



Proposed Changes to NCLB's Highly Qualified Teacher Provisions

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- **Provide for a measure of teacher quality that focuses on *outcomes*, rather than inputs.** There is increasing consensus in the research on teacher quality that observable characteristics predict very little in the way of teacher effectiveness. Even the few factors that have a clear correlation with effectiveness (e.g., being in the first 2 years of teaching) account for only a small part of the range in teacher quality. The best way predict how effective a teacher will be in the future is to look at her impact on student achievement today. NCLB, should allow for and encourage that kind of measurement of teacher effectiveness. Obviously such a measure can't apply to teachers entering their first year, but for second year and beyond this should become a key component of measuring teacher quality.
- **Provide incentives and resources for developing the data systems necessary to implement an outcome-based look at teacher effectiveness.** Instituting an outcome-based measure of teacher quality requires comprehensive and integrated data systems at the district and state level. At a minimum, students and teachers must have unique state-wide identifiers in order to track data longitudinally (and so that as students and teachers move within the state, their data are not lost), and these teacher and student data systems must be linked. While many states are moving towards such systems (and in a few cases, have them already in place), on the whole we are far from where we need to be. NCLB should create targeted grants and incentives for developing such systems.
- **Modify the legislative language to allow states to consider teachers who are part of an approved alternative certification program to be highly qualified, according to NCLB.** As it stands, the language of the law requires that all public school teachers have obtained "full State certification as a teacher (including certification obtained through alternative routes to certification" (except where existing charter school laws define requirements differently for teachers in public charters). This language effectively excludes teachers enrolled in approved alternative certification programs that do not officially grant certification until the end of the first or second year. While DOE guidance on NCLB makes it clear that the intent of the law is to include these individuals, the actual language creates a great deal of confusion at the state and local level. Congress should take the opportunity of reauthorization to ensure that the initial intent is codified more clearly. New language could read: "has obtained full State certification (or is obtaining full State certification through an approved alternative certification program)."