

**Local School System Request
Teacher Quality Waiver in Title I Schools – School Year 2003-2004
Section 1119(a)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the
No Child Left Behind Act (P.L. 107-110)**

**Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999 (PL 106-25)
Maryland State Department of Education**

A. Certification

Local School System: Baltimore County Public Schools

Superintendent/Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Joe A. Hairston

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this waiver request is correct and complete. We have developed this Ed-Flex waiver request in consultation with administrators, teachers, parents, and community members, where applicable. We will monitor the recruitment activities of each Title I school for which a Teacher Quality Waiver is requested to ensure that by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year all newly hired teachers in each Title I school(s) are highly qualified.

Superintendent's/Chief Executive Officer's Signature

Date Signed

B. Local School System Information

Local School System Contact Person:

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Public comments regarding the waiver are invited. Please forward all such comments to the fax number or e-mail address above prior to the October 9, 2003 Board of Education meeting.

Baltimore County Public Schools – Title I Waiver Plan

October 9, 2003

1. Discuss how the school system is monitoring each Title I school to ensure that all “new hires” meet the highly qualified requirements under *No Child Left Behind*?

Introduction:

Prior to hiring teacher candidates, personnel officers in the Office of Personnel who are responsible for the recruiting of candidates, create application files containing transcripts, resumes, references, testing and certification. The personnel officer in the Office of Certification establishes a database of highly qualified, as well as, non-highly qualified candidates. It is from this list of highly qualified applicants that personnel officers refer candidates to the principals of Title I schools.

- a) The Department of Human Resources is committed to fulfilling the Superintendent’s directives that all Title I schools be staffed with highly qualified teachers.
- b) During the summer the Office of Certification, Department of Human Resources previews the file of each new hire in order to determine each new hire’s status with respect to being “highly qualified”. Any new teacher who is identified as not “highly qualified” is presented with a plan to achieve “highly qualified” status. An informational letter is given to each explaining the requirements that must be met and the time frame for meeting them. During the mandatory New Hire Orientation meetings held during the summer months, new hires have an opportunity to ask questions of clarification regarding the review of their credentials that has been completed. Copies of the informational letters are sent to the new hires’ administrators.
- c) The Office of Certification maintains a spreadsheet that summarizes the needs of each “non-highly qualified” teacher and monitors each teacher’s progress toward completing the requirements.
- d) During the fall months the Office of Certification is in close contact with the new hires who need to take qualifying tests. The office provides assistance with registration and, if appropriate, referral to the Praxis I Preparatory Course that we offer. A record of all teachers who are participating in the prep course offered through a partnership with Towson University is maintained, and teachers who provide qualifying scores by January 31, 2004 will have professional certificates with a January validity date requested.
- e) Through grant funds, the Office of Certification has purchased 100 certificates for the Prep2Teach program, an individual online Praxis I Test Preparation Course. This is a self-paced computer program designed to offer practice to the teacher in preparation for the Praxis I tests. The individuals may reuse the certificate and participate in the practice sessions as many times as they wish.

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- f) Throughout the year, the Office of Certification conducts “school visits” in order for teachers to have an individual appointment with the Personnel Officer for Certification to review the plan in place, chart progress, and make any needed adjustments.
- g) The Office of Certification publishes a booklet, *Questions about Certification*, that contains information regarding certification regulations. This booklet is distributed to each new employee at the New Hire Orientation meetings and is distributed to each professional staff member in the school system at their school location.

2. Discuss ways the school system has attempted to meet the highly qualified requirements under No Child Left Behind, e.g., redeploying/transferring highly qualified teachers from non-Title I Schools, recruitment fairs, signing bonuses, etc.

- a) All Title I Schools have been identified as high priority schools to which “highly qualified” candidates, if available, have been referred by the Office of Personnel. It is the commitment of the Department of Human Resources to first place highly qualified teachers in our Title I schools.
- b) All student teachers are invited to a reception arranged by the Department of Human Resources at which they are introduced to curriculum and human resources personnel. They are given applications and information about employment in the Baltimore County Public Schools. Almost all are “highly qualified” and as such are encouraged to seek employment in Baltimore County, particularly in our Title I schools.
- c) The Department of Human Resources coordinates a large Exposition/Job Fair and invites prospective education graduates from twelve states. Staff members and administrators from all schools prepare a display booth from which they greet candidates and discuss the merits and needs of their school. More than one hundred candidates are interviewed that evening. More than a thousand attend the event.
- d) A new Resident Teacher Certificate program was established through an MSDE grant for secondary special education teachers.
- e) Transfer limitations are placed on schools in an effort, by the Department of Human Resources, to transfer more experienced teachers into schools with a disproportionate number of novice teachers.
- f) Rehired retired teachers are encouraged by the Department of Human Resources, Office of Personnel to teach in Title I and priority schools by offering full experience steps in salary in those schools.
- g) Incentives are offered:
 - The State signing bonus for qualifying candidates.
 - A \$1,000 interest free loan.
 - The credit union partners with us to offer an additional interest free loan.

