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April 22, 2008

TO: District HR Dept.
FROM: Connie J. Pollard, Director, PTSB
RE: Requests for Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Letters

We are receiving numerous requests from individual teachers and districts for copies of HQT letters. Please understand that HQT letters were sent to every teacher upon verification of highly qualified teacher status via the HOUSSE rubric, documentation of passing an approved test, or upon issuance of an initial standard teaching certificate. In Spring 2006, several districts received packets of HQT letters for elementary teachers who met the HOUSSE rubric based on paper reviews completed in this office. Unfortunately, it appears that several of these letters were misplaced, and districts and individuals are now asking for replacement copies.

The Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB) wants to make it clear that the HQT letters were sent out as a courtesy to inform teachers and districts that these individuals had met HQT requirements. However, the letter is neither necessary nor required to prove HQT status. Please understand that if a teacher was identified as HQ based on data from the 602 report from the previous year and their assignment has not changed—then the 602 report stands as verification that they are HQ and, again, no letter from PTSB is needed. If a teacher was identified as not HQ, you are notified by WDE and a teacher and district plan must be developed; the district plan must be submitted to WDE. The form templates for those plans are located at: http://www.k12.wy.us/FP/highly_qualified.asp.

Additionally, a memo sent by Dr. Jim McBride, dated August 2007, states that “a certified teacher who is not yet highly qualified may teach in his/her subject area(s) but is expected to develop and implement, with the collaborative support of his/her principal, a plan for becoming highly qualified.”
http://www.k12.wy.us/A/supt_memos/2007_143.pdf

I certainly appreciate districts’ commitment to gathering HQT information on each of their teachers and keeping it in one location. To that end, PTSB is working on providing online access to information regarding teacher HQ status, endorsement areas, certificate expiration dates, etc. Individual educators and district personnel will be able to log on to the PTSB website and verify any of this information themselves. We anticipate that this feature will be available this summer. PTSB is asking for your patience until that time. If a district or individual still feels that they need another copy of their HQ letter, a fee of \$20.00 per letter will be required prior to a letter being sent.

Finally, please remember that as of June 2007 new certification requirements were adopted to ensure that any individual who is issued an initial standard five year certificate is HQ in the area(s) noted on his or her standard certificate. For this reason, no HQ letter is necessary. During this transition, PTSB continued to issue some HQ letters; however, this will no longer be the case. Any person receiving an initial five year standard certificate will not be sent a HQ letter – their certificate suffices since HQ and certification are aligned.

Thank you so much for your patience.

Sincerely,

Connie J. Pollard