

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) has received many questions from districts about how the elimination of HQT and federal requirements for educator evaluations will impact Oregon educators. The purpose of this brief is to provide initial guidance to school districts regarding current requirements (2015-16) and changes in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years.

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has recently clarified the timeline for states to transition from “highly qualified teacher” (HQT) requirements to new requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). See USED’s [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document.

The USED is in the process of federal rulemaking which will further clarify and provide complete details on how the new requirements in ESSA will be implemented. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will work with educators, Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC), and others to help districts transition and prepare for the new ESSA requirements concerning licensure/certification, equity, and reporting.

With passage of ESSA, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Waivers expire on August 1, 2016. In response to these changes, ODE will work with the [ESSA Educator Effectiveness Work Group](#), with input from educators across the state, to explore how the current evaluation system is working, what is not working, and what could be changed or improved in Oregon’s state regulations moving forward.

ESSA and Highly Qualified Teachers

2015-16 School Year

- During the 2015-16 school year districts must submit their 2015-16 HQT/Staff Assignment data for federal reporting but will not have to submit HQT teacher plans to ODE if they did not meet HQT requirements. Rather, districts should begin planning how they will ensure that their teachers meet state licensure and certification requirements as required by ESSA in 2017-18.
- Oregon Licensure: For teachers with a License for Conditional Assignment (LCA) or a Restricted Teaching License working toward some endorsements or completion of a licensure program, TSPC requires completion of an academic licensure preparation program and evidence of progress toward meeting those requirements throughout the term of the LCA (three years total). TSPC will renew the LCA annually with evidence of progress submitted as part of the LCA or Restricted Teaching License renewal process. For more information on Oregon licensure see the [TSPC website](#).

2016-17 School Year

- Districts will not be required to comply with HQT requirements of teachers, including special education teachers, in the 2016-17 school year.
- The Staff Assignment Data Collection will continue in 2016-17; HQT data elements will be altered based on guidance from the USED. ODE will communicate to districts what changes to expect as soon as possible.
- ESSA amends the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requiring that beginning in 2016-17 special education teachers in elementary school, middle school, or high school must: have obtained full certification as a special education teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification) or passed the State Special Education Teacher Licensing Examination and hold a license to teach in Oregon as a special education teacher;

not have had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Oregon Licensure and Special Education:

- Oregon Licensure: For teachers with a License for Conditional Assignment (LCA) or a Restricted Teaching License working toward completion of a Special Education endorsement, TSPC requires completion of a full academic special education preparation program and evidence of progress toward meeting those requirements throughout the term of the LCA (three years total). TSPC will renew the LCA annually with evidence of progress submitted as part of the LCA renewal.
- Emergency teaching licenses may be allowed in special education at a school district's request for applicants who have some past working or significant educational experience related to special education. Applicants for an Emergency License must be fully enrolled in a Commission-approved special education preparation program and able to complete the remaining program requirements within one academic school year. These licenses are not renewable and expire at the end of the school year in which it is issued.

2017-18 School Year

- Beginning in the 2017-18 school year, ESSA requires districts to ensure that all teachers and paraprofessionals working in a program supported by Title I funds meet applicable state certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification. Forthcoming regulations from USED are expected to further clarify this requirement.
- ESSA requires the following professional qualifications to be reported annually in the State Report Card:
 - inexperienced teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
 - teachers teaching with emergency or provisional credentials; and
 - teachers who are not teaching in the subject or field for which the teacher is certified or licensed.
- ESSA requires districts to describe how students experiencing poverty and students of color enrolled in schools assisted by Title IA funds are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers.

ESSA and Educator Evaluations

2015-16 School Year

- State requirements for educator evaluations, Senate Bill 290 and Oregon administrative rule ([OAR 581-022-1723](#)), remain in effect.
- The use of Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs), as a condition of Oregon's ESEA waiver, will not be required in educator evaluations this year (2015-16).
- Educators in tested and non-tested grades and subjects may use other measures for the two Student Learning and Growth (SLG) goals in their 2015-16 summative evaluations (as outlined in the [Oregon Framework for Teacher and Administrator Evaluation and Support Systems](#)).
- The Oregon Matrix is currently required in OAR as the summative model that combines multiple measures of performance, including professional practice, professional responsibilities, and student learning and growth.

2016-17 School Year

- [OAR 581-022-1723](#) will remain in effect until it is revised and adopted by the State Board. It is anticipated that the OAR revision process would begin in the fall of 2016 for implementation in the 2017-18 school year.