

To: All Florida Teachers  
From: Jim Warford, K-12 Chancellor

At this point in the school year, it's nice to be able to share some good news. The US Department of Education recently announced new, more flexible policies to help teachers meet the "highly qualified" requirements of NCLB. These policies take effect immediately and may help Florida teachers who teach more than one subject, especially those in rural districts.

First, as long as teachers in rural districts are highly qualified in at least one subject, they will have three more years to become highly qualified in the additional subjects they teach. There are 20 such districts in Florida. More importantly, current teachers who teach multiple subjects, particularly teachers in middle schools and those teaching special needs, will have the option to demonstrate subject-matter competency through a process called HOUSSE - High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation. The HOUSSE may include a teacher's years of experience, high-quality professional development success as measured by students' test scores, and continuing education.

Additionally, we are now able to explore removing the reading endorsement requirement for 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers certified in elementary education, who are teaching reading in 6<sup>th</sup> grade middle school classes.

In short, these changes will allow us to provide Florida teachers with more options to meet the highly qualified requirements. As Chancellor, I promise to aggressively seek ways to reduce the growing amount of paperwork and bureaucratic red-tape you face each day so that you may focus your time and energy on what is most important...your students.