



**Status of Highly Qualified Teachers according to the
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title I Schoolwide Status: Letter to Parents
2024-2025 School Year**

February 10, 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), requires schools that receive federal Title I funding to ensure that all teachers teaching in a program supported with Title I funding hold appropriate state certification and licensure requirements, including any requirements for certification obtained through alternative routes to certification.

Schools are required to notify parents if their children are taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher in a Title I school or program who does not yet meet the definition of “appropriate state certification.”

Specifically, you have the right to receive the following information about each of your child's classroom teachers:

- Whether the teacher meets the state qualifications and licensing criteria for the grades and subjects he or she teaches.
- Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or provisional status because of special circumstances.
- The teacher's college major, whether the teacher has any advanced degrees, and the field of discipline of the certification or degree.
- Whether paraprofessionals provide services to your child and, if so, their qualifications.

Gillingham Charter School is committed to providing quality instruction for all students and does so by employing qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. Additionally, according to the Charter School law, 75% of a charter school's faculty must be fully certified. Please feel free to contact the school if you wish to receive this information or if you have any questions.

The law states that all teachers who teach in core content areas must meet a specific, legal definition of “highly qualified” in order to teach in schools that receive Title I funding in order to supplement the

academic instruction. The legal definition of a “highly qualified teacher” has three parts. It states that teachers must have the following:

1. A four-year college degree
2. A standard teaching certificate
3. Proof of their knowledge in the subjects they teach

At this time, all of our teachers meet the requirements of #1 & #3, but the following are not PA teacher certified in all of their content areas:

- **Angie Fowler (Spanish Teacher):** Mrs. Fowler received her bachelor's degree in Bilingual Preschool Education from the Universidad Hispanoamerica in San José, Costa Rica. She taught students ages one year old to eight years old for six years in Costa Rica.
- **Rachael Drobnick-Espinosa (Art Teacher):** Mrs. Espinosa received her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Kutztown University. She has received her emergency certification from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is completing her Master's degree in Education program.
- **Joshua Gilgoff (Part-time assistant music teacher):** Mr. Gilgoff is a certified special education teacher in the State of New York where he taught for many years with a master's degree in special education. He is a touring musician and is excited to help support Mr. Shaull and our music program. He has an emergency certification from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- **Sylvet Montejo (Special Education teacher):** Mrs. Montego has a PA emergency certification with obligation in Special Education. She has 28 years teaching experience, a teaching certificate and a Master's degree in Special Education.
- **Susan Carlson (Upper School secondary mathematics teacher)** Mrs. Carlson is a Massachusetts certified math educator (grades 5-12) with a Master of Arts in Teaching (Mathematics Education, honors) from Boston University. (PA reciprocity in process.) She has a cum laude bachelor's in mathematics from Marymount College of Fordham University. She has five years of full-time teaching, three years as an adjunct math STEM professor at RACC, and 20+ years of tutoring and part-time teaching experience.
- **Lynn Annis (middle school math and science teacher):** Mrs. Annis received her Bachelor of Science and master's degree in elementary education from Kansas State University. She has PA certifications in K-6 and special education prek-12. Ms. Annis homeschooled her own children from PreK through high school. She was a learning support /resource room teacher, worked as a TSS in behavioral health, and taught science for two years.

As a schoolwide Title I school, all students will benefit from Title I services and resources.

We currently need parents to join our Title I Parent Committee. If you can serve for one hour per month, please contact Carolyn Ranck at cranck@gillingham.school.

Sincerely,


Nicolle Hutchinson

Executive Director
Directory of Education



Carolyn Ranck
Title I Coordinator