

FAQ CERTIFICATION

TEACHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS UNDER ESSA

Does the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require teachers to be Highly Qualified (HQ)?

The HQ teacher requirement was eliminated under ESSA. ESSA requires effective teachers.

Do Title I schools still have to file HQ teacher plans?

In compliance with ESSA, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE) will no longer require HQ teacher plans to be filed, and Title I schools will no longer be required to have HQ teachers. However, it is a requirement under section 1114 that Title I Schoolwide Plans include plans for “recruiting and retaining effective teachers, particularly in high-need subjects.” (ESSA §1114(b)(7)(A)(iii)(IV)).

Have the requirements for receiving a teaching license or permit changed?

W.S. 21-2-802, in combination with rules and regulations promulgated by the Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB), will continue to set the standard requirements educators must meet in order to receive a license or a permit in an endorsement area aligned to their area of preparation. As such, current testing requirements for Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Social Studies Comprehensive, the Demonstration of Competency route, American Sign Language, and Special Education teachers of record will continue to stand as policy in order for an educator to obtain initial licensure, add an endorsement, or be assigned as the teacher of record for a particular assignment.

While HQ is no longer in statute, teachers in schools running either a Schoolwide Title I Program or a Targeted Assistance Title I Program must be certified teachers. Furthermore, schools need to ensure that work is being done toward recruiting and retaining effective teachers as defined by WDE.

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When will Wyoming define an effective teacher?

The WDE will continue to work with external stakeholders to define an effective teacher and associated evaluation methods. State law can be no less stringent than federal law, and while federal law does not require HQ teachers after July 1, 2017, a measure of ineffective teachers will be captured at the state level. Furthermore, the WDE will continue to monitor and ensure that educator assignments and endorsement areas continue to match (W.S. 21-2-203, as reported via the WDE 602 and 652 each fall).

Does the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act still require HQ Special Education teachers?

ESSA also amends the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to no longer require Special Education teachers to be Highly Qualified. However, Wyoming state statute and PTSB's rules and regulations continue to set the certification requirements for special education teachers as it does for general education teachers.

Do Title I Paraprofessionals still need the HQ designation?

Federal requirements for the certification and licensure of Title I paraprofessionals remain in place even though the HQ designation no longer exists (ESSA §1111(g)(2)(M)).