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Proposals to improve the Act's requirements concerning highly qualified teachers and the distribution of such teachers:

- A. Include social studies in addition to of history, civics/government, economics and geography as a core content. The reasons are many:
- 1) Confusion of requirements among states; some, like CO, have retained social studies certification while others have interpreted the law strictly. Teachers who move from one state to another are caught in conflicting requirements.
  - 2) Rural schools with just one social studies teacher might have to eliminate courses because that one teacher is not certified in all 4 core content areas
  - 3) Inequity—there are no similar requirements for other content areas, e.g. a science teacher does not have to be certified in biology, chemistry or physics
  - 4) Knowledge of any of the four core disciplines enhances the teaching of all; it is difficult to conceive of a history teacher who does not incorporate aspects of civics, economics or geography into the teaching of history content. A “social studies” requirement allows this to happen during the course of teacher preparation/certification.
- B. A “grandfather” clause that would allow for experience to count.
- 1) Example: a certified math teacher has been teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade US history for 18 years; rather than meet the new requirements, that teacher elects to retire because their acquired expertise through professional development and teaching “does not count.”
  - 2) Districts and states are losing experientially qualified teachers because the law ignores their acquired knowledge and skills.
  - 3) How ironic that there are now alternative pathways for entering the profession based on experience, but not pathways for retaining teachers.
- C. Specific vigilance to assure that highly qualified teachers in the social studies staff middle schools and charter schools.
- 1) Middle school Social Studies: This is an area where many teachers have positions with only a K-8 certification and little preparation in history, government, economics, or geography. Middle schools that would never use a K-8 certified teacher without many math hours to teach math often use a K-8 person with few social studies credits to teach American History and Government, World Geography, etc.
  - 2) Public charter schools: Many teachers were hired by charters on emergency certification and have been able to keep jobs that they would not qualify for today.
- D. Distribution:
- Consideration must be given to assuring that there are highly qualified teachers in EVERY school, but particularly in those in which students are clearly not achieving, by any measure. Currently, monetary rewards are being used to lure HQTs to some underachieving schools, and transfers are being used to rid these schools of "less able teachers." Clearly, these are short-term solutions. More attention must be paid to monitoring teacher performance and to providing the less qualified with professional development designed to improve their

performance. We must also admit that some members of the teaching cadre may need to be dismissed for not taking advantage of Professional Development opportunities or for failure to demonstrate improvement. It is somewhat ironic that we have definitions for HQTs and will hire no one who fails to meet those requirements, but we allow some to continue to teach who cannot "demonstrate" proficiency in ways other than accumulating clock hours. In some cases, we are requiring less of teachers in terms of demonstrating proficiency than we are of students.

It seems that if monetary rewards are the preferred answer for attracting teachers to poorly performing schools, then all districts must have the means of offering those rewards to teachers to lure them to these schools. How can we make that happen in large urban districts and very rural districts, especially when facing an overall teacher shortage?

- E. NCSS believes that NCLB reauthorization should include some standard of **evaluated clinical practice** and **ongoing professional development** in its definition of a "highly qualified teacher." Although establishing this standard and a mechanism for its enforcement will not occur immediately, it is important to take a stand on the **expectation** of these qualifications. Credentials are not enough to guarantee the effectiveness of a classroom teacher.