



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

April 5, 2016

Dear LEA Leader,

I am writing to inform you of a change to the District of Columbia's personnel qualifications requirements, as a result of the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), that impact requirements for the 2016-17 school year.

As you are likely aware, the ESSA removed the requirement in section 1119 of the ESEA, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), that all teachers of core academic subjects in the State must be "highly qualified."

The ESSA also amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by removing the definition of "highly qualified" in IDEA section 602(10) and the requirement in IDEA section 612(a)(14)(C) that special education teachers be "highly qualified" by the deadline established in section 1119(a)(2) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB.

Accordingly, during the 2016-17 school year, States are not required to ensure that special education teachers are "highly qualified" as defined in the ESEA prior to the enactment of the ESSA. However, the ESSA also amended IDEA section 612(a)(14)(C) by incorporating the requirement previously in IDEA section 602(10)(B) that a person employed as a special education teacher in elementary school, middle school, or secondary school has:

- 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 holds a license to teach in the State as a special education teacher;
- has not had special education certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis; and
- holds at least a bachelor's degree.

With respect to any teacher teaching in a public charter school in the District, because of the requirements set forth in the District's public charter school law, licensure and certification requirements do not apply. However, **the requirement for special education teachers to hold at least a bachelor's degree remains in effect.**

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr. Orman Feres, Manager, Educator Quality and Effectiveness, at Orman.feres@dc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Maisterra', written over a light blue rectangular background.

Amy Maisterra, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent
Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Specialized Education
Office of the State Superintendent of Education