



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SPECIAL EDUCATION



September 2005

## Highly Qualified

### 1. Why prepare special education teachers at the middle grades level?

A teacher's content level expertise in the core academic content area(s) must be at or above the level of instruction prescribed by the student's Individual Education Program (IEP). Certifying teachers at the middle grades content level reaches the greatest number of students.

### 2. Must teachers of preschool special education children meet the highly qualified requirement?

No.

### 3. Do new special education teachers have an extra year to become highly qualified if they teach more than one of the core academic content concentration areas?

The 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) amendments contain an exception for special education teachers who are new to the profession and who teach multiple core academic subjects exclusively to students with disabilities. These teachers must be highly qualified in mathematics, language arts, or science at the time of hire, but they have two additional years after the date of hire to become highly qualified in all other core academic subjects they teach.

### 4. What does "new to the profession mean?"

"New to the profession" means that the teacher has less than three years of experience.

### 5. Must special education teachers who teach multiple core academic subjects exclusively to students with disabilities be highly qualified in all subjects they teach?

Yes. Special education teachers in this category, whether new to the profession or not, must be highly qualified. Special education teachers who are not new to the profession must demonstrate competence in all core subjects they teach, just as all teachers not new to the profession must do.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the reauthorized IDEA legislation of 2004 provide that special education teachers new to the profession who teach multiple core academic subjects and are highly qualified in either mathematics, language arts, or science at the time they are hired, have two additional years after the date of hire to become highly qualified in all other academic subjects they teach, including through use of a HOUSSE. A HOUSSE must be completed for each content area.

### 6. What is the highly qualified status of special education teachers holding Non-renewable special education certificates?

Special education teachers holding Non-renewable certificates must verify that they know the core academic content they are assigned to teach. They can do so by having a major (secondary cognitive level or below) or concentration (middle grades cognitive level or below) in the core academic content area or by passing a content test (secondary, middle grades, or early childhood cognitive level, or multiple subjects tests for middle grades cognitive level or below).

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## 7. What are the core academic content subject areas?

Core academic subjects include English, reading, language arts, mathematics, broad-field science (such as physics, biology, or chemistry), foreign languages, broad-field social studies (such as civics and government, economics, history, geography), and the arts (visual arts, music, band and chorus). (See Title IX General Provisions, Part A, Section 9101 Definitions). Dance and drama are not considered core academic subjects in Georgia. All teachers teaching a core academic subject, including remedial, extended day, evening, or summer school classes, must be "highly qualified" to teach the subject.

## 8. What activities may special education teachers carry out if they are not highly qualified in the core academic content area being taught?

There are many activities that special education teachers can carry out that would not, by themselves, require those teachers to be highly qualified in a core academic content area. Such special education teachers can provide consultation to highly qualified teachers of core academic subjects.

They can perform such activities as adapting curricula, using behavioral supports and interventions, or selecting appropriate accommodations. These special education teachers can also assist students with study skills or organizational skills and jointly provide and reinforce instruction in the co-teaching or collaborative setting with the teacher of record.

## 9. Do special education teachers teaching the adapted curriculum need to be highly qualified?

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the reauthorized IDEA legislation of 2004 require that if a special education teacher teaches core academic subjects exclusively to students who are being assessed against alternate achievement standards, the teacher must meet the highly qualified requirements for elementary school teachers and, for instruction above the elementary level have subject-matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided.

These special education teachers may take the Early Childhood Test that includes reading, or the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Praxis II Test that does not include reading. If the teachers are teaching reading to their students and choose to take the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Praxis II Test, they will need to also take one of the Reading Praxis II tests or complete an approved reading endorsement program, or utilize HOUSSSE.

Please note that reading is included in the Early Childhood Praxis II, but not included in the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Test.

## 10. What is the deadline for special education teachers to become highly qualified?

All special education teachers, including special education teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools, must be highly qualified by August 31, 2006 just as all other teachers of core academic content subjects. The course work option for special education teachers to become highly qualified in core academic content concentration areas are available through August 31, 2006. Refer to question 5 for information on special education teachers teaching multi- subjects.

## 11. What teaching assignments require that the teacher be highly qualified to teach the content?

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Teachers who teach core academic subjects include elementary (K-5) teachers, middle grades (4-8), and secondary teachers (6-12). All teachers who teach core academic subjects, art, or music must be "highly qualified." See question 7 for a complete list of core academic subjects.

