

Southwest Comprehensive Center

Analysis of Nine States' Highly Qualified Teacher Plans

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Introduction

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), recognizing that a highly qualified teacher (HQT) is an important factor in raising student achievement, requires that each state ensure that all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified. The definition of a highly qualified teacher is operationalized by each state, and must include the following requirements: a highly qualified teacher must (1) hold a bachelor's degree or higher in the subject taught; (2) obtain full teacher certification; and (3) demonstrate knowledge in each subject taught. In the fall of 2005, the Department of Education announced that states who could show that they were making a good faith effort toward ensuring a highly qualified teacher was in every classroom by the end of the 2006-2007 school year could submit a Revised State Plan for meeting this goal. The Department of Education requested that states pay particular attention to schools identified for improvement under NCLB as well as schools serving high numbers of disadvantaged students. These plans were due to the United States Department of Education by July 7, 2006, and all plans were reviewed by August 16, 2006.

A team of 31 experts in teacher quality and administrators evaluated the state plans against a six-part protocol. These six points were identified as the basic requirements for a successful plan, and the reviewers assessed how well each state addressed the issues, which were:

1. A thorough analysis of the data identifying teachers that do not meet HQT requirements, including trends that the state plan will address;
2. Steps local districts will take to help teachers quickly attain HQT status;
3. Technical assistance, programs, and resources the State Education Agency (SEA) will offer to help Local Education Agencies (LEAs) implement their HQT plans;
4. Actions states will take if LEAs do not ensure all teachers of core academic subjects are highly qualified;
5. Use of an alternative method to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified (i.e., the state's use of High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE); and
6. Taking steps to ensure that minority students and students from low-income families are not disproportionately taught by inexperienced or unqualified teachers.

With input from the panel of reviewers, the Department of Education determined that nine states (Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, and South Dakota) had plans that sufficiently addressed the six criteria. These states also received recommendations that were to be incorporated into their plans. Based on an independent review of the plans from these nine states, it appears there are several common features that best characterize the most successful plans:

- Specific strategies that are targeted toward high poverty and/or high minority schools and assurances that the SEAs/LEAs have the resources and infrastructures necessary to carry them out;
- Descriptions of databases or data systems that allow for thorough analyses of school-, grade-, classroom- and teacher-level data that are used to support conclusions (especially those regarding the state's areas of highest need and its equitable distribution of teachers in high poverty and/or high minority schools);
- Improvement and support strategies that are research-based and include evidence of effectiveness in their descriptions;
- Strategies designed to prioritize the state's areas of highest need and are aligned to address those particular needs (e.g. teacher subgroups that are particularly difficult to recruit/retain, high poverty/minority schools, etc.);
- Coherent and targeted strategies (rather than a "laundry list" of unrelated techniques/programs), feasible given the state context, and proven effective;

- Strategies that are well-developed and include specific timelines, benchmarks, performance measures; and
- Evidence that the effectiveness of the plan’s strategies will be monitored and evaluated.

Plan Analysis

The following analysis highlights elements of these nine successful plans according to the six requirements.

Requirement One: The revised plan must provide a detailed analysis of the core academic subject classes in the State that are currently not being taught by highly qualified teachers. The analysis must, in particular, address schools that are not making adequate yearly progress and whether or not these schools have more acute needs than do other schools in attracting highly qualified teachers. The analysis must also identify the districts and schools around the State where significant numbers of teachers do not meet HQT standards, and examine whether or not there are particular hard-to-staff courses frequently taught by non-highly qualified teachers.

Kansas: Under requirement one, Kansas’ plan presents several district-, school- and classroom-level data analyses from the state’s database of all licensed teachers’ HQT status. These analyses include the total number of teaching assignments as well as the number and percent of classes taught by non-HQTs for each core academic subject. The plan features separate analyses for each of the state’s high-priority (highest need) areas, which include: (1) schools and districts with less than 100 percent HQT that did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), (2) special education teachers, and (3) teachers teaching multiple subjects in rural schools. Descriptions of contextual factors that make these areas a priority and outlines of the state’s plan for addressing these priorities are also included. Finally, the Kansas plan includes an analysis of teachers who are designated as non-HQT but who are on a State approved plan to become HQT; this analysis is accompanied by a description of the state approved plan, including policies regarding waivers and provisional endorsement for already licensed teachers.

Louisiana’s plan describes the Louisiana Education Accountability Data System (LEADS), a system of databases and online reporting tools which includes course data, teacher assignment data, and teacher certification data. The plans includes data by type of school and by core academic subject, the number and percentage of certified teachers, the number and percentage of non-certified teachers, the number and percentage of HQTs, as well as the number and percentage of non-HQTs. The plan describes analyses indicating that the percentage of certified teachers in the state is increasing but a greater effort is needed in helping veteran teachers establish content mastery for HQT status. The areas of greatest need are identified as self-contained special education classes, secondary mathematics, physics, elementary foreign language, and Spanish classes. Lastly, the plan also includes data showing what types of schools (e.g. schools not making AYP and schools with low performance scores according to LA State Report Card) and districts (e.g., districts hit by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, rural districts, high-poverty districts) have fewer HQTs.

Maryland: Under requirement one, Maryland’s plan describes the state’s data collection techniques and refers to the manual used for reporting HQT data. Further, the plan includes the percentage of classes taught by HQTs overall as well as in high poverty schools and analyzes changes in these percentages over the past 3 years, noting contextual factors that might explain the levels/changes in HQT percentages. Maryland’s plan breaks down the percentage of its total non-HQT classes for which the following reasons explain the teacher’s non-HQT status: expired certificate, invalid grade level certification, testing requirements not met, invalid subject for

certification, missing certification information, and holding a conditional certificate. The percentages of classes taught by non-HQTs by district, subject area, school level, school improvement/accountability status, and poverty level are identified, analyzed, and accompanied by a description of results. Areas of highest need (LEAs with more than 20 percent non-HQT classes; secondary teachers; math, English, and science teachers; high-poverty schools, and schools in Need of Improvement) are identified.

