



Arizona State Board of Education  
Arizona Department of Education



January 30, 2017

Re: Subject Knowledge Examination Waivers

Dear Colleague:

This letter provides information regarding the State Board of Education's recent adoption of board rule R7-2-607.01 and its impact on certified teachers who were previously designated as "**highly qualified**" under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires teachers in Title I schools to be "appropriately certified" through being in compliance with certification requirements established by the State of Arizona. Board rule R7-2-607(J) requires teachers in grades 6-12 whose primary assignment is an academic subject area to pass the appropriate Board adopted subject knowledge exam, and further requires these teachers to have the area(s) of demonstrated proficiency specified on their certificate. Therefore, teachers who were designated as "highly qualified" through the AZ High, Objective, Uniform, State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) rubric in a content area, or through 24 semester hours of coursework in the subject area, may not qualify as "appropriately certified" under ESSA.

To remedy this issue and promote the retention of experienced and effective teachers in core subject areas in grades 6-12, the State Board of Education adopted board rule R7-2-607.01. This rule provides a **temporary grandfathering provision** that allows teachers with a valid Elementary or Secondary certificate, or a Special Education certificate that includes grades 6-12, issued prior to August 1, 2016 to become "appropriately certified" in a subject, and add one or more approved subject areas to their certificate, **without requiring a subject knowledge exam**, if they meet the following requirements:

1. Verification from the LEA that the teacher was "highly qualified" in the subject(s) as defined by NCLB, for reason that:
  - The individual was teaching in one or more subject areas based on a verified Arizona High, Objective, Uniform, State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) rubric as highly qualified to teach the subject area(s) as defined under the No Child Left Behind Act; **or**
  - The individual has completed a minimum of 24 semester hours of courses in the subject area(s); **and**
2. Verification that the teacher's most recent evaluation was within the two highest performance classifications; **and**



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**3. Submission of an application to add the approved area on or before August 1, 2017.**

Please note the transition from NCLB to ESSA does not impact teachers in grades 1-5 who are teaching in a departmentalized setting:

- Certified teachers who are teaching one or more core subject areas in a departmentalized setting in grades 1-5 are “appropriately certified” with an elementary certificate and **no subject knowledge exam is required.**
- Certified teachers who are teaching one or more core subject areas in a departmentalized setting in grades 1-3 are “appropriately certified” with an elementary certificate or an early childhood certificate and **no subject knowledge exam is required.**

This action is intended to recognize the efforts of effective teachers without burdening them with additional testing requirements during the transition from NCLB to ESSA.

The application to add an approved area under Board rule R7-2-607.01 may be found here: <http://www.azed.gov/educator-certification/downloadable-certification-forms/>

Please contact ADE at 602-542-4367 or [Certification@azed.gov](mailto:Certification@azed.gov) should you have any questions.