## 12. Are there minimum points required for special education veteran teachers to meet the HOUSSE criteria?

Yes, there are minimum points required in three categories for special education veteran teachers to meet the highly qualified status under the new HOUSSE policy.

There are minimum points required in three of the HOUSSE categories:

Experience	15 points
College Course Work	50 points for secondary, and 30 points for middle grades
Effectiveness	15 points

There are maximum points required in two of the HOUSSE categories:

Activities and Services	15 points
Scholarship	15 points

## 13. What can teachers who work in psycho-educational programs do to be considered highly qualified?

Psycho-educational program teachers can now use the same collaborative model as the alternative school teachers. Therefore they can defer the standard of being highly qualified to the home school teacher if they document a minimum of two contacts per month.

Teachers who teach in psycho-education programs and who are the "teacher of record" for any of the core academic subjects must meet the requirements of "highly qualified" as stated in this document. If a consultative model with the participation of "highly qualified" teachers is used, the teachers who are on-site in the psycho-educational programs are not required to be "highly qualified" in the content. Two consultations per month with the "highly qualified" teacher must be documented and maintained.

Teachers in psycho-educational programs who facilitate the use of technology-based programs, such as computer-assisted programs that provide self-pacing and pre/post-testing or courses delivered through distance learning technologies, are not required to meet "highly qualified" teacher requirements if they are not responsible for delivering content instruction. The quality and rigor of the computer-based programs and distance learning courses for all subject areas and their alignment with state curriculum are the responsibility of the school system and teachers with content expertise must be made available as needed to support student learning. Each computer-based program and/or distance learning course must have scientifically based research to indicate that it is successful with student populations and research must be available for monitoring of Title II, Part A.

## 14. What are the latest requirements for GA TAPP candidates to become highly qualified?

Candidates in Georgia TAPP special education programs must verify that they know the core academic content that they are assigned to teach as TAPP special education teachers. They can demonstrate their content knowledge by having a major (secondary cognitive level or below) or concentration (middle grades cognitive level or below) in the core academic content area or by passing a content test (secondary, middle grades, or early childhood cognitive level, or multiple subjects tests

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for middle grades cognitive level or below). These teachers may take the special education Praxis II tests in the first year for diagnostic purposes and for certification purposes in their second year in the Georgia TAPP just as they have been doing. This policy also applies to teachers holding Non-renewable or Intern certificates. Any teacher holding a certificate must show that they have content knowledge in the core academic content subject area that the teacher is assigned to teach.

## Certification

**15. Are core academic content concentration areas listed on the new special education certificates as special education core academic content concentration areas?**

Yes. The core academic content concentration areas should be listed as special education core academic content concentration areas on the new special education certificates.

**16. Were the transcripts of TAPP teachers and teachers holding other Non-renewable certificates evaluated by the certification staff?**

No. Only Clear renewable (T) certificates were reviewed. Certification staff did not evaluate the transcripts for TAPP teachers or teachers holding the old provisional certificates. Certification staff has no way of knowing what these individuals are teaching or what course work they have completed. In such cases, school systems that are program providers must make requests to Certification using the Georgia PSC Special Education Academic Content Concentrations Form. This is a form that may be downloaded from the web. The Certification Division also needs a current application and all of the documentation (transcripts, test reports, etc.) that support the Academic Content Concentration Form. When TAPP or Provisional/Nonrenewable certified persons complete their approved programs, their program provider should include the appropriate concentrations on the recommendation form.

**17. What does the term on my certificate “special education general curriculum consultative” mean?**

The term “special education general curriculum consultative” means that the certificate holder is highly qualified to provide special education services to students with a broad range of disabilities whose IEPs call for instruction in the regular curriculum at a level appropriate to the student’s cognitive level. “Consultative” refers to the specific roles that special education teachers have when they provide services in their areas of exceptionality, and incorporates references such as inclusion, mainstreaming, collaborative or co-teacher. These special education teachers cannot be the teacher of record, primarily responsible for the direct instruction for any of the core academic content areas, unless they are also hold certification in a special education concentration. See question 8 for some of the suggested activities that teachers may carry out in their role as general curriculum consultative special education teachers.

