

## Strategy Guidance for use of funds under The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009



Strategy Number 18

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Highly Qualified Teachers

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### Statement of need:

The No Child Left Behind Act expected that in every state 100% of the teachers of core academic subjects would be “highly qualified” by 2006-07 school year. The Act also requires that all new teachers hired in Title I schools are highly qualified upon employment. Each state’s Plan for Achieving the Highly Qualified Teacher Goal is a key component of meeting NCLB requirements, and the number and percent of courses taught by highly qualified teachers in each school district are reported to the federal government annually. A teacher’s knowledge of subject matter is an important fundamental element of that teacher’s ability to improve student achievement in the content area, and meeting certification requirements in the content area is a core factor in determining whether a teacher is considered highly qualified. The second factor is the district’s responsibility to assign teachers of core subjects appropriately based upon their area(s) of certification. Most districts have made great strides in the number and percentage of appropriately staffed core courses since these data have been reported beginning in 2003-04. The state’s overall percentage of courses taught by highly qualified teachers has increased in the last three years from 88.2% to 91.4%, which represents an increase of highly qualified teachers for several hundred thousand students. The state also is required to track and report the equitable distribution of highly qualified and other types of teachers among high need schools and other schools within each district. The most recent data reported for these requirements may be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/pdf/nclbspar.pdf> and <http://www.teachinflorida.com/Portals/0/Teacher%20Assignment%20Data%202007-08.pdf>.

### Requirements:

- Districts may utilize a number of strategies and activities to improve their capacity to place/assign highly qualified teachers, especially those in schools in need of improvement, and several of these are listed under Strategy Number 1 (Assign high-performing teachers to low-performing schools in tested areas. If the district is utilizing Title II-A funds to pay teacher salaries, there are restrictions on how these dollars can be used for that purpose and the district’s Title II-A coordinator should be consulted.
- For teachers who are not currently highly qualified in one or more courses (Title II-A dollars cannot pay the teachers’ *salaries* for those who are not highly qualified), the district may use activities such as the following to move those teachers to highly qualified status as soon as possible:
  - Reimburse the teacher for passing the certification examination in the subject area and adding the subject coverage to his or her certificate.
  - Provide professional development for the teacher to assist in meeting certification requirements and improve teaching effectiveness
  - Require a non-HQT agreement (similar to the district’s out-of-field agreement) that the teacher must enter into upon being determined to be not highly qualified
  - Provide a one-time incentive bonus for earning appropriate endorsement/certification
- The district may also consider revising its staffing plan to prioritize the staffing of Title I schools and other schools in need of improvement.

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- Recruitment resources and tools are available at no cost to the district through [www.teachinflorida.com](http://www.teachinflorida.com).
- Professional development resources to assist exceptional education teachers become highly qualified are available through Florida's Personnel Development Supporting Exceptional Student Education website, a single access point for individuals seeking information related to either preparation or professional development for personnel working with exceptional student education students is available at <http://www.florida-ese.org/personneldevelopment/>.

### **Funding Sources:**

- For teachers in Title I schools, Title I stimulus funds
- For exceptional student educators, IDEA stimulus funds
- Title II-A for teachers in core academic subjects
- SFSF