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3. Explain why the school system's efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers in Title I schools have not been sufficient.

- a) Many "out-of-state" candidates are hired because of the limited number of teachers (2,412) produced in Maryland schools. These teachers are excellent candidates who have prepared for their state's requirements. These requirements are often different from Maryland's.
- b) Late vacancies at a time when the applicant pool is limited results in a reduced availability of highly qualified teachers.
- c) The educational job market is extremely competitive; in critical need areas we are often forced to make staffing decisions based upon finding the best candidate who is closest to professional certification for the assignment that is being filled.
- d) The starting salary for teachers in Baltimore County Public Schools ranks fifteenth in comparison to the other 23 local education agencies in the state.
- e) New employees who need tests to be eligible for highly qualified status are disadvantaged because the tests are offered late in the summer and the results are not received until well after the beginning of school.

4. Describe the steps the school system will take to ensure that student achievement will not be negatively impacted in the Title I schools for which this waiver is requested.

- a) Mentors will be assigned to schools by the Office of Professional Development based upon the number of new teachers in each Title I school.
- b) Most of the current non-highly qualified teachers in the Title I schools are outstanding candidates awaiting the results of tests, an out-of-state teaching certificate, or the completion of limited coursework. They are selected based upon a credential review, confidential references, a screening interview, and an on-site interview with the principal of the school. Our expectations for their positive impact on student achievement are very high.
- c) The Office of Professional Development and the Office of Certification will continue to work closely together to offer supportive coursework for new teachers.
- d) We will assign resource teachers to the Title I schools. One of the primary responsibilities of the resource teachers is to provide support for new teachers.
- e) There are appraisal teams within the schools; the teams' responsibilities are to help the new teachers acquire and refine their teaching skills to promote a high level of student achievement.
- f) At the time of request by the rehired retired teachers to be rehired by the school system, applicants are informed by the Director of Personnel that they are eligible for full experience salary step if rehired for Title I and priority schools. For positions in other schools salary experience credit will be a maximum of step 13.

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We will continue to offer full experience steps in salary to the rehired retired teachers who choose to teach in Title I and priority schools.

- 5. Discuss steps the school system will take during the 2003-2004 school year to ensure that by the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year *all newly hired teachers in all Title I schools are highly qualified.***
- a) As long as vacancies exist in Title I schools and highly qualified candidates exist in the applicant pool, the vacancy needs of Title I schools will be addressed first.
 - b) The Department of Human Resources will develop a policy to provide the mechanism by which highly qualified teachers will be transferred allowing for the redistribution of highly qualified teachers from non-Title I schools to our priority schools.
 - c) The Department of Human Resources will work with the Executive Directors of Schools and Principals to recommend to the Superintendent transfers and assignments of highly qualified teachers to schools with the greatest needs.
 - d) The Department of Human Resources will review current human resources procedures to provide the authority to place newly hired highly qualified teachers in Title I and priority schools first based on the needs of a particular school.
 - e) We believe that the employment of a Recruitment Supervisor will allow the Department of Human Resources to develop a program of teacher recruitment that will build a candidate pool from which we will draw to fill our vacancies in our Title I schools.
 - f) The Recruitment Supervisor will study recruitment data to develop data-driven decisions regarding the focus of our recruitment resources.
 - g) During the recruitment season for the 2004-2005 school year, the Department of Human Resources will take Title I principals on recruiting trips. This will provide the principals with an opportunity to meet highly qualified candidates and recruit them for their schools.
 - h) The Department of Human Resources will request additional resources from April, 2004 through August, 2004 in an attempt to get early certification estimates and improve employment decisions in Title I and all other schools.
 - i) The Department of Human Resources will support initiatives to improve teacher salaries and close the salary gap between our school system and our competitive neighbors.