All Clear Renewable Interrelated Special Education Certificates have been reissued as Special Education General Curriculum Consultative P-12 Certificates.

**18. Is a teacher with a special education general curriculum consultative P-12 in field to teach middle grades reading?**

Special education teachers must be highly qualified to teach all of the core academic content concentration areas that they are assigned to teach. Reading is one of the core academic content areas. The chart below illustrates which certificate holders are considered “highly qualified” to teach reading and remedial reading.

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## Who Can Teach Reading?

Qualification	Reading	Remedial Reading
Early Childhood Education Certification	P-5	P-5
Early Childhood Education Certification with Reading Endorsement	P-5	P-5
Early Childhood Praxis II in Reading	P-5	P-5
Middle Grades Certification with Concentration in Reading	4-8	4-8
Middle Grades Certification with Reading Endorsement	4-8	4-8
Life (DT) P-8 Certification	P-8	P-8
High School Certification with Reading Endorsement	6-12	6-12
Middle Grades Praxis II in Reading	4-8	4-8
Special Education Certification with Reading Endorsement or Appropriate Reading Test	P-12	P-12
Secondary Certified Teachers with the Middle Grades Praxis II in Reading	4-8	4-8
Secondary Praxis II Reading	6-12	6-12
Reading Specialist Certification	P-12	P-12

**19.** Since the new special education certificates have been issued, what should teachers do if they think that they qualify for special education core academic content concentration areas that are not listed on their new certificates?

If teachers believe that they qualify for special education academic content concentration areas that are not reflected on their new certificate, they may send an email to [spedappeal@gapsc.com](mailto:spedappeal@gapsc.com) with the following information:

- Name and social security number or certificate number
- Specific core academic content concentration area(s) for which you think you qualify
- Specific college or PLU transcript(s) that reflect the core academic content (not methods) courses you think will qualify
- Specific core academic content course numbers and titles that you think will qualify

If teachers believe that they qualify for a cognitive level that is not reflected on their certificate, they should reference in their email the specific core academic content area examination that they think will qualify them in addition to the information above that is requested for the core academic content concentration area.

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## 20. After the new special education certificates were issued, what is the process for adding special education core academic content concentration areas to certificates?

School systems must submit the Georgia PSC Special Education Academic Content Concentration Form along with all required documentation to the Professional Standards Commission, Certification Division. Question 21 contains the methods for adding core academic concentration to special education certificates

## 21. What are the options for special education teachers to become highly qualified?

### Test Options

Praxis II test option(s) can be used to meet the highly qualified teacher requirements for currently certified, consultative, special education teachers who are the teachers of record for teaching core academic content. Student information contained in the Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for K-12 determines the level of core academic content appropriate for the student with exceptionalities. See the **Praxis II Test Options Table** for currently certified special education teachers located at: <http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/Admin/Files/SpEdOnly1.pdf>.

### Course Work Option (Available through August 31, 2006)

- Complete 15 hours of Professional Standards Commission (PSC) approved college or university course work in the concentration area(s).
- Complete PSC approved Web-based, college or professional learning content modules, equivalent to a concentration. The following eight PSC-approved mathematics and science courses meet the requirement: Earth and Space Science, Life Science, Physical Science, Special Cases, Number Sense, Modeling in Algebra, Geometry, Probability and Statistics.
- Complete PSC approved preparation courses developed for endorsements or professional development credit, equivalent to a concentration.

**NOTE:** While course work completed through August 31, 2006 may be used for highly qualified purposes, the PSC Certification Division is only evaluating transcripts for purposes of adding special education academic content concentrations to **certificates** through June 30, 2006, as per PSC rule 505-2-.103 section (5).

