



JOY HOFMEISTER  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION  
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Superintendents and Special Education Directors

**FROM:** Todd Loftin, Executive Director, Special Education Services

**DATE:** January 24, 2017

**SUBJECT:** **Certification Policy for Special Education Teachers and Teachers in Alternative Schools, Alternative Education Programs, and Residential and Treatment Facilities**

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) removes the designations and requirements for Highly Qualified (HQ). However, the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) recognizes the need of districts to address critical staffing shortages in special education, alternative schools, alternative education programs, and residential or treatment facilities. The OSDE also recognizes the need to ensure that students in these settings continue to receive the support they need from teachers who have appropriate content knowledge. For the 2017-2018 school year and beyond:

Teachers who are certified in special education are approved to provide content instruction in a special education setting if they hold a valid certificate (in Elementary, Early Childhood, or Secondary content area) that matches the subject and grade level of the assignment and demonstrates competency by passing an appropriate Oklahoma Subject Area Test or demonstrates competency through Oklahoma's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) for the required subject area in a special education classroom. Special education teachers who are not approved to serve as a teacher of record may still serve as co-teachers.

In addition, unique programs such as an alternative school, an alternative education program, residential or treatment facility (such as juvenile detention centers, group homes, and emergency youth shelters) must ensure that teachers are qualified to provide appropriate educational instruction in accordance with OAC 210:35-29-6 and OAC 210:10-1-13. Teachers may continue to qualify in subject areas for which they aren't certified through the High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) only for the purposes of teaching in an alternative education program or alternative school offered by the district board or in a residential or treatment facility located within a district.

A paper copy of the HOUSSE form accompanied by proper documentation must be available for review by OSDE, upon request.

Thank you

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