



New Charter Credentialing Guidance

The California Department of Education (CDE) has just released updated guidance which clarifies that charter schools have the legal authority to define their "core" teachers for credentialing purposes rather than being subject to the federal definition of core subjects that applies to other public schools.

CharterVoice, the Charter Schools Development Center (CSDC), and other charter school groups have been working diligently with CDE and state board of education staff to underscore and clarify the specific NCLB provisions governing charter school core teacher credentialing.

While non-charter public schools are governed by a federal definition of core subjects that dictate which teachers must hold a credential, federal law states that charter schools are subject to the state charter laws regarding credentialing. According to California's charter laws, the definition of "core" for charter schools' credentialing purposes is established in the school's charter and by agreement with the agency that granted the charter school.

The guidance further clarifies that while charter schools are exempt from the federal definition of "core" for credentialing purposes, they are still subject to this definition for the other NCLB mandated teacher qualifications. Thus, while teachers defined in their charters as non-core would not need a teacher credential, they would still need to hold a bachelor's degree and demonstrate subject area competence if teaching in subjects deemed "core" pursuant to the federal definition.

This guidance provides welcome news for charter schools whose granting agencies have been applying to them the federal definition of core. The federal definition includes an exhaustive list of subjects and leaves little room for innovation or flexibility in teacher hiring. The CDE guidance recognizes that charter schools offering innovative programs are struggling to meet the NCLB requirements. It urges charter-granting agencies to work with their charter schools to find constructive solutions and advises against initiating any disciplinary actions or revocation proceedings against a charter school making a good faith effort on these issues.

To read the complete updated guidance, visit:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nclb/sr/tq/documents/nclbresourceguide.pdf>

CharterVoice and CSDC will continue to keep you updated on credentialing and other key provisions of NCLB affecting charter schools. Feel free to contact us with any questions at CSDC@calstate.edu.