### HOUSSE Option

The special education teacher's HOUSSE packet **MUST** include the following documents in order for the evaluation to be complete:

1. Georgia PSC Certification Application
2. Georgia PSC Special Education Academic Content Concentrations Form (For special education teachers only)
3. Appropriate Scoring Rubric with point calculations, for each core academic content concentration area as needed to meet Title II Part A requirements
4. Documentation that may be used to verify teaching experience in the core academic content area, including core academic content-specific course work and graduate degrees, professional activities and service, scholarship in the core academic content area, and teacher effectiveness evidence (To be maintained at the school system level)
5. Signed Assurance Form

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Please note that school systems **MUST** submit the following four items only from the HOUSSE packet to the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, Certification Division, for special education teachers assessed using HOUSSE:

1. Georgia PSC Certification Application
2. Georgia PSC Special Education Academic Content Concentrations Form
3. Scoring Rubric with point calculations, for each core academic content concentration area being added
4. Signed Assurance Form

## 22. What are the current names of the special education certificates?

Old Certificate Name	New Certificate Name
Interrelated	Special Education General Curriculum
MR	Special Education Adapted Curriculum and Special Education General Curriculum
LD	Special Education Learning Disabilities
BD	Special Education Behavior Disorders
Hearing Impaired	Special Education Deaf Education
Visually Impaired	Special Education Visual Impairment
Orthopedic Impaired	Special Education Physical And Health Disabilities
Interrelated Special Education / Early Childhood Education	Special Education General Curriculum / Early Childhood Education

## 23. What are the new special education endorsements?

The new special education endorsements are:  
Special Education Preschool (Ages 3-5)  
Special Education Deaf Education  
Special Education Visual Impairment  
Special Education Physical and Health Disabilities  
Special Education Transition Specialist

## 24. What are the special education core academic content concentrations?

The special education core academic content concentrations are:  
Special Education Mathematics  
Special Education Science  
Special Education Language Arts  
Special Education Social Science  
Special Education Reading

## 25. What are the special education content cognitive levels?

The special education content cognitive levels as appropriate to IEP are:

- P-5
- 4-8
- 6-12

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## 26. What are the requirements and timeframes for adding core academic content concentrations to special education certificates?

Until June 30, 2006

- Recommendation of approved provider, OR
- Content Assessment(s), OR
- Course Work (15 semesters hours, 25 Georgia PLUs (content)), OR
- HOUSSE (qualifying veteran teachers only)

After July 1, 2006

- Recommendation of approved provider, OR
- Content Assessment(s), OR
- HOUSSE (qualifying veteran teachers only)

## 27. What courses can be used to add core academic content concentrations to special education certificates?

Both college courses and PLUs can be used to add core academic content concentrations to special education certificates:

- PLUs and/or college content courses can be used for transcript analysis to add core academic concentration areas to special education certificates.
- PLUs and/or college content courses can be used in columns 2 and 3 of the special education HOUSSE to add core academic content concentration areas to certificates.
- The teaching of reading courses can be counted for transcript analysis and on HOUSSE to add the reading core academic concentration area to special education certificates.

## 28. How can college courses and/or PLUs be used to add core academic content concentrations to special education teaching certificates?

Teachers wishing to add special education core academic content concentrations to their certificate fields may use college courses or Professional Learning Units (PLUs). The college courses and the PLUs must be content not methods courses. All requests for changes to their concentrations must be made through the [spedappeal@gapsc.com](mailto:spedappeal@gapsc.com) email address. Requests must include the college/PLU provider transcript source(s), the course name(s) and course number(s).

## 29. Who is affected by the changes in the rules of the Professional Standards Commission as they relate to special education teachers being in-field and highly qualified?

Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in core academic subjects will be directly affected by the new rules. Any teacher who is assigned as the teacher of record with the primary responsibility for instruction students in core academic content must hold certification in that core academic subject in addition to their special education fields.

## 30. When is the deadline for special education teachers to become “highly qualified?”

August 31, 2006 is the deadline for all teachers of core academic content subjects, including special education teachers, to meet the highly qualified requirements. For any teacher not "highly qualified" this school year, the system should have a written plan to assist them in obtaining highly qualified status.

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## Testing

- 31.** Does passing the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Test (0511) qualify teachers to work with middle and high school special education students?

Teachers who pass the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Test (0511) are highly qualified to teach math, science, social studies, and language arts to special education students whose cognitive level is eighth grade and below. However, reading is not included. If these teachers teach reading, they will need to take one of the reading Praxis tests, or complete an approved reading endorsement program.

- 32.** What are the appropriate Praxis II tests for elementary teachers who teach severe and profound disabled early childhood students?

Elementary teachers who pass the Early Childhood Education Praxis Test (0012 and 0016) are highly qualified to teach all of the core academic content areas including reading at the P-5 cognitive level, and teachers who pass the Fundamental Subjects Test (0511) are highly qualified to teach mathematics, science, and language arts to special education students (P-8) cognitive level.