New Jersey's plan includes data from several major state databases that enable the state to produce detailed analyses of classes taught by non-HQTs, broken down by school poverty status, grade level, and subject. Data regarding classes taught by non-HQTs across core subject areas is presented by district in an appendix, and the plan identifies New Jersey's 31 Abbott districts (high-poverty districts most in need of additional resources as well as districts with schools in years 3-5 of improvement status under NCLB). The reviewers note that although the plan does not include analyses of school-level data, descriptions of the state's data systems indicate that New Jersey has the capacity to do so. New Jersey's Certificated Staff Report includes every New Jersey teacher, his/her certification information, class assignments, HQT status, and the grade-level teaching assignment of each teacher. Finally, the plan identifies the greatest areas of challenge for the state, particularly recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers in the areas of special education, English as a Second Language, mathematics, and science.

New Mexico's plan disaggregates data regarding equitable distribution of HQT teachers using charts and tables. It compares courses taught by HQT as well as non-HQT and also looks at this data by type of school (e.g., poverty level, AYP status). The reviewers felt that the plan contained "excellent disaggregation, presentation and analysis of data."

Nevada presented data on HQT by type of school, and highlighted data from two districts in which more than 20 percent of courses were taught by non-HQTs, the threshold for identifying districts as being most in need. Nevada identified special education as an area in need of particular attention and highlighted grade levels and subject areas within special education that were most in need. The reviewers found the chart on page 3 particularly helpful.

Ohio's plan describes how the state tracks HQT status by using the state's Education Management Information System, which is then reported annually at the classroom level. The plan includes an analysis of classes taught by teachers who are non-HQT and staffing needs of schools not making AYP that have a high percentage of classes taught by non-HQTs. The plan presents HQT data by core subject area as well as schools that have and have not made AYP. The plan states that initiatives to address HQT gaps in history, geography, economics, and civics/government will be targeted to schools that have not met AYP, but does not state how this will be done, or what the initiatives are. The plan identified special education teachers and middle school teachers as groups of teachers that need special attention to meet HQT requirements. The state has implemented a two-pronged initiative to address the lack of HQTs in special education and has developed content-specific courses and professional development through 15 universities to address veteran middle school non-HQTs. The plan identified schools and districts where a significant number of teachers were non-HQT in traditional public schools and in other categories, and these percentages are listed in an appendix.

South Carolina's plan focuses on the importance of data collection and data accuracy. The plan includes a breakdown of the total number of core classes offered in each district in relation to the percentage of these classes taught by non-HQTs. South Carolina has created a state-level data system to collect, verify, and analyze the core academic classes taught by non-HQTs. The system allows for data to be shown at the district and school levels and can be disaggregated by school

level, poverty level, AYP, minority, and subject area. The analyses show the percentage of non-HQTs in schools not making AYP and reveals that there are more classes being taught by non-HQTs in schools not making AYP and in high poverty schools. The reviewers highlight the plan's detailed and easy-to-read charts and graphs that identify particular groups of teachers, districts and schools with significant numbers of non HQTs, and the number of courses taught by non-HQTs. In South Carolina, groups of teachers that need particular state attention include special education, foreign languages grades K-8, and science grades 9-12. The state also recognized trouble in middle grades in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Since few area colleges or universities offer a middle grades certification, a shortage of HQTs in that area is expected in 2008-2009. South Carolina's plan lists districts and schools where non-HQT class occurrence is higher than 15 percent as well as 55 specific subjects for which the occurrence of non-HQTs is higher than 15 percent.

South Dakota: To meet requirement one, South Dakota's plan includes data at LEA, school, and classroom levels through a new data system that matches teacher preparation to all core content subject areas. The plan not only identifies districts and schools with significant numbers of teachers who are non-HQT, it also provides the number and percentage of core academic subject classes taught by non-HQTs. South Dakota's plan includes analyses of the staffing needs of schools not making AYP by comparing those schools to the state averages of HQTs by level of school (e.g. elementary), poverty level, and Native American student population. The plan indicates that a separate analysis of special education teachers will be conducted based on 2005-2006 data to more clearly ascertain the needs of special education teachers, but South Dakota notes a need to pay particular attention to Language Arts (including reading) teachers. The state concluded from its analysis that low-income, high-minority, and small/isolated areas have the most difficulty in attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers.

Requirement 2: The revised plan must provide information on HQT status in each LEA and the steps the SEA will take to ensure that each LEA has plans in place to assist teachers who are not highly qualified to attain HQT status as quickly as possible.

Kansas' plan includes HQT data by district, school, and content area and lists the number of districts with at least one school that did not meet the annual measurable objective of 100 percent HQT. The plan indicates that these data are disseminated in the district and school report cards on its website, and outlines the process Kansas will use to collect district 2006-2007 HQT plans. This outline specifies a timeline for each stage of the process, and includes details on district plan review process (by a team made up of members from the Teacher Education and Licensure Team and the State and Federal Program Team in the Kansas State Department of Education). The plan describes the following requirements for districts in creating their HQT plans and includes the HQT plan template that will be sent to districts:

- Needs assessment with data analysis (by school, subject area, and high/low poverty) to determine issues that have prevented district from having 100 percent HQT,
- Timeline of district support for individual teachers,
- Benchmarks for success, and
- Funding amounts and sources to help teachers become HQTs.

