Test (option is applicable only through 3rd grade)
3. Hold a Provisional Early Childhood or Elementary Certificate that is based on certification in another state or nation and pass the Early Childhood Test or the Elementary/Middle Grades Test within nine months of certification.
4. Hold a Special K-12 Certificate (Type 10) and pass the Content-Area Test (option applicable only for the subject for which the certificate is endorsed -- e.g. art or music)

Middle Grades (5-8)

Teaching assignment: Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a middle grades setting, whether self-contained or departmentalized.

Options to be considered “Highly Qualified”

1. Hold Elementary Certificate (Type 03) and pass the Elementary/Middle Grade Test
2. Hold a Secondary Certificate (Type 09) and meet one of the following options:
   o Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for grades 6-8)
   o Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major
   o Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for grades 6-8)
3. Hold a Special K-12 Certificate (Type 10) endorsed in the area of teaching responsibility and pass the Content-Area Test
4. Hold a Provisional Elementary, Secondary or Special K-12 Certificate (as listed above) based on certification in another state or nation and pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test or the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility within nine months of certification.

Secondary Grades (9-12)

Teaching assignment: Primary responsibility for teaching content in the core academic subjects in a secondary setting.

Options to be considered “Highly Qualified”

1. Hold a Secondary Certificate (Type 09) and meet one of the following options:
   o Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility
1. Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major in each area of teaching responsibility
   o Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility

2. Hold an Elementary Certificate (Type 03) and meet one of the following options:
   o Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test and the Content-Area Test in the area of teaching responsibility (applicable only for 9th grade)
   o Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test and have a major or coursework equivalent to a major
   o Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility (applicable only to grade 9)

3. Hold a Provisional Elementary (applicable only to grade 9), Secondary or Special K-12 Certificate (as listed above) based on certification in another state or nation and pass the required tests for each area of teaching responsibility (see above) within nine months of certification

**Special Education**

*Teaching Assignment* - Special education teachers who work cooperatively with a content-area teacher, adapting materials, supporting instruction, etc. are not required to meet federal requirements for being “highly qualified.”

*Teaching Assignment* – Primary responsibility for teaching content to students with disabilities at any grade level.

Options to be considered “Highly Qualified”

1. Hold one of the four certification options as a teacher of special education and pass the test applicable to the certificate(s) held and meet one of the following options:
   o Pass the Elementary/Middle Grades Test
   o Pass the Content-Area test for each area of teaching responsibility
   o Have a major or coursework equivalent to a major in each area of teaching responsibility
   o Have a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility

2. Hold a Provisional Special Preschool-Age 21 Certificate that is based on certification in another state or nation and pass the applicable tests within nine months of certification
**Bilingual Education and English-as-a-Second Language Education**

*Teaching Assignment* -- Primary responsibility for teaching content to students with Limited English Proficiency in a Bilingual or English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) program.

Options to be considered “Highly Qualified”

- Hold an Early Childhood, Elementary, Secondary, Special K-12 or Special Preschool-Age 21 Certificate appropriate for the grade level of the teaching assignment and hold the Bilingual or ESL credential (Approval or Endorsement) appropriate to the certificate and meet one of the following options:
  - Pass the Content-Area Test for each area of teaching responsibility
  - Hold a major or coursework equivalent to a major in each area of teaching responsibility
  - Hold a graduate degree or advanced certification (e.g., NBPTS) in each area of teaching responsibility

**Special Circumstances**

Charter school teachers – No certification is required but to be highly qualified, the teacher must hold a bachelor’s degree and demonstrate competence in the area of teaching responsibility by passing the content test(s).

Alternative Certificate Holders – Hold an Illinois Alternative Certificate through an Illinois approved alternative program and demonstrate competence by passing the appropriate content test(s).

Resident Teacher Certificate Holders – Hold Resident Teacher Certificate through an Illinois approved resident teacher program and demonstrate competence by passing the appropriate content test(s).

International Visiting Teacher Certificate Holders – Hold a valid International Visiting Teacher Certificate.

Transitional Bilingual Certificate (Type 29) Holders -- Hold a Type 29 Certificate and demonstrate subject area competence through one of the following options:
  - Have a major or coursework equivalent to major in the content area
  - Pass the Content-Area Test for the area of teaching responsibility.

The Transitional Bilingual Certificate holder must also participate in a federally-defined alternative program that includes formal coursework toward full certification within three years, as well as induction/mentoring support and high-quality professional development.