- 33.** What is the link to the Education Testing Service (ETS) web site where the Georgia Supplement to the Praxis Series Registration Bulletin is located?

The link for the Georgia Supplement to the Praxis Series Registration Bulletin that includes the test codes, passing scores, is located at:

<http://www.gapsc.com/TeacherTesting/Documents/GASupplement0405.pdf>

- 34.** Are graduates of dual degree programs (early childhood and special education) required to take Praxis II tests in the core academic content area and the special education area in order to be considered highly qualified in each area?

Teachers who completed dual teacher preparation programs (Interrelated Special Education and Early Childhood Education), and passed the Interrelated Special Education Praxis II test are not required to take the Early Childhood Education Praxis II to obtain the "highly qualified teacher" status. The teachers' Early Childhood Education majors fulfill the core academic content requirement.

- 35.** What are the Praxis II test options for currently certified special education teachers to become highly qualified in core academic content concentration area(s)?

See the **Praxis II Test Options** Table for currently certified special education teachers located at: <http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/Admin/Files/SpEdOnly1.pdf>

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## **36. Will teachers be reimbursed for the cost of the Praxis II tests?**

Since this is a local school system decision, teachers should contact their local school system administrators.

## **37. Is there a limit to the number of times a Praxis II test can be taken?**

No. You may take a Praxis II test as many times as needed.

## Definitions

### **38. Alternate Assessment**

The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) is administered only to those students who are significantly cognitively impaired and are thus unable to participate in the regular State assessment program even with maximum accommodations, as determined by the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

### **39. Cognitive Level**

Cognitive level refers to the grade level of instruction provided to Special Education students and is based on a description of how well the student is performing on the curriculum being provided, as described in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### **40. Consultative**

The term "consultative" is used to refer to the specific roles that special education teachers have when they are providing services in their area(s) of exceptionality(ies). The term incorporates references such as inclusion, mainstreaming, collaborative or co-teacher.

### **41. Core Academic Content Concentration Areas**

Core academic subjects include English, reading, language arts, mathematics, broad-field science (such as physics, biology, or chemistry), foreign languages, broad-field social studies (such as civics and government, economics, history, geography), and the arts (visual arts, music, band and chorus). Dance and drama are not considered core academic subjects in Georgia. All teachers teaching a core academic subject, including remedial, extended day, evening, or summer school classes, must be "highly qualified" to teach the subject.

### **42. HOUSSE (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation)**

HOUSSE is an assessment that may be used to verify a veteran teacher's competency if the teacher has not met either the content or testing requirement in a specific core academic content area. A score of 100 points or more on the Georgia Content Area Rubric is required to determine that a veteran regular education teacher or special education teacher is "highly qualified," and/or add core academic content concentrations to special education teachers' certificates. Since HOUSSE is not time limited, it will remain available for teachers in Georgia. For more details on the use of HOUSSE for certification, refer to question number 18.

### **43. IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**

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President George W. Bush signed the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) into law on December 3, 2004. The provisions of the act were effective on July 1, 2005, with the exception of some elements of the definition of “highly qualified teacher” that took effect upon the signing of the act.

## 44. IEP (Individualized Education Program)

An IEP is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, implemented, reviewed, and revised in accordance with DOE Rule 160-4-7 Special Education. This requirement applies to all local school systems and state-operated programs. Each public school child who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP guides the delivery of special education supports and services for the student with a disability. A committee that includes school personnel, parents and others, as appropriate, develops the IEP.

## 45. Service Delivery Models

**(DOE Rule Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-240, effective July 1, 2000.)**

**SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAMS.** Refers to the amount of time that services will be delivered.

**(a) Resource program.** A resource program is defined as one in which the student is enrolled in the regular program while receiving special education services for no more than one half of the instructional segments.

**(b) Self-contained program.** A self-contained program is designed for the student who requires specially designed instruction for over one half of the instructional segments per day in special education. In most cases, the chronological age range for self-contained special education classes shall not exceed three years.

**(4) SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS.** Service delivery models describe the way in which services will be delivered to students who are receiving special education.

**(a) Team/collaborative model.** The special education teacher works with the identified student and the regular teacher within the regular classroom setting.