Louisiana: In order to meet requirement two, Louisiana's plan notes several state-sponsored tools to assist districts with the planning process. Local districts can access current teacher data from the LEADs database, SEA staff can provide targeted one-on-one assistance, and Regional Education Service Centers can help districts with planning and data analysis. Districts may submit local consolidated applications for NCLB through the state's electronic Grant Management System. These plans must include percentage of HQTs in the aggregate and in high

poverty schools, specific targets, and an action plan consisting of strategies, activities, and programs, and evaluation measures. These plans are then reviewed by Louisiana's federal program staff.

Maryland's plan outlines the major activities for the district planning process and includes anticipated timeframes and the division/office responsible for each activity. Teacher quality planning is incorporated into the comprehensive Master Plan process under Maryland's Bridge to Excellence Plan. The process for creating the five year Master Plans requires districts to report on progress and involves a formal annual review procedure that includes review panels, technical reviews, specific written guidance, consensus reports, and approval by the State Superintendent and Board of Education. The Maryland State Department of Education annually revisits the Master Plan process and develops new guidance for districts to prepare their annual updates.

New Jersey identifies all districts in which less than 100 percent of core academic subject courses are taught by highly qualified teachers. New Jersey annually identifies all districts and schools that employ teachers who do not meet the federal definition of a highly qualified teacher. Each district is required to develop and implement a plan that identifies non-HQTs and their current assignments, along with a description of the steps that the district is taking to help them become highly qualified. New Jersey's plan lists a number of steps that the state is taking to ensure that districts are helping teachers become highly qualified as quickly as possible

New Mexico's plan is commended by the reviewers as using an "exemplary approach" for using data to guide an improvement strategy that drills down to the district, school, class and individual teacher. The state has provided information regarding the performance of each school in relation to their annual measurable objectives (AMOs) for HQTs. This information is provided at the school level which allows the state to provide targeted technical assistance when needed. For districts that have not met 100 percent compliance, consultants look for evidence that plans are in place to assist teachers in becoming highly qualified. The links between the SEA and the LEAs are clear in terms of expectations, milestones, communication and timelines.

Nevada's revised plan includes a list of districts that have not met their AMOs for HQTs, as well as a description of the subject areas where the objectives are not being met. Nevada's plan includes the specific steps that the districts will take to meet their annual measurable objectives, including the plans from the districts identified as being highest in need. The reviewers note that the steps are explained very thoroughly, and Nevada's strategies for assisting districts in reaching their goals are also described in detail.

Ohio's plan describes the state's procedure for identifying districts that have not met their AMOs for HQTs, reports the percentage of traditional public schools and community schools that did not meet their objectives, and includes the source file for these data in an appendix. The plan also includes specific steps that districts not meeting AMOs need to take. The districts need to submit a District Plan for Meeting Section 1119 Qualifications for Teachers and Paraprofessionals, which is a planning tool available on Ohio's Comprehensive Continuous Improvement Planning (CCIP) website. Ohio's revised plan outlines the requirements for the district plan, which includes a requirement for LEAs to identify actions to expedite teachers becoming highly qualified. All district improvement plans submitted under the CCIP are scored based on a rubric to determine if it has met "standards of quality."

South Carolina's plan lists the percentage of classes in each district taught by non-HQTs. The SEA requires that LEAs submit plans for achieving 100 percent HQTs. LEAs that have not met AMOs specified ways to support teachers in meeting requirements, including reimbursing for

courses needed for full certification or for demonstration of content mastery; offering study sessions for exam preparation; reimbursing for Praxis II content exams; conducting HOUSSE, as appropriate; providing support and stipends for National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification above the support provided by the state; and stipulating in teacher contracts the necessary steps and timeline to meet HQT requirements. The reviewers note that South Carolina “is to be commended for taking a proactive approach in partnering with LEAs to encourage districts to reevaluate teacher assignments to classes for which they are highly qualified in order to ensure a more equitable distribution of HQ teachers.” The reviewers also indicate a need to see how the state intends to ensure the quality of the plan that each district presents to assist all non-HQTs to become highly qualified as quickly as possible, as well as evidence that the districts have the capacity to carry out the plan.

South Dakota’s plan describes an online, live database that can be updated and from which data regarding districts not meeting HQT AMOs can be viewed at any time. The plan identifies districts not meeting AMOs, and presents the percentage of classes taught by non-HQTs. The plan includes specific steps that will be taken by districts that have not met AMOs. For example, the plan includes a guidance document prepared by the state for districts to use in developing their district highly qualified teacher plans. A companion template for developing local plans includes steps that each district must take and requires districts to add strategies based on an analysis of highly qualified teachers and assignments in each of the schools within the district. South Dakota’s plan specifies steps the state will take to ensure that all districts have plans in place to assist non-highly qualified teachers to become highly qualified as quickly as possible. However, the reviewers note that while these steps were described, it was not clear that they are connected with state policies, practices and strategies articulated elsewhere in the plan.

Requirement 3: The revised plan must include information on the technical assistance, programs, and services that the SEA will offer to assist LEAs in successfully completing their HQT plans, particularly where large groups of teachers are not highly qualified, and the resources the LEAs will use to meet their HQT goals.

