

# Board of Education Agenda Item

Item: \_\_\_\_\_ P. \_\_\_\_\_

Date: September 27, 2006

**Topic:** Final Review of Proposed Response to *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Compliance Monitoring Report on Highly Qualified Teachers

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## Origin:

Topic presented for information only (no board action required)

Board review required by  
 State or federal law or regulation  
 Board of Education regulation  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Action requested at this meeting  Action requested at future meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

## Previous Review/Action:

No previous board review/action

Previous review/action  
date July 26, 2006  
action received for first review

## Background Information:

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that states and school divisions ensure that all teachers of the core academic subjects be “highly qualified” by the end of the 2005-06 school year. The law requires that to be designated as highly qualified new teachers must hold a bachelor’s degree, have full state licensure (including alternative licensure), and demonstrate subject-matter competence in the core academic subjects taught. Experienced teachers must meet requirements by the end of the 2005-06 school year to be designated as highly qualified by meeting one of the following options:

- (1) passing a rigorous state academic subject matter test; or
- (2) completing an academic major, graduate degree, coursework equivalent to an academic major, or advanced certification or credentialing for middle or secondary school teachers; or

- (3) using the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE). The HOUSSE provides states with a method by which teachers can demonstrate competency in each subject they teach. [Virginia's HOUSSE was approved on February 25, 2004, and amended to address special educators on April 20, 2005.]

The United States Department of Education (USED) announced that if states meet the law's requirements and USED's expectations in making satisfactory efforts but fall short of having highly qualified teachers in every classroom by the end of the 2005-06 school year, states would have the opportunity to submit a revised plan for meeting the highly qualified teacher goal established in statute and regulations by the end of the 2006-07 school year.

In a letter of June 29, 2006, USED Assistant Secretary of Education Henry Johnson reported to the Virginia Department of Education the results of the USED Academic Improvement and Teacher Quality Programs team review of the state's progress in meeting the highly qualified teacher provisions of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) and Virginia's administration of the Title II, Part A, Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program.

In the report, USED cited Virginia relative to the assessment of content knowledge of newly hired high school special education teachers. Virginia allowed an option for new high school special education teachers to take either a middle school Praxis II assessment in the content areas of mathematics, science, English, and/or social studies or an appropriate Praxis II content test (secondary level) to demonstrate content knowledge to be designated highly qualified. USED stated that using the Praxis II middle school assessments does not meet the requirements of NCLB or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA).

USED also reported that Virginia's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) option of allowing licensed elementary, middle, and secondary teachers not new to the profession to become highly qualified by the completion of an earned advanced degree in any area from an accredited college or university does not meet the requirements of NCLB.

In the June 29, 2006, letter USED advised the Virginia Department of Education that the issues cited with respect to highly qualified special education teachers must be resolved by December 29, 2006, and the approved definition reflected in the 2005-2006 data reported on highly qualified teachers.

### **Summary of Major Elements**

Virginia is required to submit a revised plan in response to the issues addressed in the compliance monitoring letter. To address the testing concern for high school special education teachers new to the profession, one of the following options is proposed to demonstrate subject-matter competency in the subject(s) they teach:

- **Options provided by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, including an academic major in the content area, graduate degree in the teaching content area, or coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major.** [New secondary special education teachers who teach two or more academic subjects who are highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, science, or social studies have two years after the date of employment to be highly qualified in the other core academic subject area, which may include HOUSSE. If teaching core academic subjects exclusively to children assessed on alternate achievement standards, the teacher must meet highly qualified requirements for an elementary teacher.]

- **Rigorous State Academic Subject Test: Pass the appropriate Praxis II assessment(s) in the high school subject(s) they teach.**

Praxis II Tests

Biology: Content Knowledge (0235)

Chemistry: Content Knowledge (0245)

Earth Science: Content Knowledge (0571)

English Language, Literature, and Composition: Content Knowledge (0041)

Mathematics: Content Knowledge (0061)

Physics: Content Knowledge (0265)

Social Studies: Content Knowledge (0081)

- **Rigorous State Academic Subject Test: Pass the appropriate Middle School Praxis II assessment(s) in the subject(s) they teach** if the special education teacher new to the profession is teaching classes at a high school campus in which the students are not earning standard credit in core academic areas towards a high school diploma.

The criteria for highly qualified teachers do not apply to special education consultative teachers who are collaborating with a core academic teacher.

To address the citation regarding the option of allowing licensed elementary, middle, and secondary teachers not new to the profession to become highly qualified by the completion of an earned advanced degree from an accredited college or university, the following revision is recommended for Virginia's HOUSSE:

**Amend the HOUSSE option "a" as follows:**

- 3.a. completion of an earned advanced degree from an accredited college or university in the subject(s) the teacher is teaching.

The Department of Education surveyed the 132 school divisions to collect information on the impact to the approximate 99,000 Virginia teachers if the proposed amendments are approved. The Department of Education received responses from all school divisions, and the results of the survey were as follows:

- 73 Number of teachers of special education who have been designated highly qualified who (1) serve as the teacher of record for high school classes in which the students are receiving a standard diploma and (2) took the Praxis II Middle School Subject Content Assessment(s) to be designated as highly qualified.
- 82 Number of experienced teachers who were designated highly qualified by completing an advanced degree (not in the subject content area) and who do not meet one of the other HOUSSE criteria.

### **Superintendent's Recommendation:**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends that the Board of Education approve the following:

- (1) the proposed amendment to the criteria below for high school special education teachers new to the profession to demonstrate subject-matter competency in the subject(s) they teach for the designation of highly qualified:
  - complete an option provided by the *No Child Left Behind Act*, including an academic major in the content area, graduate degree in the teaching content area, or coursework equivalent to an undergraduate major; or
  - pass the appropriate Praxis II assessment(s) in the high school subject(s) they teach; or
  - pass the appropriate Middle School Praxis II assessment(s) in the subject(s) they teach if the special education teacher new to the profession is teaching classes at a high school campus in which the students are not earning standard credit in core academic areas towards a high school diploma.
- (2) the proposed amendment to the HOUSSE option of allowing licensed elementary, middle, and secondary teachers not new to the profession to become highly qualified by the completion of an earned advanced degree from an accredited college or university in the subject(s) the teacher is teaching.

### **Impact on Resources:**

Teachers and school divisions will incur costs in meeting the requirements for the revised highly qualified designation criteria. These costs may include tuition for additional coursework and fees for tests, registration, and preparation. School divisions and the Department of Education may incur added costs in revising the data collection. Additionally, an impact on federal funding resources could occur if revisions are not made and approved by USED.

### **Timetable for Further Review/Action:**

Upon USED approval of Virginia's revised criteria, the Department will request school divisions to update their 2005-2006 data on highly qualified teachers.