**(b) Consultative model.** The special education teacher assists the regular education teacher in understanding the needs of the student with a disability and in developing appropriate modifications and adaptations to meet the student's needs within the regular classroom. At a minimum, the special education teacher should work directly with the student with a disability one segment per month.

**(c) Departmental model.** The departmental model is designed for academic instruction for a student with a disability. The academic instruction as specified by the student's IEP may be provided by a variety of special education-certified teachers; however, the student shall be served at least one segment per day by a special education teacher certified in the student's primary area of disability.

**(d) Support services.** Those services provided for students whose IEP specifies specially designed instruction or supplemental aids or services in alternative placements and/or especially in the regular classroom. The services provided must be from personnel such as paraprofessionals, interpreters, job coaches and other assistive personnel.

## 46. Special education core academic content concentration areas

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The special education core academic content concentration areas include language arts, mathematics, science, reading, and social science. Eligibility for a concentration is based on five content courses (15 semester hours/25 PLUs) or completion of the appropriate content area exam (Praxis II, etc.).

## **47. Teacher of Record**

The "teacher of record" is defined as the teacher who is responsible for direct instruction of core academic content subjects. Students being taught core academic subjects must be taught by a teacher who is highly qualified to teach that content area and grade level. For special education students this may be either a general education or special education teacher who is certified to teach the subject and grade level.

## **48. Veteran Teacher**

A veteran teacher is one who is not new to the profession and is defined as a teacher in a public school who has been teaching a total of three or more complete school years.

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**Supplemental Questions and Answers from the GASPA Drive-In Conference  
October 3, 2005**

1. Please address certification and highly qualified requirements for special education high school teachers who teach social skills or study skills with no Carnegie Units awarded.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the reauthorized IDEA legislation of 2004 require that if a special education teacher teaches core academic subjects exclusively to students who are being assessed against alternate achievement standards, the teacher must meet the highly qualified requirements for elementary school teachers and, for instruction above the elementary level have subject-matter knowledge appropriate to the level of instruction being provided.

These special education teachers may take the Early Childhood Test that includes reading, or the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Praxis II Test that does not include reading. If the teachers are teaching reading to their students and choose to take the Special Education Fundamental Subjects Praxis II Test, they will need to also take one of the Reading Praxis II tests or complete an approved reading endorsement program, or utilize HOUSSE.

2. How will systems handle study skills classes at high school? Will teachers need core academic subject certification?

Special education teachers are not required to meet highly qualified requirements if they are not providing core academic content instruction as the teacher of record. However, all students enrolled in grades K – 12 must be provided core academic content instruction by either a special education teacher or one who is certified in the content area.

3. Why do psycho-educational program teachers have a different set of guidelines for becoming highly qualified? Shouldn't these guidelines apply to everyone? This does not seem fair.

Because of their delivery model, the teachers teaching in psycho-educational programs best fit the collaborative model that is currently being used by the alternative schools in Georgia. In this previously approved model for alternative schools, teachers can defer the standard of being highly qualified to a highly qualified teacher if they document a minimum of two contacts per month with the highly qualified teacher.

4. Does the term “new teacher” in special education, who has two years to become highly qualified, apply to teachers hired this school year, next school year, or at anytime hired?

The two-year period begins at the time the special education teacher is hired.

5. Can an interrelated special education teacher take the visually impaired praxis and obtain certification? This question also applies deaf and OI certification.

Currently, certified teachers may add any field or area of concentration to their certificate by passing Praxis II examinations.

6. Hospital/homebound teachers serve a variety of students. What does the hospital/homebound teacher need to do to become highly qualified in special education? Do the rules apply?

The highly qualified requirements do not apply to hospital/homebound teachers. The students' regular teachers are considered the "teachers of record" and would need to meet the highly qualified requirements.

7. An itinerant teacher for special education visual impaired students may serve all three levels. What does this teacher need to do to become highly qualified? Do the rules apply?

Federal law requires that special education teachers who are "the teacher of record" for all core academic content subjects be "highly qualified" on or before August 31, 2006. The following options are available to assist special education teachers:

- Transcript analysis
- Course work
- Appropriate Praxis II
- HOUSSE (veteran teacher only)

8. Many special education teachers are receiving conflicting and incorrect information from the certification officials when they call PSC regarding HOUSSE. How do you want us to handle this situation?