Kansas: To meet requirement three, Kansas’ plan describes several forms of implementation support, including on-site visits, on-line courses, tuition reimbursement for 9th grade math or English as a Second Language coursework, and a professional development series for reading, Title I teachers, and special education teachers. The plan also indicates that priority will be given to districts with high numbers non-HQTs and to schools not making AYP or identified for improvement under NCLB. The plan also describes the steps taken with such priority cases (e.g., mandatory needs assessment, required usage of 5 percent of Title I Part A funds to improve HQT). Targeted professional development is described that is designed to specifically address high priority area teachers (middle school math teachers and Spanish-speaking teachers). The plan lists universities with whom districts have partnered to receive professional development and specifies the type of professional development that each university partner will provide. Additionally, the plan describes a program intended to recruit foreign language and English as a Second Language teachers from Spain.

Louisiana: In an effort to meet requirement three, Louisiana’s plan describes the purpose of several regional and district teacher quality outreach meetings sponsored by the state, and indicates that several regional certification counselors are located at Education Service Centers throughout the state that can assist with meeting the HQT requirements of NCLB. Louisiana’s Office of Educator Support is in the process of developing and disseminating numerous guides on high quality professional development (including separate guides for teachers, principals, and district administrators). The state department of education keeps an online clearinghouse

containing information on job recruitment, certification, professional development, and teacher credentials (for LEA human resource directors). Louisiana has adapted state programs to coordinate funds in order to address NCLB requirements, including the Local Teacher Quality Block Grant Program, which was refined to give funding priority to increasing the number of teachers who meet NCLB HQT requirements. Louisiana's plan also describes several other teacher quality initiatives occurring in the state and differentiates these initiatives as (1) programs/services to assist teachers and LEAs in meeting HQT goals, (2) targeted programs/services to support staffing and PD in schools that are not making AYP, and (3) targeted programs/services to support high priority subgroups for meeting HQT requirements.

Maryland's plan for meeting requirement three outlines the state's major technical assistance activities and includes anticipated timeframes as well as the division/office responsible for each activity. Maryland's revised plan includes information on the state's professional development partnerships and describes technical assistance for highly qualified teachers that is aligned with the technical assistance provided with the Maryland Bridge to Excellence Plan.

New Jersey's revised plan describes the range of technical assistance and support that the state has provided to districts in helping them carry out their HQT plans. This assistance has included providing technical assistance and training sessions on the HQT requirements and answering thousands of requests for technical assistance from districts over the past three years. The plan states that staffing and professional development needs of schools not making AYP are given priority in a number of ways, including district interventions and site visits. New Jersey uses data from multiple sources to target professional development and technical assistance to identified areas of need. Most notably, the New Jersey State Department of Education has concentrated their professional development efforts for special education teachers, teachers of students with limited English proficiency, and teachers of mathematics, science, and world languages. These professional development experiences have included one- and two-day intensive institutes, online credit bearing courses and tutorials, and school-site consultation and training. The plan includes a comprehensive state action plan with a wide range of technical assistance, programs, and services to support LEAs. Activities are targeted to different audiences of districts, administrators, and practitioners throughout the year to help LEAs meet the 2006-2007 HQT deadline. The state teacher equity plan indicates that the state is making use of multiple sources of grants and federal funds to address the needs of teachers who are not highly qualified, including groups of teachers requiring particular state attention and those in high-need schools (e.g., federal Foreign Language Assistance Program grant to provide professional development to teachers of world languages; federally-funded New Jersey Math-Science Partnership grant to improve teachers' knowledge of math, science, and technology; grant from Wachovia to provide professional development for instructional coaches in two high-need districts).

New Mexico's revised plan describes several routes through which districts can receive technical assistance from the state. These include New Mexico's Transition to Teaching program, focused technical assistance at the state educator quality conference, a leadership academy, and on-site monitoring of districts who have not met their AMOs. Although programs and strategies are listed and described, the reviewers would like more information included about the steps taken during the assistance, timelines, deliverables, and evaluation data on impact and success.

Nevada has partially met the elements of requirement three. Nevada has discussed the possibility of redirecting funds to the schools with the greatest needs in high-need school districts. Programs that are targeted to particular school districts are described in the plan, but the reviewers commented that it was not clear how the state is using the resources they have available to address the needs of teachers who are not highly qualified, and that the plan does not contain

enough detail to make the reviewers confident that the state is prioritizing its resources on the most important needs.

Ohio makes the online resources of the CCIP, including a template for developing a plan that meets the NCLB HQT requirements, resources in a document library, and three scoring rubrics. Ohio's Regional School Improvement Teams (RSITs) provide assistance to districts and schools not making AYP. Priority is given to districts with less than 90 percent highly qualified teachers and those not meeting their AMOs for two consecutive years. RSITs help districts review their plan, develop customized strategies and action steps, provide access to professional development, and monitor and report the district's progress to the state. The plan indicates how schools not making AYP will be given priority and also describes the state department of education's three-tiered approach to providing incentives for the state's reading, math, and science PD initiatives, starting with districts and schools in need of improvement, then those at risk, and then all others. The plan describes how LEAs would prioritize funds, guided by state requirements, and includes a description of programs and services the SEA will provide to assist teachers and LEAs in reaching HQT goals (e.g., free online courses and college and university workshops; 16 Special Education Regional Resource Centers (SERRCs) to assist special education teachers to become highly qualified; partnerships between the Ohio Department of Education and large urban districts to produce in-house workshops; Teachers-on-Loan (TOL) Program; a variety of programs in math to ensure highly qualified status of math teachers; and the System to Achieve Results for Students (STARS) data collection system). Finally, the plan also includes a description of how the state will use the available resources and how the state will monitor the use of Title funds in schools that are not meeting the HQT and AYP goals.

