



Highly Qualified Teachers Under NCLB

Title II-A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) focuses on teacher and paraprofessional quality in order to improve student achievement. NCLB has established rigorous goals for ensuring that all teachers are highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

What is the Definition of Highly Qualified?

To be considered a highly qualified teacher, a teacher must

- be certified to teach by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and
- be teaching in their fields of certification *or* have a major in the subjects they teach *or* in the case of a veteran teacher, successfully complete the High Object State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) offered by the PSC for the subjects they teach.

Beginning last school year, all newly hired teachers in programs funded by Title 1 must be highly qualified. By the end of the 2005-2006 school year, **all** teachers of core academic subjects must be highly qualified.

Paraprofessionals who work in Title 1 programs and were hired after January 8, 2002 must have:

- completed at least 2 years of study in an institute of higher education *or*
- obtained an associate's or higher degree *or*
- demonstrated through a state or local assessment their knowledge of and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics.

Existing paraprofessionals who work in Title 1 programs must meet these requirements by January 8, 2006.

94% of Georgia's teachers and 67% of Title 1 paraprofessionals are highly qualified

How is Georgia Doing?

Georgia's progress towards achieving NCLB goals is detailed in the PSC's Title II-A Federal Report. Ninety-four percent of Georgia teachers in eight core subject areas (Elementary Instruction; English Language Arts; Germanic, Slavic, and Classical Languages; Life Sciences; Mathematics; Physical Sciences; Romance Languages and Social Sciences) meet the state and federal criteria for highly qualified. This year's data does not include teachers in the arts and kindergarten teachers. Sixty-seven percent of Title 1 paraprofessionals meet the criteria for highly qualified.

Questions to Ask at the District Level

- Do higher-income schools in the district have more highly qualified teachers than low-income schools?
- Is there a school district plan to help teachers who are not highly qualified become so, and to recruit more highly qualified teachers into the school district?
- Do the professional development opportunities provided to your teachers include instruction on how to work effectively with parents?

Questions to Ask at the Local School Level

- What are the qualifications of the teachers at your school?
- How many teachers in your schools do not meet the definition of highly qualified?
- How many teachers in your school are not teaching in their field?

(from the National PTA, www.pta.org)

Parental Notification Requirements -Title 1 Schools

NCLB requires that at the beginning of each school year, all school districts must notify parents of students attending Title 1 schools that they may request information regarding the qualifications of their student's teachers and paraprofessionals. This information must be provided "to the extent practicable" in a language that parents can understand. Parents may request the following information:

- Whether the teacher has met state qualifications and has a license for the grade level and the subject areas he or she teaches;
- Whether the teacher has an emergency or provisional license;
- What the teacher's undergraduate major was, any graduate certification or degree held by the teacher including the field of discipline of the certification or degree; and
- Whether the student is being taught by paraprofessionals and if so, their qualifications.

Parents must also be notified in a timely manner if a student has been assigned or has been taught for four or more weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Additional Resources:

Georgia Title II-Part A, *Improving Teacher Quality* website, www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html, Georgia Professional Standards Commission