

Summary of the 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey Results

New Jersey's State Plan for meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) goal was approved by the U. S. Department of Education in 2006. The 2008-2009 New Jersey HQT Survey indicates that New Jersey is continuing to make progress toward ensuring that 100 percent of public school teachers are highly qualified. According to the 2008-2009 survey, only 0.3 percent of New Jersey's public school classes are not being taught by highly qualified teachers. The overall percentage of classes not taught by a highly qualified teacher in this sixth annual survey shows a decrease of one full percentage point from 2007-2008 (1.3 percent for 2007-2008 compared to 0.3 percent for 2008-2009).

The 2008-2009 HQT survey was compiled from the Certificated Staff Report completed in the autumn of 2008. This is a state-wide, school-based data collection system that includes every teacher, his/her certification, class assignments, and HQT status. The survey provides grade-level teaching assignments of teachers, which is especially important in defining elementary and middle-level teachers, a chief component of the NCLB reporting requirements.

Context

The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires states to report data to the public annually on the number of classes in the public schools that are taught by highly qualified teachers. In order to be deemed highly qualified, a teacher must have a bachelor's degree, a standard certificate for which no requirements have been waived, and documentation of content area expertise in each subject taught. States had until 2006 to reach 100 percent compliance with the Highly Qualified Teacher provisions. Most states have not yet reached that goal. Therefore, in 2006 the federal government required all states to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure they would continue to make progress toward the federal goal of 100 percent compliance.

Under *NCLB*, New Jersey's elementary teachers satisfy the content preparation requirement as generalists because they must demonstrate knowledge across the range of subjects taught in elementary schools. New Jersey's elementary teachers who have been certified since 1985 have automatically met this requirement by passing the Praxis II Elementary Content Knowledge Test required for state certification. Middle- and secondary-level teachers, teaching in a departmentalized setting, must show content area expertise in *each* core academic subject they teach in order to meet the *NCLB* definition. The options for meeting this requirement are as follows:

- Passing the Praxis II content knowledge exam (This is already part of the licensing process for those with K-12 content area certificates and is now part of the process for the new elementary with specialization certificates for grades 5-8.) ; or
- Having an undergraduate major in the content area; or
- Having 30 credits equivalent to a major in the content area; or
- Having a graduate degree in the content area; or
- Having an advanced credential, such as National Board Certification, in the content area.

Veteran teachers had the option of accruing ten points on the New Jersey HOUSE Standard Content Knowledge Matrix to demonstrate their content expertise until it expired on June 30, 2007.

Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in core academic content, either as replacement teachers in resource settings or in self-contained classes, must meet the requirements in the same manner as elementary, middle, and high school teachers. Veteran special education teachers have the option of accruing ten points on the New Jersey HOUSE Standard Content Knowledge Matrix. This option was reinstated in April 2008 and will expire June 30, 2010. Novice special education teachers, in accordance with *IDEA* flexibility, upon hire have the option of using the HOUSE to become highly qualified in additional content areas, beyond the content area for which they have already satisfied highly qualified requirements.

Special education teachers whose only role is to provide support or consultation for students with disabilities who are being instructed by highly qualified teachers satisfy the requirement by having full state certification as a special education teacher. Also, it is important to note that until the adoption of new regulations by the State Board of Education in December 2003, the state's licensing requirements at both the middle school level and for special education were not aligned to *NCLB* requirements.

Results by Classes

As shown in Tables 1 and 2 below, the number of elementary classes not being taught by a highly qualified teacher decreased from 1.3 percent in 2007-2008 to 0.3 percent in 2008-2009. At the secondary level the number of classes not being taught by a highly qualified teacher decreased by 0.7 percentage points (1.1 percent for 2007-2008 compared to 0.4 percent for 2008-2009).

The HQT survey data also have been disaggregated by high-poverty and low-poverty schools. High poverty is defined as the 25 percent of the schools in the state with the largest percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Low poverty is defined as the 25 percent of schools in the state with the smallest percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The 2008-2009 data show an overall decrease in the percent of high-poverty classes not taught by highly qualified teachers with 0.9 percent of classes in high-poverty schools taught by teachers who are not highly qualified. The percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers in low-poverty schools has decreased from 0.5 percent in 2007-2008 to 0.1 percent in 2008-2009. It should be noted in the 2004-05 school year there was a 10 percent gap between the high- and low-poverty classes taught by teachers who are highly qualified. In 2007-2008 the gap narrowed to 2.7 percent and narrowed further in 2008-2009 to 0.8 percent. Additionally, from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009 the percentage of high-poverty classes not taught by highly qualified teachers decreased in both elementary and secondary classes. Similarly, from 2007-2008 to 2008-2009, the percentage of low-poverty classes not taught by highly qualified teachers decreased in both elementary and secondary schools. Taken together, these data show a narrowing of the gap between high-poverty and low-poverty classes taught by highly qualified teachers.

**Table 1: 2008-2009 Federal Report
Percentage of Classes Not Taught By Highly Qualified Teachers
Data Collected Fall 2008**

	Classes not taught by highly qualified teachers (percent)	High-Poverty (percent)	Low-Poverty (percent)
All Classrooms	0.3	0.9	0.1
Elementary (K-8)	0.3	0.6	0.1
Secondary (9-12)	0.4	0.6	0.0

**Table 2: 2007-2008
Percentage of Classes Not Taught By Highly Qualified Teachers
Data Collected Fall 2007**

	Classes not taught by highly qualified teachers (percent)	High-Poverty (percent)	Low-Poverty (percent)
All Classrooms	1.3	3.2	0.5
Elementary (K-8)	1.3	3.2	0.6
Secondary (9-12)	1.1	3.2	0.2

Results by Teachers

As shown in Table 3 below, the most recent data reveal only slight variations in the percentage of teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools who meet the highly qualified teacher definition. At the elementary level where all classes are self-contained, 0.3 percent of the teachers are not highly qualified; at the middle school level, 0.3 percent of the teachers are not highly qualified; and at the secondary level, 0.4 percent of the teachers are not highly qualified.

