



The University of the State of New York • The State Education Department

Just the Facts for NY Parents

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

*The **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND (NCLB) ACT of 2001** is a federal law to improve education for all children. It holds schools responsible for results, gives parents greater choices, and promotes teaching methods that work. This fact sheet will point out one part of the law that is important for New York parents to know.*

All children deserve well-prepared teachers. Well-prepared teachers know what to teach and how to teach. They have mastered the subject matter that they are teaching. Under NCLB, all school districts and charter schools must make sure that all teachers in core academic subjects are **highly qualified** by the end of school year 2005-2006. For NCLB, core academic subjects are English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

What highly qualified means.

“Highly qualified” means that your child’s teacher must have a bachelor’s degree and be fully certified by the State of New York. (A small percentage of charter school teachers do not need to be certified in order to be highly qualified.) Your child’s teachers must also pass state tests or meet comparable requirements for the grades and the subjects they are teaching. Under NCLB, schools that receive Title I federal funds may only hire new teachers if they are highly qualified.

All teachers of core subjects, even experienced teachers, in your child’s school may participate in professional development to meet the highly qualified standard set by NCLB. School districts must offer professional development to enable teachers to become highly qualified and effective teachers by school year 2005-2006.

You have the right to know if your child’s teacher is highly qualified.

At the beginning of each school year, school districts and charter schools receiving Title I funds must let parents know their rights. One of these is the right to know the professional qualifications of their child’s classroom teachers. Such information must include:

- Whether a teacher has State certification for the grade levels and subjects he or she is teaching;
- The teacher's baccalaureate degree major and any other certifications or degrees; and
- Whether their child receives services from paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

Schools receiving Title I funds must also give parents timely notice:

- If their child has been assigned to a teacher of a core academic subject who is not "highly qualified," or
- If their child has been taught for four or more weeks in a row by a teacher of a core academic subject who is not "highly qualified."

PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

All **newly hired** paraprofessionals providing instructional support in Title I programs must have a high school diploma or GED. They must also have at least two years of college or an associate's degree, or pass a test chosen by their local school district. Paraprofessionals hired on or before January 8, 2002 in Title I programs must meet this new standard by school year 2005-2006. School districts and charter schools can help paraprofessionals meet this standard through on-the-job training or additional schooling.

Paraprofessionals working solely as translators or solely in programs to involve parents must have a high school diploma or GED. They do not have to meet the rest of the paraprofessional requirements.

You can find out if your child's teacher is highly qualified.

- Ask the principal in your child's school about the qualifications of your child's teachers.
- Ask your child's principal or teacher what professional development activities will be offered to help all teachers meet the highly qualified standard.



*This is one of a series of NY parent information sheets about the federal education law **No Child Left Behind**. Section 1119 of **No Child Left Behind** covers teacher qualifications. For more "...Facts," ask your principal or email the NY State Education Department at nclbnys@mail.nysed.gov or go to the web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/deputy/nclb/nclbhome.htm>. The federal **No Child Left Behind** web site has a page especially designed for parents at <http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/parents/>.*