

GUIDANCE ON THE ASSIGNMENT OF PERSONS HOLDING TEACHER OF THE HANDICAPPED AND N-8 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER ENDORSEMENTS THAT ARE STILL VALID BUT ARE NO LONGER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT

The *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* was passed by the U.S. Congress late last year and signed into law on December 10, 2015. This latest reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* shifts authority over many state and local public education systems and processes back to the states.

One shift made by the *ESSA* was the elimination of the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) provision. Although HQT has been eliminated, *all educators in New Jersey are still required to hold the appropriate state license for the position in which they are working*. This means that for the vast majority of positions, nothing should change about a school's ability to place teachers in certain roles with the exception of small changes to the placement of teachers who were certified under rules existing prior to 2004 in a special education and/or middle school setting. Note that newer endorsements (Teacher of Students with Disabilities and Teacher of Elementary School Grades K-6) are not affected by this change, as these endorsements provide that the teachers may only instruct in the content area and grade level that their endorsements authorize.

These exceptions are detailed below:

Special Education: The following endorsements can be used at any grade level, for any subject, in either a special class program or departmentalized setting. *Although the HQT requirement has been eliminated by the new federal law, the Department still strongly recommends following the House Matrix to ensure that content-qualified teachers are in place to support student achievement.*

N.J.A.C. 6:11-6.2(a) Teaching Endorsements and Authorizations

22. Special education:

- i. Blind or partially sighted:** This endorsement authorizes the holder to teach blind or partially sighted children in all public schools;
- ii. Deaf or hard of hearing:** This endorsement authorizes the holder to teach deaf or hard of hearing children in all public schools;
- iii. Teacher of the handicapped:** This endorsement authorizes the holder to teach pupils classified as handicapped in all public schools.

Middle School (Elementary School Teacher/N-8): The following endorsement can be used at any grade level N-8, for any subject, in either a special class program or departmentalized setting. *Although the HQT requirement has been eliminated by the new Federal law, the Department still strongly recommends following the House Matrix to ensure that content-qualified teachers are in place to support student achievement.* Please also note the restrictions on the use of N-8 teachers in preschool settings.

N.J.A.C. 6:11-6.2(a) Teaching Endorsements and Authorizations

6. Elementary education: This endorsement authorizes the holder to serve as elementary school teacher in grades nursery through eight in all public schools.** Teachers with elementary endorsements are not permitted to devote more than one half time to teaching art, music, health, home economics, industrial arts, or physical education in the elementary grades. Teachers with elementary endorsements are authorized to teach the common branch subjects such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling in the secondary school.

**** N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-9.2 Authorizations – General**

(a) Teachers with elementary school endorsements valid in preschool through grade eight issued no later than March 1, 2008, may teach in preschool through grade eight in any employing school district, subject to the qualification for teaching three - and four-year-old children in N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-11.2(b). *** The teachers must demonstrate to the school district they have content knowledge appropriate to the subject(s) taught. All elementary school teachers certified to teach in grades kindergarten through five after January 20, 2004, and hired to teach in grades six through eight, must hold either the elementary school with subject matter specialization or the subject matter endorsement.

*****N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-11.2 Preschool through Grade Three**

(b) A teacher holding a standard elementary school endorsement valid in preschool through grade eight issued no later than March 1, 2008, with the equivalent of two academic years of full-time experience teaching three- and four-year-olds under the certificate, may teach children in preschool in a public school or Department of Children and Families facility. The teaching experience must be in a position that would require the preschool through grade three endorsement. It must be the responsibility of the school district or Department of Children and Families facility to maintain a copy of documentation that supports the preschool teaching experience for each teacher affected by this subsection.

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