

Highly Qualified Status Revised for Some Alabama Reading Teachers
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As a result of recent interpretations by the United States Department of Education involving rules and regulations of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, now entitled the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, many teachers across the state will have their Highly Qualified (HQ) status changed – predominately in Reading above 3rd Grade and those teaching Reading above the highest grade on their teacher’s certificate. The State Department of Education (SDE) is revising the HQ status of approximately 35,000 teachers statewide; however, fewer than 400 Alabama teachers will be affected since these are the only ones teaching Reading above the highest grade on their teacher’s certificate.

Although it is unfortunate that these changes are necessary, the corrective procedure being followed does allow teachers interested in teaching Reading to add this endorsement to their certification, in addition to obtaining HQ status. For most teachers deemed HQ for Reading, the change involves deletion of HQ status for Reading above Grade 3 (for those who hold Early Childhood Education or Early Childhood Special Education certificates) and above Grade 6 (for those who hold Elementary Education, Collaborative Special Education [K-6], or Multiple Abilities certificates). Almost all single designations of HQ status for Reading in Grades P-12 will be deleted.

In an effort to accommodate teachers currently assigned to teach Reading in the state, the SDE has created the Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading in Grades P-12 (Supplement ADR). Superintendents may submit Form ADR no later than October 1, 2010, on behalf of a teacher who meets the stipulated criteria to request the first Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading. For qualified applicants, the first certificate will be issued for 2010-2011. The first certificate will not be available after 2010-2011. Eligible teachers are full-time employees who teach Reading at least part time.

A Preliminary Certificate or alternative approach that has already been authorized will be used to add the Reading endorsement. The first Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for teaching reading in grades P-12 will be available ONLY for the 2010-2011 scholastic year for:

- Public school teachers who hold a valid Early Childhood Education (grades P-3) or Early Childhood Special Education (grades P-3) Professional Educator Certificate and who taught Reading in an Alabama public school system during the 2009-2010 scholastic year to students above grade 3; **OR**
- Public school teachers who hold a valid Collaborative Teacher (grades K-6), Elementary Multiple Abilities (grades K-6), or Elementary Education (grades K-6 or 1-6) Professional Educator Certificate and who taught Reading in an Alabama public school system during the 2009-2010 scholastic year to students above grade 6; **OR**
- Public school teachers who hold a valid Elementary Education (grades 1-9) Professional Educator Certificate and who taught Reading in an Alabama public school system during the 2009-2010 scholastic year to students above grade 6.

While holding the first Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading for 2010-2011, a teacher of Reading must document completion of an e-Learning course titled *Kids, Content, and Comprehension: Literacy and Learning in Grades 4-12* and meet the other criteria by the dates indicated on Supplement ADR. A superintendent may then request a second Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading to continue that teacher's employment and assignment to teach Reading during the 2011-2012 school year. The second certificate will not be available after 2011-2012. During the second year, the teacher must complete an e-Learning course to be developed and to be titled *Reading Intervention for Struggling Readers*. The two e-Learning courses will consist of six sessions of two hours each.

A teacher who has held two Preliminary Certificates Through Exception for Reading, the first for 2010-2011 and the second for 2011-2012, who taught Reading during both of those scholastic years above the grade level of his or her professional educator certificate and completed the professional development activities described above may apply for an Alabama Professional Educator Certificate with an endorsement for Reading in Grades P-12. **At this time, the teacher will not be required to earn a passing score on a Praxis II test because Alabama has not validated an appropriate test.** Superintendents must request the first and second preliminary certification by October 1, 2010, and October 1, 2011, respectively.

Teachers who go through this alternative process must also submit a new High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) portfolio that may be used to document HQ status for Reading. As indicated on the HOUSSE portfolio application, **use of this option to document HQ status is restricted to teachers who hold a valid Alabama Preliminary Certificate for Reading, Grades P-12.** The HOUSSE portfolio and SUPPLEMENT ADR must be submitted together to the State Department of Education (SDE). SDE staff members will determine eligibility for the Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading and then determine eligibility for the HQ designation for Reading, P-12. If a teacher is awarded the Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading but has not documented 100 points on the HOUSSE portfolio, the teacher will not be deemed HQ for Reading. In this case, the superintendent will receive a status report with suggestions for assisting the teacher in achieving the goal of obtaining HQ status.

Eligible teachers are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to add a valuable endorsement to their Alabama certificates. Questions related to the procedure for requesting a Preliminary Certificate Through Exception for Reading should be directed to the Teacher Certification staff member assigned to your school system at 334.353.8567. Questions related to the new HOUSSE portfolio should be directed to Dr. Jayne A. Meyer at jmeyer@alsde.edu or 334-242-9560. Members may also contact Dr. Tyna Davis or Dr. Pamela Fossett at AEA at 1.800.392.5839.