CHARTER SCHOOL -- *HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHER* REQUIREMENTS

NCLB's Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements

All public school teachers with primary responsibility for direct instruction in one or more of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) core content areas are required to demonstrate that they satisfy the definition of a *Highly Qualified Teacher* (HQT). This requirement includes:

- Elementary level (grades K-6) teachers who teach all subjects to a particular grade;
- Middle- and secondary-level (grades 7-12) core content area instructors;
- Special education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas;
- English as a second language (ESL) teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas; and
- Alternative education teachers who provide direct instruction in one or more core content areas.

In Pennsylvania, the NCLB core content areas include English, Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Sciences, Foreign Languages, Music and Art, and Social Studies (History, Economics, Geography, and Civics and Government).

Pennsylvania's Definition of *Highly Qualified Teacher*

To satisfy the definition of a *Highly Qualified Teacher*, Pennsylvania public school teachers must:

1) Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
2) Hold a valid Pennsylvania teaching certificate (i.e., Instructional I, Instructional II or Intern certificate but not an emergency permit); **and**
3) Demonstrate subject matter competency for the core content area they teach.

Flexibility for Charter School Teachers

All Pennsylvania charter schools must meet the requirements of Pennsylvania's charter school law, including the requirement that 75% of the charter school's professional staff hold appropriate state certification.

Additionally, Pennsylvania charter schools must meet the federal law's *Highly Qualified Teacher* requirements. Under NCLB, Charter school teachers must hold at least a bachelor's degree and must demonstrate competence in the core content areas in which they teach. NCLB further provides that charter school teachers must meet the certification requirements established in the State's public charter school law, which may differ from the requirements for full State certification.

In Pennsylvania, 75% of professional staff in a charter school must be certified and 25% can be non-certified. In order to be highly qualified, all charter school teachers of core content subjects at all grade levels, whether or not they hold state certification, **must:**

1) hold at least a bachelor's degree and

2) demonstrate subject matter competence in each core content area and grade level at which they teach.

Methods to Demonstrate Subject Matter Competency

1. **PRAXIS** -- All Pennsylvania teachers may demonstrate subject matter competency through having passed the appropriate **PRAXIS content area test** in the subject area of their teaching assignment.

2. **Academic Major/ Graduate Degree** -- Middle and Secondary level teachers may also demonstrate competency by having completed a **content area major or a graduate degree** in the subject area of their teaching assignment.

3. **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards** --Teachers with 3 or more years teaching experience may demonstrate subject matter competency through having attained **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification** in the core content area of their teaching assignment.

4. **HOUSSE** -- Experienced teachers (i.e., one or more years of teaching experience) may demonstrate subject matter competency through completing Pennsylvania's **HOUSSE** programs. These programs are Pennsylvania's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) pursuant to NCLB (Section 9101(23)(C)). The following Pennsylvania HOUSSE programs permit certain experienced teachers of core content areas to demonstrate competency and obtain Highly Qualified status:
   - **Bridge Certification Program** (NOW CLOSED FOR NEW PARTICIPANTS);
   - **State-level HOUSSE** (ONLY applicable to PA Elementary Education certified teachers who received their certification before 1988 when PA implemented teacher testing requirements)
   - **HOUSSE HQT Designation** (100 point matrix)

HQT Documentation Required From Charter Schools And Charter School Teachers

1. **Documentation of Bachelor's Degree**
   - Official transcript from accredited college/university

2. Documentation Options for Demonstrating Subject Matter Competency

PRAXIS – Official Test Results from ETS – 2 options:

- Electronic Report direct from ETS
- Official paper copy presented by educator in sealed ETS envelope

Academic Major/ Graduate Degree -- Official transcript from accredited college/university

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards – Copy of valid NBPTS certificate.

HOUSSE –

Bridge Certification Program (Verification on PDE TCS system)

HOUSSE HQT Designation (100 point matrix)
Completed matrix signed by charter school teacher and verified by charter school CEO.

State-level HOUSSE (ONLY applicable to PA Elementary Education certified teachers who received their certification before 1988 when PA implemented teacher testing requirements – verification on PDE TCS system)