Message Regarding NCLB

Written by Louise Bassett Wednesday, 29 September 2010 12:57 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 January 2011 13:33

School districts and school personnel have been working for several years to complete the requirements of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act regarding highly qualified teachers. I applaud your hard work to comply with the federal law. We are close to the 100 percent goal but not quite there, despite tremendous efforts statewide.

USDE reviewed compliance nationally and informed all states last week of their status. We were informed as follows: "Our review shows that, in general, your State is implementing the HQT provisions in NCLB and making an effort to reach the HQT goal, but it appears that you will not reach it in all districts and schools by the end of the current school year. Accordingly, the Department requests that you submit a revised plan detailing specific new actions you will take to reach the HQT goal in the 2006-07 school year to facilitate all students performing on grade level in reading and math by 2014

In addition, USDE has informed all states that although we can continue the process toward reaching our goal of 100 percent highly qualified teachers, the use of HOUSSE as one tool for veteran teachers must be phased out over time. Their notice to us is as follows: "The revised plan should address how the State plans to complete the implementation of HOUSSE procedures for current teachers. The plan should also describe how the State will phase out the use of HOUSSE for teachers hired for the 2006-07 school year and beyond, except for teachers who teach multiple secondary subjects in school districts eligible to participate in the Small, Rural School Achievement program and are highly qualified in at least one core academic subject at the time of hire; new special education teachers who teach multiple core academic subjects, and who are highly qualified in either mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired; and teachers who come to the United States from other countries to teach on a temporary basis.

"It is our intent to submit a revised plan to USDE which will delineate use of HOUSSE in 2006-07 and 2007-08. We want to give teachers as much time as possible to become highly qualified through HOUSSE, while still phasing it out as required. We hope they will accept our plan, and we will keep you informed as we work with them to negotiate a timeline.

• • As you can see from the USDE language, teachers who teach multiple secondary subjects in school districts in eligible rural schools and who are highly qualified in at least one core academic subject at the time of hire will have three years from the date of employment to become highly qualified in the remaining core subjects and may use HOUSSE after the first year of teaching to demonstrate competence.

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- • Additionally, new special education teachers who teach multiple core academic subjects and who are highly qualified in either mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired will have two years to become highly qualified in the remaining core subjects, and may use HOUSSE after their first year of teaching.
- • Teachers who come to the United States from other countries to teach on a temporary basis will also be eligible to use HOUSSE.

We are advising that all veteran teachers (teachers with at least one year of teaching experience) use HOUSSE to determine their highly qualified status in all possible core academic subjects. Once HOUSSE is phased out for veteran teachers, the only means of demonstrating highly qualified status in a subject will be: 1) to pass a state exam; 2) to earn a major in the subject or; 3) to earn an advanced degree in a subject or an advanced certificate in a subject.

Teachers should utilize the IEA/IFT HOUSSE worksheets for any content areas they believe they may be assigned to teach—both now and in the future. They should print out the results and submit them to their building/district administrator. A formal state system for reporting highly qualified status will be available in September.

ISBE will be convening an ad hoc group of individuals (e.g., ROEs, IFT, IEA, administrators, others) in the near future to develop the revised plan. The plan must be submitted to USDE by July 7, 2006.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We will continue to communicate information on this issue as it becomes available to us.

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