

ESSA Quick Reference Brief: Teacher Requirements under Title I-A

What the Law Says

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) eliminated the highly qualified teacher requirement and addresses teacher qualifications three ways:

- **Teacher licensure:** Teachers employed in Title I-A schools must meet state certification requirements.¹
- **Notifying families:** Districts that receive Title I-A funds are required to notify families that they can request specific information about a teacher's qualifications.² Districts must also notify families when their child has been taught for four or more weeks by a teacher who does not meet applicable State certification or licensure requirements at the grade level and subject area in which the teacher has been assigned.³
- **Equitable Distribution of Teachers:** ESSA requires districts receiving Title I-A funds to address disparities by ensuring that students experiencing poverty and historically underserved students are not disproportionately taught by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers as compared to their peers.⁴



What it Means

Districts must ensure that teachers working in Title I-A schools meet the qualifications laid out in Oregon statute and rule and have information available on the qualifications of those educators to share with families. Families must be notified when their child is taught by a teacher for four or more weeks who is teaching “out of field”. They must also ensure that all students have equitable access to qualified teachers.

Requirements

Teacher Certification

An Oregon teaching license is required for employment as a teacher. All licenses in Oregon are authorized in grades PreK-12, but are limited to teaching the content identified by their endorsements, under the [Course to Endorsement Catalogue](#). However, teachers licensed in Oregon can be assigned to work up to 10 hours per week in one subject-matter area without the appropriate endorsement and still be meeting state certification and licensure requirements.⁵ This is commonly referred to as the “10-hour rule.” It is important to note that **this provision does not apply to teaching assignments in ODE-approved CTE programs or to teachers holding a Restricted, Preliminary or Professional CTE Teaching License.**

Notification of Families

Districts are required to inform families that federal law gives them the **right to request specific information about the professional qualifications of their children's classroom teachers**, including:

¹ ESEA Section 1111(g)(2)(I); 34 C.F.R. § 200.58

² ESEA Section 1112(e)(1)(A)

³ ESEA Section 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii)

⁴ ESEA Section 1111(g)(1)(B)

⁵ OAR 584-210-0160

- Whether the teacher has met state certification criteria for the grade levels and subject matter taught,
- Whether the state has waived its qualification and licensing criteria to permit the teacher to teach on an emergency or other provisional basis, and
- Whether the teacher is teaching coursework in the field or discipline of their certification.

ESSA also requires that districts notify each family whenever their child in a Title I school has been **taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who does not meet state certification or licensing requirements** at the grade level or subject in which they are assigned. [In Oregon, unrestricted, non-provisional teaching licenses](#) include:

- Preliminary Teaching
- Professional Teaching
- Teacher Leader
- Legacy Teaching
- Reciprocal Teaching

To be considered properly assigned for the purposes of Title I-A, teachers must hold one of the above licenses and be teaching the content identified by their endorsements. Teachers who hold one of the above licenses who are teaching out of their endorsed area for more than 10 hours a week **and who also hold a License for Conditional Assignment (LCA)** are also considered to be properly assigned.

Equitable Distribution of Teachers

ESSA requires districts accepting Title I-A funds to develop plans to assure that students experiencing poverty and historically underserved students are not taught at disproportionate rates by out-of-field, inexperienced, or ineffective teachers, as compared to their peers.⁶ Currently, information regarding these three indicators is captured through the [Staff Assignment](#), [Staff Position](#) and [Principal and Teacher Evaluation](#) data collections. The table below includes Oregon’s definitions of these terms as described in the ESSA State Plan.

Indicator	Definition
Inexperienced	Any teacher with less than 3 years of experience
Out-of-Field	Any teacher teaching a subject area (course) in which they have neither a regular license and the proper endorsement, nor a License for Conditional Assignment.
Ineffective	Any teacher who receives the lowest rating (Level 1) in the district’s evaluation system as reported in the Principal and Teacher Evaluation Data Collection.

Recommendations for Practice

- **Conduct an annual review.** Having a system to review the licensure status of staff allows the district to develop an “inventory” of staff licensure, informing where additional endorsements may be needed. This practice can also help prevent accidental lapses in certification requirements.
- **Invest in induction.** New teachers are more likely to be assigned to schools that have high turnover, so developing a strong educator induction program can improve classroom instruction and increase the retention of new educators.
- **Leverage the power of other federal funds.** Title II-A funds are an excellent resource to support efforts to ensure equitable access to educators. Strategies such as **mentoring** of first- and second-year teachers, **tuition reimbursement** (for

⁶ Districts with no more than one school per grade span are exempt from this analysis.

endorsements or licensure in areas identified as high need in the district), and implementation of meaningful **educator evaluation systems** are all ways to decrease disparities in access.

Questions for Reflection

1. How does the district ensure all families are aware of their rights regarding notification of teacher qualifications?
2. What is the district's system for promoting communication between Human Resources and Title program staff regarding licensure and requirements under Title I-A?
3. What changes in the district's collective bargaining agreement might be needed to meet equitable distribution requirements?

Resources

- [Teacher Standards and Practices Commission Licensure webpage](#)
- [Course to Endorsement Catalogue](#)
- [Family Notification Letter Templates](#)
- [OAR 584-210-0160](#)
- [Transitioning to the Every Student Succeeds Act: FAQs](#)