

Overview of the Multidisciplinary Portfolio for Secondary Special Education Teachers

(Noted attachments are available at www.mea.org/esea "Clarification for Meeting Highly Qualified Requirements for Special Education Teachers")

Both the ESEA/NCLB and IDEA allow the state to set High Objective Uniform State Standards of Evaluation (HOUSSE) options as a process by which veteran teachers can meet the highly qualified requirement. HOUSSE Option #3 allows for the development and submission of a content area portfolio as a means of demonstrating competence. To structure this process, "Michigan Content Area Portfolio Guidelines" were developed by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education.

In summary, a portfolio developed to comply with these guidelines is the purposeful collection/documentation of experiences, activities, events and opportunities that support professional learning and demonstrate competence in one or more of the core academic areas specified in ESEA/NCLB.

The portfolio process includes four structural/functional categories:

- Teaching Experience;
- College Level Course Work;
- Content Specific Professional Development Activities; and
- Service to the Profession in the Content Area.

These components/areas form the frame within which subject area competence must be demonstrated.

The secondary special education teacher must demonstrate competence in each of these four areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Competence in each of the areas may be demonstrated in different ways (within these guidelines). Each experience, activity or event included in the portfolio must be documented, and; the required report form must be used, where applicable.

Following are the four components/categories in which competence must be demonstrated by secondary special education teachers who select the multidisciplinary portfolio to meet the highly qualified requirement. The teacher must have documentation of activity in each of the following categories:

Teaching Experience - See Attachment B

The teacher must have up to of five years of successful teaching experience in at least one of the four appropriate core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. Teaching experience must be documented by a valid Michigan teaching certificate and an experience report.

College Level Course Work - See Attachment C

The teacher must have successfully completed a minimum of 30 semester hours with at least 6 semester hours in **each** of the core academic areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. These 30 semester hours must include at least 3 semester hours in the core academic area of reading, which is required for a Michigan secondary level teaching certificate. All course work may have been completed anytime during the teacher's collegiate preparation program. Successful completion of course work must be submitted on the required report form and documented by official transcript.

Content Specific Professional Development Activities - See Attachment D

As defined by ESEA/NCLB, the term professional development includes activities that:

- Improve and increase teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach and enable them to become highly qualified;
- Are an integral part of broad school-wide and district-wide educational improvement plans;
- Give teachers and other members of the educational team knowledge and skills to enable students to meet and achieve state academic standards; and
- Involve many other experiences, activities and opportunities that are "not one-day or short-term workshops or conferences."

With respect to this definition, the teacher must list at least **five** professional development experiences in which he/she has participated within the last five years from June 30, 2006 that support teaching and learning in the core academic areas. This might include participation:

- To develop, select or evaluate content standards;
- To align local content standards with state standards;
- To develop, validate or evaluate content assessments;
- At local, regional or state professional development seminars/workshops;
- In action research study groups;
- or
- In the completion of the portfolio assessment for National Board Certification.

In keeping with the State Board approved guidelines for a content area portfolio, this content specific professional development activities section of the multidisciplinary portfolio must also include a reflection statement on how the combination of professional activities has improved/impacted your teaching practice/classroom instructional strategies. See Attachment D-1.

(Attachment A provides a list of additional optional activities that may be used for professional development.)

Some activities classified as "professional development" may also be classified as "service to the profession in the content area" and may be interchanged to demonstrate competence for either component. Note: A given activity may not be used for both "professional development" and "service to the content area."

Service to the Profession in the Content Area - See Attachment E

The sharing of content knowledge and pedagogical skill, and the application of principles and practices acquired by experience to the teaching and learning for the continuous improvement of schools is a critical means by which the teaching profession is sustained. For this reason, "Service to the Profession in the Content Area" is one of the four structural/functional categories of the multidisciplinary portfolio process.

Service to the Profession within the last five years from June 30, 2006, must relate to the core academic areas. Experience and opportunities that may be used to demonstrate competence in this category may include, but is not limited to:

- A department chair or team leader;
- A mentor teacher;
- A cooperating teacher for student teacher;
- An officer in a regional, state, or national professional content organization;
- A content instructor at an institution of higher education;
- A recognized content specialist at the district level;
- A National Board assessor;
- A member of a district/building school improvement team;
- An author/publisher of professional literature related to core academic areas;
- A participant in the development, selection, validation, or evaluation of standard in any of the cored academic areas;
- A participant in the development, pilot, evaluation of curriculum, instructional or assessment tools/procedures, etc., in any of the core academic areas; and
- A participant in the development/validation of state/national assessments.