South Carolina's plan includes a description of the technical assistance the SEA will provide to assist LEAs in successfully carrying out their HQT plans (through training, technology, on-site visits, and continual accessibility). However, the reviewers indicate that some areas need to be addressed. These areas include the rationale for continuing the initiatives mentioned in the technical assistance component, information on whether any summative evaluations reveal that these initiatives were achieving their intended goals in providing technical assistance to LEAs, and the criteria that the SEA is using to determine the kind of technical assistance SEA is providing LEAs. The plan indicates that priority is given to the schools that are not making AYP as indicated in the program descriptions and in the state's Educational Accountability Act of 1998 which is aligned with components of NCLB. The Educational Accountability Act requires LEAs to submit a strategic plan which includes assurances for targeting Title II funds to schools with the lowest population of HQT, the largest class size, or that have been identified for improvement.

The reviewers commend South Carolina for providing a detailed description of the specific programs and services SEA will provide teachers and LEAs in successfully meeting the HQT goals. These programs focus on 3 areas:

- Ensuring that employed teachers meet requirements (e.g., Centers for the Re-Education and Advancement of Teachers in Special Education (CREATE));
- Recruiting a workforce of highly qualified teachers (e.g., Certification reciprocity);
- Retaining a workforce of highly qualified teachers (e.g., mentoring program)

The areas of particular need identified in requirement one are specifically addressed under this section of South Carolina's plan. For example, the state has 4 initiatives to address the needs of special education teachers, including a restricted alternative certificate, Project CREATE, Program of Alternative Certification for Educators (PACE), and implementation of a multi-subject HOUSSE. The plan also describes initiatives for foreign language teachers, secondary science teachers, and middle school teachers of language arts, math, science and social studies.

Finally, the plan describes how the state will use its available funds to address the needs of non-HQTs and indicates how the needs of schools most in need will be prioritized.

South Dakota's plan includes a description of technical assistance the state will provide to assist LEAs in successfully carrying out their highly qualified teacher plans (e.g., providing technical assistance for developing LEA plans; conducting follow-up meetings to address LEA concerns; conducting meetings to discuss progress; and conducting monitoring of progress reports submitted periodically by LEAs). LEAs can also use the SEA's database to monitor the status of their HQT percentages. Several specific initiatives are cited that demonstrate a priority for staffing and professional needs of schools not making AYP. The plan includes a description of specific programs and services the state will provide to assist teachers and LEAs in meeting highly qualified teacher goals. For example, LEAs may utilize State-provided e-learning courses in small high schools, offer courses through the Virtual High School, and participate in programs and services offered through regional education service agencies. The plan acknowledges the need to target specific teacher subgroups, including those identified in Requirement 1, and indicates that specific steps will be re-evaluated based on data from the 2005-2006 school year. South Dakota's plan also describes how the state will use its available federal funds to address the needs of teachers who are not highly qualified, including the prioritization of funds and partnership programs with institutions of higher education. South Dakota is also working with Alternative Certification programs to bring content experts who have become teachers into high-needs schools.

Requirement 4: The revised plan must describe how the SEA will work with LEAs that fail to reach the 100 percent HQT goal by the end of the 2006-07 school year.

Kansas' plan describes two forms of evaluation/monitoring support provided to districts: ensuring accurate data collection/analysis and ensuring that appropriate HQT strategies are being used. These strategies include assisting districts with data, identifying high-needs areas, conducting cross team reviews of district HQT plan strategies, onsite monitoring, and annual review of district HQT plans. Kansas' plan is promoting policy coherence through weaving HQT needs into the process for monitoring the Local Consolidated Plan, and provides a timeline for this process. The plan describes the corrective action process for districts that fail to meet HQT requirements and do not make AYP for three consecutive years. In this process, districts must submit a Teacher Quality Corrective Action Plan (TQCAP) that includes recruitment and retention strategies for addressing staffing needs, funding sources and budgets, and evidence that funds are targeted to neediest schools. These plans are then reviewed and given feedback by superintendent, site administrators, and the Kansas State Department of Education. Districts are assigned District Support Teams to provide technical assistance and monitoring

Louisiana's plan acknowledges significant challenges, noting that no LEA in the state currently meets the AMO of all teachers being highly qualified. LEAs that do not meet their AMOs must give the reasons for this, identify subgroups of greatest challenge, and provide specific strategies and actions for addressing these issues. Louisiana's plan describes the process for ensuring these LEAs' applications: (1) comply with federal and state mandates; (2) include sufficient information on strategies to meet HQT goals; (3) allocate sufficient personnel and financial resources (Note: the reviewers particularly highlighted this); (4) include information on progress in meeting goals; and (5) include an evaluation component. Louisiana's plan specifies the technical assistance available to support these districts, and how the progress of the LEAs will be monitored through data analyses and site visits.

Maryland's plan outlines major activities for districts not meeting goals and includes anticipated timeframes and the division/office responsible for each activity. The plan also references publications used to assist with plan revision and goal analysis.

New Jersey's indicates that the state will conduct a review of districts in which fewer than 95 percent of core academic classes are taught by HQTs, and will make specific recommendations for corrective action to the commissioner. LEAs must report the number and percentage of core academic courses taught by non-HQTs on their district HQT plans. They must also report the percentage of teachers who did not receive high-quality professional development during the previous school year. The plan indicates that technical assistance will be targeted to schools and districts not making AYP in a number of ways. For example, all districts that have not achieved 100 percent compliance in meeting the highly qualified requirement and that have schools listed in years 3-5 of AYP will receive targeted assistance to include district interventions and site visits. The plan includes a comprehensive state action plan that includes a wide range of technical assistance, programs, and services to support LEAs. Teachers who are not fully certified or are teaching out-of-field may be reassigned, dismissed, or employed as a substitute teacher until they meet all certification requirements. LEA sanctions may include redirecting a portion of Title II funds to support highly qualified teacher initiatives.

