

THE CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY, TEACHERS COLLEGE

NCLB SHOULD CALL FOR HIGHLY EFFECTIVE RATHER THAN MINIMALLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS

Introduction

1. Under current NCLB requirements, most states consider as “highly qualified” teachers with only minimum competency, which is the basic requirement for most state certification systems.

Under alternative certification provisions, teachers in training who have not yet met even the minimal state certification requirements are designated “highly qualified”.

2. These requirements have led to improvement in the availability of minimally qualified teachers, but they do little to ensure that all students will be taught by teachers with the pedagogical skills, expertise, and depth of subject matter knowledge needed to provide meaningful instruction that will lead to proficiency in challenging state standards.
3. By labeling as “highly qualified” teachers who are, in fact, only minimally qualified, the statute misleads parents and the public. This deceptive hyperbole also undermines possibilities for maximizing the availability of teachers with the high qualifications that are truly needed to provide a meaningful educational opportunity to all children, and especially children of color and/of from poverty backgrounds, English language learners, and students with disabilities.
4. A teacher who is effective in providing all children a meaningful educational opportunity is one who has deep subject matter knowledge, thorough knowledge of state academic content standards and proficiency requirements, and an ability to effectively impart to students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs the knowledge and skill required by state standards. (see INTASC standards)

Recommendations for Improvement

1. NCLB should be revised to distinguish three categories of teachers: “qualified teachers,” “provisionally qualified teachers” and “highly qualified teachers.”
 - a) “Qualified teachers” would mean those who fully meet NCLB’s current teacher qualification requirements, plus some evidence of pedagogical skills to meet the needs of a diverse student body. The Department of Education should also enforce vigorously existing requirements for teacher qualification requirements to be aligned with state proficiency standards.
 - b) “Provisionally qualified teachers” would mean teachers in training who meet acceptable alternative certification requirements.

- c) “Highly effective teachers” would mean those who meet the high qualifications set forth above in paragraph 3.
2. NCLB should mandate that *all* teachers at a minimum must be “qualified” or “provisionally qualified”.
 3. NCLB should encourage and provide incentives for states to identify, attract, and retain a maximum number of “highly effective teachers” and ensure that they are equitably distributed to high poverty and high minority schools through such means as:
 - a) Providing adequate salaries for all teachers (with new money, plus re-directing pension funds).
 - b) Ensuring a critical mass of competent, dedicated peers at hard-to-staff schools.
 - c) Provide substantial on-going bonuses for “highly effective teachers” willing to make long-term commitments to teach in hard-to-staff schools.
 - d) Assure adequate resources, reasonable class sizes and appropriate working conditions in all schools.
 - e) Ensure effective school leaders.
 - f) Provide high quality mentoring and professional development.
 - g) Provide opportunities for collaboration and exercise of professional judgment.
 - h) Eliminate rights of senior teachers to transfer in and “bump” qualified junior teachers.
 - i) Re-define tenure to ensure reasonable job security so long as instructional effectiveness is maintained.
 - 4) NCLB should require states to establish procedures for identifying “highly effective teachers” and for reporting to the public on an annual basis the number of “highly effective teachers” in each school and in each school district, disaggregating data based on school demographics to allow comparisons between poor and non-poor and high minority and other schools.
 - 5) The federal government should establish and fund a “federal education manpower act” (see Darling-Hammond and Sykes) to:
 - a) Support research on effective teachers and teachings.
 - b) Boost the supply of highly effective teachers for currently hard-to-staff schools.
 - c) Provide incentive grants to states to pilot innovative methods for hastening the equitable distribution of highly effective teachers.