



Proposed Changes to NCLB's Teacher Distribution Requirements

Abigail Smith, Teach For America

Shining a light on the distribution of teacher quality is clearly necessary, and the Department must make good on this ideal by ratcheting up their enforcement of the measure. The provision itself would be strengthened through two fundamental improvements:

- Provide for a measure of teacher quality that focuses on *outcomes*, rather than inputs. Clearly this issue is not limited to the distribution question, but it has a significant impact on it. 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 only way to clearly predict how effective a teacher will be in the future is to look at her impact on student achievement today. The teacher distribution provision, like other parts of NCLB, should allow for and encourage that kind of measurement of teacher quality.
- Incorporate a strong suggestion/incentive for states to end the district practice of allocating teaching positions to schools, rather than allocating the dollars. This practice only exacerbates inequities between schools.