



EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSITION TEAM

TEACHER QUALITY

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this economic stimulus is to provide states and districts with the fiscal resources, support, and technical assistance to promote accountability for high student performance on 21st century skills by creating new systems for recruiting, supporting, and conferring professional status of PK-12 teachers.

By increasing the investment for Title II of the No Child Left Behind Act--Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals--federal funding will leverage the teaching elements most directly related to student learning and dramatically increase the number of teachers and paraprofessionals deemed “highly qualified,” provide states and districts the funds to hire these educators, and create entry-level induction programs to firmly establish their teaching careers and target professional development needs.

The proposed plan will:

- Expand the employment opportunities of college graduates, paraprofessionals, and mid-career professionals by reducing the barriers to entering the teaching profession, while simultaneously expanding the teacher candidate pool and particularly in hard-to-staff areas such as science, math, technology, foreign language.
- Create thousands of jobs in a range of fields that provide innovative, performance-focused professional development and support including experts in higher education, assessment technology and IT.
- Provide equity in access to highly qualified teacher to all students and promote high student performance on 21st century skills and graduate students that are college and career ready.
- Assist States in creating a standardized teacher performance-based system, including assessments that are linked to student performance and determines tenured professional status.

Recommended Funding Increase



Teacher Quality State Grants fund the high-quality professional development necessary to teach students to high standards. The program is intended to help states achieve NCLB's goal of having 100% of teachers in core academic subject "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

Funds are distributed via formula grant (65% poverty/35% child population) to states. States also disburse funds to districts by formula (80% poverty/20% child population). State activities include teacher and administrator licensure reforms, developing alternative routes to certification, recruitment and retention activities, teacher testing, and merit pay. Locally, funds can be used for professional development, class size reduction, signing bonuses and other financial incentives, and merit pay.

The FY08 appropriation for Teacher Quality State Grants was \$2.935 billion and the authorized figure was "such sums as may be necessary." And yet, according to a survey by the Center on Education Policy, 44% of states (22) are not yet in compliance with the 100% mandate. ("Implementing the No Child Left Behind Teacher Requirements, August 2007) Moreover, there are glaring shortfalls in the number of highly qualified special education teachers, teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools, and of high school math and science teachers.

Increasing the teacher quality state grant funding level to \$10 billion will help all states meet NCLB's highly-qualified teacher requirements, create thousands of educator jobs, and promote teacher development systems that leverage improvements in instructional practice and student learning that will prepare children for college or postsecondary careers and today's global market.

State Capacity and Improving Low-Performing Schools

Perhaps the most challenging state requirement in NCLB is the requirement that state departments of education support and provide technical assistance to low-performing schools. NCLB requires states to "establish a statewide system of intensive and sustained support and improvement for local education agencies and schools."

The success of NCLB will depend heavily on the ability of states to provide support and technical assistance to low-performing districts and schools. More than 11,000 schools, or nearly one-fifth of all Title I schools are in need of improvement. The growing number and demands of these schools and students require more and better state interventions, assistance, and leadership than state departments of education are currently able to provide without additional funding.

NCLB has offered few financial resources to states to provide this intensive support. For the majority of time that NCLB has been law, the only federal funding available to states has been



the four percent set-aside in Title I (two percent prior to 2005-06) and only a portion could be used for state activities and personnel.

In FY08, however, Congress provided states \$491 million earmarked specifically for state school turnaround efforts under the School Improvement Grants line item (section 1003(g)).

The capacity of state education agencies plays a vital role in the ability to turnaround schools and districts. Unfortunately, many states simply do not have the personnel to provide the type of assistance that is required to effectively support turnaround efforts, while at the local level districts do not have an adequate supply of trained specialists needed to guide individual school improvement activities.

Increasing State Improvement Grant funding to \$2 billion substantially expand the capacity of state and local departments of education to hire thousands school leaders and turnaround specialists. Half of these funds will be distributed to localities, many in high-poverty areas, to employ new educators and school leaders to improve low-performing schools.

Enhancing State Assessments

Provide \$2 billion under section 6112 of the No Child Left Behind Act for the enhancement of state assessments. Whether it is to improve the quality and validity of currently used assessments, to develop multiple measures of student achievement, or utilize performance and technology-based academic, the next iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will rely heavily on student evaluations that are based on assessments well beyond the existing standardized multiple choice exams now in use to help increase student achievement and augment school accountability.

Increasing the investment for assessments now, will expand the infrastructure of state departments of education and the testing industry to accommodate the future demands to be made on them in any reauthorized ESEA. Psychometricians are highly skilled, well paying jobs. A stimulus plan that includes funding for state assessments will increase the number of these positions in the states and throughout the country. In addition, a Government Accounting Office (GAO) study found that the cost to states of NCLB's testing requirements is between \$1.9 billion and \$5.3 billion. Any federal subsidy for state assessments will allow states to reallocate expenditures currently being spent on exams for the more important work of acting on the assessment data, notably hiring educators to improve low-performing schools (see State Capacity above).