New Mexico: Educator Quality Division staff at the state department of education has developed a district monitoring model that incorporates both electronic and on-site monitoring. The electronic monitoring tracks districts' success in meeting key performance indicators: HQT, educational assistants, and teachers receiving high-quality professional development. Districts are then provided with both summary reports, a district-level report regarding these indicators, and detail reports that track individual teachers. Staff members also go on-site to assist schools in need of improvement by providing technical assistance and support in establishing goals. The reviewers commented that New Mexico's plan for requirement four could be strengthened by describing what the technical assistance will look like in a district and how the state will evaluate the impact of the technical assistance, saying "the state will need to be vigilant in addressing the problem of a lack of implementation know-how on the part of the LEAs." The reviewers note that New Mexico is doing well in terms of providing data on an ongoing basis to the LEAs on the progress of the districts in meeting AMOs.

Nevada: The reviewers highlight that Nevada's plan of sampling teachers to determine if they are receiving high-quality professional development is an efficient way of monitoring professional development. The plan does not describe the specific technical assistance or corrective action the SEA will provide if the LEA fails to meet HQT and AYP. The reviewers found evidence in other parts of the plan that indicate that there are measures for corrective action to be taken. However, they find that it is not clear how the SEA will interpret and implement Section §2141 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Ohio has provided a detailed description of its monitoring of the LEAs and their progress toward highly qualified teacher goals. Ohio selects one-third of districts on a rotating basis for compliance monitoring, which involves a self-evaluation, a desk audit, and telephone and on-site reviews for selected districts. To show how technical assistance from the SEA to help LEAs meet HQT goals will be targeted towards LEAs and schools that are not making AYP, the plan repeated the information previously discussed in Requirement 3. The plan indicated how schools not making AYP would be given priority. For these schools, LEAs must include specific action steps in the District Agency Plan. The lowest performing districts are the primary targets for PD initiatives, such as District Partnership Agreements, in which ODE staff commit to providing job-embedded PD at or near the buildings with the greatest needs. The SEA will monitor whether

LEAs attain 100 percent HQT through their data and reporting systems, which are used to track HQT data, create annual measurable objectives, and determine whether the objectives were met. The state also reports on the percentage of teachers who have received high quality professional development. The plan outlines actions the SEA will apply to LEAs failing to meet HQT goals: public reporting, 5-10 percent of Title I funds required to be used for professional development or testing to get teachers highly qualified and paraprofessionals qualified, and parent notification letter.

South Carolina's plan indicates how the state will monitor LEA compliance with their HQT plans. South Carolina's Title II, Part A grant application requires districts to explain their plan - grant applications or allocations of funds are not approved until plans are submitted. In addition, plans are carefully reviewed to ensure that LEAs' budgeted activities include resources and services to help teachers become highly qualified. The reviewers indicated they would like more information on how the state will monitor the LEAs, including the state's capacity to monitor and how quality will be assured. The reviewers also require South Carolina to include more evidence on how it will monitor whether or not each LEA and school attains 100 percent HQT. The plan states that data will be collected during the first semester of 2007-2007 and used to determine monitoring and technical assistance activities and that the SEA will ensure that the LEAs have plans for getting all non-highly qualified teachers to become highly qualified. The plan specifically describes how the SEA will monitor the percentage of teachers who are receiving high quality professional development to enable them to become highly qualified. Schools that do not make AYP have an external review team that reviews the school and makes recommendations, which the SEA supports. Districts not making progress towards HQT will be prioritized for monitoring visits.

South Dakota's revised plan indicates how the state will monitor LEA compliance and hold LEAs accountable for successful implementation of their highly qualified teacher plans through the state's online database, data interfaces, and required reporting. The plan describes clearly how the state will provide technical assistance to all LEAs acknowledging the fact that the AYP status of LEAs and schools may change. The plan indicated that LEAs and schools not making AYP will receive the technical assistance needed to attain the goal of 100 percent highly qualified teachers. The plan describes how the state will monitor whether LEAs attain the 100 percent goals in the percentage of highly qualified teachers and the percentage of teachers who receive high-quality professional development. Districts will be required to give justification for not meeting the HQT goal by the end of the year. South Dakota will analyze the districts' consolidated local applications, particularly the Title II, Part A component, to ensure that professional development activities are aligned with the LEA Plan for HQTs. South Dakota will continue to monitor each LEA's "good faith effort." Furthermore, the type and extent of technical assistance and state involvement will depend upon the assessment of LEA's effort and resulting progress toward meeting highly qualified teacher and AYP goals.

Requirement 5: The revised plan must explain how and when the SEA will complete the HOUSSE process for teachers not new to the profession who were hired prior to the end of the 2005-06 school year, and how the SEA will discontinue the use of HOUSSE procedures for teachers hired after the end of the 2005-06 school year.

Kansas' revised plan describes the steps the state has already taken to discontinue HOUSSE as well as a timeline and description of how HOUSSE will be removed as an option (including exceptions for teachers with proof of veteran status and teachers still completing an already approved plan of study). Kansas explains contextual factors/concerns specific to Kansas that impact the use and discontinuation of HOUSSE and cites examples for how the state might

address those issues. For example, HOUSSE will be continued with special education teachers because data collection on these teachers was delayed, most special education teachers are veteran teachers, the turnover rate among special education teachers is high, and Kansas has not found an acceptable multi-subject test. Kansas' licensure requirements are more stringent than NCLB requires and create barriers for teachers. As a result, the state is looking for ways to help teachers add endorsements to their licenses, including state approved content test and on-line programs. Kansas is concerned with a separate elementary and middle-level licensure structure because their data predict a future shortage in middle school teachers; they are examining data and teacher preparation regulations in an effort to head off this shortage.

