

Highly Qualified Requirements for Special Education Teachers

In the scenario where a special education teacher is the primary instructor in elementary academic content or Core Academic Subjects (CAS), **NCLB requires special education teachers to meet the same Highly Qualified requirements as general education teachers. However, these teachers are not required to add the CAS (English/language arts, reading, science, mathematics, government and civics, history, economics, geography, foreign languages, music, visual arts) to the license.**

Licensed special education teachers who are required to meet the NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher definition include:

- **Core Academic Elementary School Teacher:** The special education teacher is the primary teacher providing instruction to the student in the core academic elementary subjects.
- **Core Academic Junior High, Middle or Secondary School Teacher:** The special education teacher is the primary teacher providing instruction to the student in one or more Core Academic Subject(s).
- **Team Teaching (Special Education Teacher and a General Education Teacher):** The special education teacher works in the general education class alongside a Highly Qualified Teacher of Core Academic Subjects or elementary academic content. The special education teacher and the general education teacher share responsibilities for the design and delivery of instruction, as well as the evaluation of student performance.

Licensed special education teachers who are **NOT** required to meet the NCLB Highly Qualified Teacher definition include:

- **Co-Teacher:** The special education teacher works within the general education setting in which a Highly Qualified general education teacher provides instruction to the class on Core Academic Subjects. The special education teacher provides direct assistance to students with disabilities (e.g., via individualized or small group instruction) as a **support** to the Highly Qualified Teacher's instruction.
- **Consultant Teacher:** The special education teacher **provides consultation** (e.g., adapts curricula, uses behavioral supports and interventions, and selects appropriate accommodations) to Highly Qualified general education teachers of Core Academic subjects.
- **Resource Room Teacher:** The special education teacher provides direct assistance to students with disabilities (e.g., tutoring, reinforcement of content provided in the general education setting) **in segregated settings** (e.g., resource class setting, self-contained classroom) **after the students receive instruction** on Core Academic Subjects from a Highly Qualified general education teacher.
- **Non-Core Academic Instruction Teacher:** The special education teacher provides direct instruction to students with disabilities **on non-Core Academic Subjects** (e.g., life skills, study skills, community-based instruction).

Teaching Core Academic Subjects Exclusively to Students Assessed Against Alternate Achievement Standards (ISTAR)

Highly Qualified Requirements – Amendment

The IDEA 2004 provides that if a special education teacher teaches Core Academic Subjects exclusively to students who are being assessed against alternate achievement standards (ISTAR), the teacher must meet the Highly Qualified requirements for elementary school teachers and, for instruction above the elementary level, have subject-matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided. Accordingly, special education teachers above the elementary level who teach Core Academic Subjects exclusively to students assessed against alternate achievement standards (ISTAR) have the option of meeting the Highly Qualified requirements for elementary school teachers. Alternatively, these teachers can meet the Highly Qualified Teacher requirements at the secondary level.

Note: *Teachers who do not teach Core Academic Subjects (e.g., some life skills classes) do not have to be Highly Qualified.*