Special education teachers are encouraged to discuss requirements and concerns with their system level administrators. These administrators receive frequent updates and technical assistance, and should be considered the best sources of information. Some systems have requirements for their teachers in addition to state and federal requirements.

9. What is the rationale for the differences in HOUSSE points allowed for general education and special education teachers?

HOUSSE is an option for veteran regular education teachers to be assessed as "highly qualified." HOUSSE cannot be used to change the certification status of regular education teachers. On the other hand, the special education HOUSSE is an option for veteran special education teachers to be assessed as "highly qualified" **and** to add core academic content concentration areas to their consultative special education certificates.

10. Why are there differences in the points awarded on the HOUSSE rubrics for regular and special education teachers?

Refer to item number 9. Special Education HOUSSE may also affect a special education teacher's certification.

11. Will federal funds be pulled from schools that are not making progress toward their teachers reaching the highly qualified status?

Systems are reminded that there is an AYP for Title II, Part A. Systems must have benchmarks and a plan must be in place to ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects are “highly qualified” by 2006 and/or that systems are moving in that direction. The federal government requires a plan for each teacher who is not “highly qualified” and systems should be able to show what steps are being taken to ensure that these teachers will become “highly qualified.”

“Section 2141 of ESEA requires that an SEA determine if an LEA has made progress toward meeting the State’s measurable objectives for increasing teacher quality within the LEA and its schools. If the LEA fails for two consecutive years to make progress toward meeting the annual objectives, then the LEA must develop an “improvement plan.” The improvement plan must be designed to help the LEA to meet the State’s annual measurable objectives for increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers and must address issues that prevented the LEA from meeting those objectives. If after the third year of the plan the SEA develops under Title I, Section 1119 of ESEA for increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers, the LEA has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for three consecutive years under Section III(b)(2)(B) of Title I, Part A, the SEA must enter into an agreement with the LEA on its use of Improving Teacher Quality State Grants program funds under which the SEA will:

- Develop (in conjunction with the LEA, teachers, and principals) professional development strategies and activities based on scientifically based research that the LEA will use to meet the State’s annual measurable objectives for improving teacher quality;
- Require the LEA to use these professional development strategies and activities; and
- Prohibit LEAs from using Title I, Part A funds to fund any new paraprofessionals, except under certain limited instances.”

12. Do school systems with Title I schools have to send letters to parents of teachers who are not highly qualified in the content area, but have a special education general curriculum certification? If so, what is the time line on that requirement? What should be the contents of that letter?

School systems should be implementing their process of notifying parents of teachers, including the parents of special education students, if teachers are not highly qualified in the core academic content areas. However, if a teacher has recently taken the Praxis II or is in the process of completing a HOUSSSE, the LEA may wait for the results of the test. All parent notifications should be sent within a reasonable period of time.

Sample parent notification letters are available on the Professional Standards Commission’s Title II, Part A web page: <http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/Admin/Files/SpEdFAQ.pdf>

13. What is Georgia Professional Standards Commission’s recommended last day to take the Praxis II tests?

If possible, teachers should take appropriate Praxis II tests in a timely manner to ensure that there is evidence that all teachers are highly qualified by August 31, 2006.

14. If a teacher has a Special Education General Curriculum Certificate and serves as an inclusion and resource teacher who has a student working on an adapted curriculum,

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does she have to take the MR Praxis II to obtain special education adapted curriculum certification?

If this teacher already has a Special Education General Curriculum Certificate, he/she is not required to obtain the adapted curriculum certification. This teacher needs to become highly qualified in the core academic content area she/he is teaching.

15. What documentation (if any) will be required to validate the cognitive level and certification match? For example: 9-12 special education student on the general diploma track who is taking a pullout math class taught by a special education teacher with 4-8 math cognitive level and student level of performance at 8th grade level?

The teacher of a high school general diploma track, special education student must be highly qualified in math at the 6-12(secondary) cognitive level. The documentation needed would be a math concentration at the secondary cognitive level on the special education teacher's certificate. The IEP drives the level of content for the teacher unless the student is on the high school, general diploma track which requires a teacher to be highly qualified at the 6-12 cognitive (secondary) level.

16. If a special education teacher was "highly qualified" in a content area being taught using a previous HOUSSE rubric, will that teacher be out-of-field on CPI since the subject field will not show on the certificate?