Louisiana's plan outlines current HOUSSE content requirements and explains how it will complete the HOUSSE process using its statewide data systems. Louisiana details a timeline for the discontinuation of HOUSSE and states that all teachers hired after the end of the 2005-2006 school year will need to meet the NCLB requirements for new teachers.

Maryland's plan describes the HOUSSE system that they have used for the past two years and highlights specific contextual factors that have impacted its use. Maryland outlines its timeline for the discontinuation of HOUSSE but allows exceptions for special education teachers and amended licensure requirements.

New Jersey provides clear guidance describing situations when veteran teachers may no longer demonstrate subject matter competence via HOUSSE and explains how the SEA plans to phase out its use.

New Mexico indicates that technical assistance will be provided to districts to assist them in completing the HOUSSE process for all veteran teachers who were hired before the end of the 2005-06 school year. New Mexico anticipates amending its state code pending final instructions from the U.S. Department of Education, but the reviewers indicate that a greater elaboration on how the state will proceed in this area is needed in New Mexico's plan.

Nevada's plan for completing HOUSSE allows flexibility for multi-subject secondary teachers in secondary schools as well as multi-subject special education teachers and those teachers who had previously completed a HOUSSE process but are changing teaching assignments. Additionally, the reviewers note that, "the reciprocity policy for HOUSSE that Nevada has adopted seems very logical and appropriate for a state that is experiencing rapid growth."

Ohio's plan includes a timeline for the discontinuation of the HOUSSE process for veteran teachers. Ohio has not implemented the rural school flexibility, but will continue to allow special education teachers to use the HOUSSE option.

South Carolina's plan indicates the specific conditions under which the HOUSSE process can be used for veteran teachers hired before the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The plan also explains how South Carolina will discontinue the HOUSSE process.

South Dakota's plan indicates that by the end of the 2006-2007 school year, the HOUSSE process for all veteran teachers hired before the end of the 2005-2006 school year will be completed, with the exception of those teachers who are currently using the HOUSSE process. Those teachers will be allowed to continue the process through the end of the 2006-2007 school year. After the end of the 2006-2007 school year, new subject areas must be validated by a Praxis II content exam. The reviewers had specific comments regarding South Dakota's plan for requirement five, "In relating the state's limited need for HOUSSE, the plan indicates that all core

academic subject teachers who receive initial certification by the state and those that add content endorsements to existing certificates are required to take the appropriate Praxis II test. (It is noted that teachers who become certified in a content area through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and teachers who obtain an advanced degree in a content area are not required to take a Praxis II test.) This discussion seems to indicate that the state will not allow any use of the HOUSSE after the end of the 2006-2007 school year. It is admirable that the state has set a very high standard for demonstrating content knowledge. It should be noted, however, that the use of HOUSSE for certain multi-subject special education teachers who are new to the profession is allowable under IDEA 2004.”

Requirement 6: The revised plan must include a copy of the State’s written “equity plan” for ensuring that poor or minority children are not taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than are other children.

Kansas’ plan presents school- and classroom-level data indicating inequities in high-poverty schools. The plan outlines five steps to improve equity: dissemination of information to districts, data collection/analysis, communication with identified districts, Teacher Quality Plan modifications, and monitoring the equitable distribution of HQTs through annual review of data and the Local Consolidated Plan monitoring process. Kansas’ plan includes numerous strategies for increasing equitable distribution of HQTs, and although no research of effectiveness is described, a reviewer notes that “LEAs should be able to implement one or more of the strategies over time to diminish or eliminate gross inequities.” Kansas’ strategies for meeting requirement six include:

- Increasing the supply of highly qualified teachers through scholarships and targeting teacher preparation programs for high-need schools;
- Redistributing existing teachers through incentives;
- Improving the knowledge, skills, and training of teachers already working high-need schools through mentoring, coaching and professional development;
- Improving working conditions that cause teachers to avoid or leave high-need schools by improving safety, working conditions, and discipline; reallocating resources; and developing policies to attract effective principals and teachers;
- Reviewing building level data regarding the percentage of highly qualified teachers in buildings and AYP status;
- Communicating with LEAs having higher numbers of inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers in higher poverty schools;
- Requiring LEAs to modify their LEA HQT plans to address inequity issues; and
- Monitoring equitable distribution through reports and on-site monitoring.

Louisiana’s plan notes the challenges Louisiana faces as a state with very large populations of poor and minority children. They list two overarching strategies and include data measures and reporting processes for those strategies. The first strategy is to continuously monitor through data collection and analyses that poor and minority students are taught with equal proportion of HQTs in relation to other students, and the second strategy is to increase the percentage of core academic subjects taught by HQTs to 100 percent. The plan then describes seven sub-strategies (which are seven out of the eight included in Council of Chief State School Officers’ (CCSSO) Template) to achieve these goals: (1) data and reporting systems, (2) teacher preparation, (3) out-of-field teaching, (4) recruitment and retention of experienced teachers, (5) professional development, (6) working conditions, and (7) policy coherence.

Maryland’s plan for meeting requirement six highlights their use of the Template for State Teacher Equity Plan created by CCSSO which involves considering the following 8 elements: (1)

data and reporting systems, (2) teacher preparation, (3) out-of-field teaching, (4) recruitment and retention of experienced teachers, (5) professional development, (6) specialized knowledge and skills, (7) working conditions, and (8) policy coherence. For each of these eight criteria, Maryland's plan lists an inventory of current policies and programs, specific strategies the state will adopt, and specific steps to implement those strategies. Information about the implementation steps includes the activities required, the agencies and/or people responsible for carrying out the activities, the resources required for carrying out the activities, and a timeline for completing the activities.