**Table 3: 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey
Percentage of Teachers Not Highly Qualified
All Subjects Taught**

Type Of School	Percentage Not Highly Qualified
Elementary School (K-8)	0.3
Middle School (6-8)	0.3
High School (9-12)	0.4

Data in Table 4 below show that for all three grade-level configurations, low-poverty schools have the lowest percentage of teachers who are not highly qualified. Specifically, in low-poverty elementary schools the percentage of teachers that are not highly qualified is 0.1 percent, while, by comparison, it is 0.7 percent in high-poverty elementary schools. Moreover, in low-poverty middle schools, the percentage of teachers not highly qualified is 0.0, while it is 1.7 percent in high-poverty middle schools. Finally, in low-poverty high schools, the percentage of teachers not highly qualified is also 0.0 percent, as contrasted with 1.7 percent in high-poverty high schools.

**Table 4: 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey
Percentage and Numbers of Teachers Not Highly Qualified
All Subjects Taught**

	Elementary Schools		Middle Schools		High Schools	
	# of Teachers	Percent Not HQ	# of Teachers	Percent Not HQ	# of Teachers	Percent Not HQ
All Schools	46,679	0.3	14,864	0.3	26,429	0.4
High-Poverty Schools	14,210	0.7	2,281	1.7	5,681	1.7
Low-Poverty Schools	10,601	0.1	4,085	0.0	6,929	0.0

Classes in Elementary Schools by Subject Areas

Table 5 provides information about classes taught by highly qualified teachers at the elementary level. In summary, 0.3 percent of general education classes are not taught by highly qualified teachers. In addition, an examination of the data shows a variation in the percentages of highly qualified teachers across subject matter areas. For example, in basic skills English, 0.1 percent of classes lack a highly qualified teacher as compared to 0.3 percent of classes in basic skills mathematics. There are also disparities between high- and low-poverty schools by subject matter area. For example, in high-poverty schools one percent of basic skills mathematics classes are not taught by highly qualified teachers, while basic skills mathematics classes in low-poverty schools are fully staffed by highly qualified teachers.

**Table 5: 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey
Percentage of Classes Not Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher
Elementary School**

Classes	General Ed.	Basic Skills English	Basic Skills Math	Arts	World Language	Special Education	ESL	All Classes
All Schools	0.3	0.1	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.8	0.5	0.3
High-Poverty Schools	0.5	0.4	1.0	0.1	0.2	1.7	0.0	0.4
Low-Poverty Schools	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.1

Classes in Middle Schools by Subject Areas

In Table 6, data for middle school classes show that the percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers varies across subject matter areas, with special education in high-poverty schools showing the greatest need (7.4%). A comparison of the four core subject matter areas indicates that the percentage of mathematics classes not taught by highly qualified teachers is slightly higher than the percentage of language arts, social studies and science classes, respectively. Moreover, high-poverty schools overall show a higher percentage of classes not taught by highly qualified teachers (1.7 percent in high-poverty compared to 0.1 percent in low-poverty).

**Table 6: 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey
Percentage of Classes Not Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher
Middle School**

Classes	Lang. Arts	Social Studies	Sci.	Math.	Arts	World. Lang.	Spec. Ed.	ESL	Eng. Basic Skills	Math. Basic Skills	All
All Schools	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.0	0.1	1.3	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.3
High-Poverty	1.2	0.5	1.5	2.6	0.0	1.7	7.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7
Low-Poverty	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1

Classes in High Schools by Subject Areas

Data in Table 7 report the content area classes not taught by highly qualified teachers at the high school level. For all schools state wide, the percentage of content area classes not taught by highly qualified teachers ranges from 0.0 percent in many content areas to 9.5 percent in special education classes. Overall, in high-poverty high schools, 1.6 percent of content area classes are not taught by highly qualified teachers, while in low-poverty high schools, all core academic classes are taught by highly qualified teachers. These data also reflect the need for more highly qualified teachers in special education at the high school level in high-poverty schools.

**Table 7: 2008-2009 Highly Qualified Teacher Survey
Percentage of Classes Not Taught by a Highly Qualified Teacher
High School**

Classes	Lang. Arts	Social Studies	Sci.	Math.	Arts	World. Lang.	Spec. Ed.	ESL	Eng. Basic Skills	Math. Basic Skills	All
All Schools	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	0.3	0.4	0.0	0.4
High-Poverty	1.5	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.5	0.7	1.1	0.0	1.6
Low-Poverty	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Conclusion

In reviewing the data from 2008-2009, it is clear that the greatest challenge facing the state is filling the need for highly qualified special education teachers, especially in high-poverty schools. It is important to note that the federal law imposed new requirements for special education teachers, who must now have specific content expertise in all the core subjects they teach when they are working in a departmentalized setting. Many teachers in these settings are currently working to complete these highly qualified teacher requirements.

The New Jersey Department of Education will complete its seventh highly qualified teacher survey in October, 2009. The state will continue to monitor the progress of districts and schools in decreasing the number of teachers who do not satisfy the federal definition of highly qualified. The New Jersey School Report Cards now include information about the federal highly qualified teacher requirement. School Report Cards can be accessed at the following NJDOE Web site: <http://education.state.nj.us/rc/nclb07/index.html>.