The results on teachers evaluated as "highly qualified" on HOUSSE before July 1, 2005 are valid. However, the teacher does not have a concentration, which is required by the Professional Standards Commission and can be accomplished with the previous rubric. These teachers would need to use the new special education HOUSSE to show that they meet the content requirement for the subject/s they are teaching.

17. Does a teacher working in a special education transition program need to have the Special Education Transition Specialist Endorsement to be considered in field or will Special Education General Curriculum certification be sufficient?

Special Education Transition Specialist Endorsement Programs are not available at this time. However, core academic content subject teachers must be highly qualified in the core academic content area/s they are assigned to teach.

18. If a special education Academic Content Concentration field being taught does not show on the certificate, should systems request an NT in the content concentration area for CPI?

Yes, but the applicant must meet requirements to convert the NT to Clear Renewable by August 31, 2006. However, these teachers should attempt to complete the concentration before the August 31st deadline, but must complete before the expiration of the NT certificate.

19. Do local school systems have the authority to determine whether or not "core academic subjects" are being taught? I teach severe/ profound classes. Most of these classes focus on meeting physical needs of students and self-help skills.

Special education teachers are not required to meet highly qualified requirements if they are not providing core academic content instruction as the teacher of record. However, all students enrolled in

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grades K – 12 must be provided core academic content instruction by either a special education teacher or one who is certified in the content area.

20. Why did MR convert to both general and adapted – while interrelated did not? Interrelated has a much better program to address how to work with students on general and adapted – but MR does not really concentrate on preparing the educator to work in the general curriculum.

This was a decision made by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission in an attempt to make sure special education teachers did not lose any area of certification that they had already earned.

21. If a high school special education teacher is the teacher of record in a resource room for a student working on a general education diploma (regular), does the special education teacher have to be certified in the regular high school content area?

Yes. Any special education high school teacher that is the "teacher of record" for any academic content must be highly qualified at the 6-12 (secondary) cognitive level if the student is on the general diploma track.

22. This teacher teaches an LD student who functions on a 6th grade level in math in a resource setting. The resource class is a developmental math elective designed to provide support only. (This is not for Carnegie unit of study in math). The student is working towards a regular education diploma. Is this teacher considered highly qualified?

If this student is on the regular diploma track the teacher must be highly qualified at the 6-12 (secondary) cognitive level.

23. What information is available for special education teachers, and when will there be more changes?

Specific information regarding changes can be found at the following web sites:

- GA PSC website: [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com) (Certification rules, Educator Testing information)
- GA Title II-A website: [www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html](http://www.gapsc.com/nclb/home.html) (Highly qualified requirements)
- Georgia Implementation Guidelines (**Section 8**)  
HOUSSE Rubric and Instructions  
Special Education Testing Chart  
Special Educators Frequently Asked Questions

We consider most of these items to be living documents that will be updated as needed.

24. What is the special education appeal process?

If teachers believe that they qualify for special education academic content concentration areas that are not reflected on their new certificate, they may send an email to [spedappeal@gapsc.com](mailto:spedappeal@gapsc.com) with the following information:

- Name and social security number or certificate number
- Specific core academic content concentration area(s) for which you think you qualify

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- Specific college or PLU transcript(s) that reflect the core academic content (not methods) courses you think will qualify (Teachers or systems may fax transcripts to the PSC at 404-232-2560.)
- Specific core academic content course numbers and titles that you think will qualify

If teachers believe that they qualify for a cognitive level that is not reflected on their certificate, they should reference in their email the specific core academic content area examination that they think will qualify them in addition to the information above that is requested for the core academic content concentration area.

25. Is the former Teacher Certification Test (TCT) for special education comparable to the Special education Fundamental Subjects Praxis II Test?

No, the TCT for special education teachers was not a content assessment. This test was the requirement for base special education certificate.

26. Has there been any consideration given to using the GRE scores for math content?

No.

27. What is the sanction if special education teachers are not highly qualified by the deadline date?

This is a matter of local decision. However, if school systems are able to demonstrate best effort and are in the process of implementing a plan for success in the absence of 100 percent compliance, this would be considered in most monitoring situations. Technically, the possible sanctions include loss of funding and state/federal intervention. Refer to item 11 for additional information.