

## Are You a Highly Qualified Teacher?

Federal NCLB guidelines and the State of Illinois both require public school teachers to be Highly Qualified for the subjects, grades and classification of students they teach.

You may already be Highly Qualified! Find out through the Educator Certification System (ECS) link on the Illinois State Board of Education website: [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net), click on “ECS.” Here, ISBE has combined CeRTS and OTIS into a one-stop compilation of a teacher’s credentials, work history, education and professional development for recertification. ECS will display the areas in which a teacher is Highly Qualified based on the subject area certification tests the teacher has passed through the Illinois Certification Testing System.

Testing began in 1988. Experienced teachers who completed certification programs before 1988 may also be Highly Qualified; their status can be determined by counting years of teaching, college courses, endorsements, professional experiences, and additional certificates or Masters’ Degrees. Calculate Highly Qualified status by entering the current teaching assignment, teaching experience, college credentials and other information in the Illinois High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) system. (Find HOUSSE at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net), and then click on “Highly Qualified Worksheet.”) ISBE worked with the Illinois teachers’ unions to automate the process through two electronic worksheets. The Illinois Education Association developed one and one the other was developed by the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

The worksheets look different but give the same results. The IEA system looks like a flow chart. The IFT worksheet is presented in outline form and has a bit more detail about special education certifications and endorsements.

Choose either worksheet, complete it, then print the summary page that states your Highly Qualified status. Experienced teachers with multiple endorsements or significant college work in several subjects should go through HOUSSE for each subject area. Years of teaching experience can be counted each time a teacher completes a HOUSSE worksheet.

Teachers who discover they are not Highly Qualified have several choices for pursuing Highly Qualified status in their teaching area. A passing grade on the appropriate Illinois subject area or special education test makes a teacher highly qualified. See test schedules at: [www.icts.nesinc.com/index.asp](http://www.icts.nesinc.com/index.asp). Teachers who participate in appropriate college courses or professional development in their district can also move to Highly Qualified status.

This school year, Illinois School Districts will be asked to report the number of not-highly qualified teachers in their district and prepare a professional development plan to move not-highly qualified teachers toward Highly Qualified status.

### Important Facts about Highly Qualified Teacher status:

- Most teachers are already Highly Qualified, either by passing Illinois subject area tests or by using HOUSSE to document professional experiences.
- Experienced teachers can demonstrate Highly Qualified status using HOUSSE and should do so this fall.
- Print, date and save HOUSSE worksheet summary pages as documentation of Highly Qualified status.
- Teachers of multiple subjects must be highly qualified in each area they teach.
- Certification to teach in Illinois is not the same as Highly Qualified under federal requirements. You can be Highly Qualified and not Illinois Certified, or vice versa.
- Districts are required to report percentages of Highly Qualified teaching staff this school year.