New Jersey is commended by the reviewers for the numerous strategies that the SEA has developed and implemented to recruit, develop, and retain teachers in high-need schools and districts. Analyses presented earlier in the report identified inequities in teacher distribution by poverty, grade level, subject, and district, including the 31 high-need Abbott districts and those in which schools are entering Years 3-5 of AYP. In addition, one of the indicators in New Jersey's new school district accountability system addresses district plans to ensure equitable distribution of qualified and experienced teachers in low-performing schools. The report notes that inequities in the distribution of inexperienced teachers will be examined in the near future. The plan indicates that some of the initiatives described in New Jersey's equity plan are currently being evaluated, but does not discuss the measures that the state will use to determine whether other strategies are succeeding and leading to a more equitable distribution of teachers. To do this, the reviewers state that New Jersey will need to identify the measures that it will use to evaluate and publicly report progress.

New Mexico partially meets the sixth requirement. They acknowledge that they are still in the process of developing their equity plan. New Mexico has many pieces in place to move forward in: the inclusion of diverse stakeholders in the plan's development, the Title II monitoring tool, the 3-tiered teacher licensure system, and nearly completed Student Teacher Accountability Reporting System (STARS). Therefore, New Mexico's equity plan has not yet been developed in full. The reviewers state that the strategies presented in the revised state plan need to be clearly tied to the inequities in teacher assignment.

Nevada: The reviewers indicate that element 4.1 of Nevada's equity plan, which outlines providing a financial incentive of a one-fifth retirement credit for teachers who serve "in need of improvement" or "at risk" schools, and element 4.8, allowing high-need schools first pick of teachers, are noteworthy.

Ohio includes a written equity plan, including a discussion of the research on high quality teachers and Ohio's focus on accountability and teacher quality; data on inequities in teacher assignment by district and school level using quantitative and case study data; strategies for addressing inequities, evidence for the probable success of these strategies, and how the SEA will continue to monitor this issue. The equity plan has 2 key strategies: to increase the percentage of highly qualified teachers in Ohio to 100 percent, and to continuously monitor the distribution patterns of Ohio's teachers to ensure that poor and minority students are not being taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, and out-of-field teachers. The state also outlines 68 sub-strategies (targeted for high-need schools and aligned with Ohio's long-term strategic education goals and policy environment), organized around 9 supportive elements (again, closely aligned to those in the CCSSO Template): Data and reporting systems, teacher preparation, out-of-field teaching, recruitment and retention of experienced teachers, professional development, specialized knowledge and skills, working conditions, new compensation systems, and policy coherence. The reviewers commend Ohio for its equity plan's focus on the distribution of effective teachers. This is found on page 14 of the equity plan.

South Carolina's revised plan includes a written equity plan, and its key elements include implementation of the strategies outlined in the South Carolina Education Accountability Act of 1998. These strategies focus on eliminating the achievement gap and targeting resources to low-performing schools which typically have percentages of poor or minority children greater than the state average. The plan delineates the following strategies to address teacher inequity:

- Offer financial incentives to encourage teachers to work in high-need schools;
- Pay for performance;
- Require and fund mentoring and induction programs to give teachers the support that they need to succeed and remain in challenging schools;
- Support the development of high-quality alternative route programs to create a pool of teachers specifically for high-need schools;
- Rehire retired teachers;
- Improve administrative support and leadership; and
- Provide intensive professional development in core academic content to teachers currently working in high-need schools.

The plan provides bibliographical citations as evidence for the probable success of the strategies above.

South Dakota's revised plan includes a comprehensive equity plan that is based on extensive data analyses. In the plan, multiple factors representing underlying causes of inequitable teacher distribution and factors impacting the potential success of the strategies are presented and addressed. The plan includes immediate and long-range strategies; additionally measures of success are delineated. South Dakota's equity plan is based on the eight elements of the CCSSO Template, and each element is analyzed by inventory of what is in place, strategies and implementation to support the plan, and methods for measuring success. The reviewers comment that the equity plan demonstrates a thorough, measured, and thoughtful approach to a very complex problem. Further, the plan demonstrates the state's commitment to providing equitable distribution of highly qualified, experienced, and effective teachers.

Conclusion

The nine successful state plans had several unifying elements across the six requirements. First, each plan used data to identify areas in need of improvement, and included specific strategies to address those areas that were based on data. Most often strategies were targeted to meet the needs of high poverty and high minority districts, schools, and students as opposed to being directed at broadly improving teacher quality across the state. Additionally, successful plans tended to build in measurable objectives that allowed for accountability and evaluation of the plan's effectiveness. For example, most plans indicated that the strategies included benchmarks, specific timeliness, or other mean of monitoring progress at regular intervals (e.g., through an online database, onsite monitoring, or a combination of the two). Overall, these successful plans were based on data and used specific, measurable strategies to meet highly qualified teacher requirements.

Resources: Links to the Nine Successful State Plans for HQTs

Kansas: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/ks.doc>

Louisiana: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/la.doc>

Maryland: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/md.doc>

New Jersey: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/nj.doc>

New Mexico: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/nm.pdf>

Nevada: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/nv.doc>

Ohio: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/oh.doc>

Equity Plan: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/ohdep.doc>

South Carolina: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/sc.doc>

South Dakota: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/sd.doc>

Equity Plan: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/teacherqual/hqtplans/sdep.doc>