



Providing leadership, research, and service since 1906

To: Center on Education Policy

Date: November 10, 2006

Re: Proposal for Redefining Highly Qualified Teachers

The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) attempts to address the significant issue of ensuring that all children attending our public schools will be taught by qualified professionals. Although many would argue that the provisions adopted in the 2001 reauthorization to address this issue are insufficient, few would argue against the stated intent. Crafting an effective policy response will be challenging, but we believe that doing so is critical to ensuring a high-quality education for all.

Our proposals for changing the ESEA provisions relating to teacher qualifications are based on a model of an effective school that is structured in a way that maximizes the effects of the knowledge and skills of its administrative and pedagogical professionals on student learning. Though the intent of the teacher provisions of the law was to increase the likelihood that all students would be taught by highly effective teachers, it has been difficult to identify the particular combination of preparation, experience, and other relevant factors necessary for a teacher to be effective, and so the ESEA and our proposals use teacher qualifications as an imperfect indicator of quality.

We envision a school in which administrative and instructional leaders work cooperatively to increase student achievement and foster the professional growth of its educators in a safe, clean, and well-resourced learning and working environment. In this model, all students would be taught by a *qualified* teacher. At such a school, a cadre of teachers deemed *highly qualified* would be guided and supported by the school's administrators but would have the primary responsibility for mentoring less experienced teachers, designing curriculum and assessments, and overseeing professional development. Novice teachers would enter such a school having met the definition of *qualified*, as proposed below. Their professional growth would be supported by the school and include *highly qualified* mentors to guide them through the school's curriculum and assessments and support the development of their classroom management skills and instructional capacity. Novice teachers would complete the school's professional development requirements and would be provided with resources (e.g., compensated time off, tuition and fee reimbursements, awards, greater leadership roles, or salary increases) to pursue additional growth opportunities. As teachers gain experience and demonstrate greater instructional effectiveness, they would move into the ranks of the *highly qualified*. At that point, they would begin to take on the responsibilities of a pedagogical leader at the school.

Although many of the components of this model would be best addressed at the state or local level, the basic framework could be established at the federal level, which would increase equity in the system by eliminating variations in standards for teachers across states and would reduce constraints on teacher mobility. With this in mind, we propose that the following changes to the provisions in the ESEA that relate to teacher qualifications be considered. As a caveat, we undertook the task of developing our proposal using a "skunk works" approach in which we sought to answer the question "If funding were not an issue, how would you craft a federal policy that would foster the development of a qualified teaching force that is well prepared to educate all of our nation's children?"

1. Replace the requirement that all teachers in core academic subjects (English, reading or language arts, math, science, history, civics and government, geography, economics, the arts and foreign language) be *highly qualified* with a requirement that all teachers regardless of content area be *qualified*.
2. Define *qualified* as having earned from an accredited postsecondary institution a bachelor's degree and having completed one year of pedagogical training that combines coursework and co-teaching with a *highly qualified* teacher.

PHONE 812.339.1156·TOLLFREE 800.766.1156·FAX 812.339.0018

Phi Delta Kappa International·408 N. Union Street·P.O. Box 789·Bloomington, IN 47402-0789

- a. The minimum requirements for this one-year teaching practicum will be defined at the national level, would be administered by states and individual school districts, and would be designed and implemented through partnerships between districts and teacher-training entities.
 - b. The distribution of coursework and direct classroom teaching will vary depending on the teacher candidate's preparation. For example, a candidate with a bachelor's degree in education might be required to fulfill an 80 percent classroom co-teaching/ 20 percent coursework distribution, while a candidate with a bachelor's degree and work experience in a discipline other than education might be required to complete a 60 percent classroom co-teaching/40 percent coursework distribution.
 - c. Teacher candidates who have completed a bachelor's degree in education and coordinate their one-year teaching practicum with a postsecondary institution may qualify for a master's degree in education.
 - d. At the successful completion of this year, as verified by the sponsoring school district, a teacher candidate will receive a national teaching license and be deemed *qualified*.
 - e. National licensure should indicate the level of subject-matter mastery and should include at a minimum designations for elementary, middle, and secondary grades and subjects; ESL; special education; and multiple subjects. These designations must be incorporated into the design of the one-year teacher apprenticeships.
 - f. Federal funding will be provided to supplement districts for the cost of paying all teacher candidates a stipend and other costs associated with administering the practicum programs. To the extent that providing more support and preparation for new teachers reduces attrition, these costs will be offset by savings from not having to replace teachers who leave the profession after one or two years.
 - g. In recognition of the need for teachers with multiple-subject certification, particularly in rural schools and in schools meeting the needs of large numbers of English-language learners and special education students, federal block grant funding will be provided to states to establish incentives — e.g., higher salaries, tuition reimbursements, or one-time bonuses — for existing teachers to achieve multiple-subject certification and to attract teachers who have such certification to high-need schools.
3. Require all states to demonstrate that their schools have in place an infrastructure that will support the development of *qualified* teachers toward becoming *highly qualified* instructional leaders, as defined by the state. Such an infrastructure could include a mentoring program, compensated time for teachers to engage in collaborative learning opportunities like lesson study, school- or district-provided professional development, a system of awards and recognitions, incentives to pursue professional growth outside of the school or district, and a system of evaluating growth in teacher efficacy.
 4. Provide federal block grant funding for schools to create and sustain the infrastructure needed to increase the effectiveness of their teachers. This could be a needs-based grant program targeted at schools with disproportionate shares of low-income students, English-language learners, and students performing below grade level.
 5. Require states to demonstrate that there is an equitable distribution of *highly qualified* teachers among the schools in the state.

PHONE 812.339.1156·TOLLFREE 800.766.1156·FAX 812.339.0018

Phi Delta Kappa International·408 N. Union Street·P.O. Box 789·Bloomington, IN 47402-0789