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"In 2004-05, an average of 82% of all core academic classes in elementary schools were taught by an NCLB-compliant teacher, compared with 71% in middle schools and 74% in high schools."

"In high-poverty schools, on average, 76% percent of all core classes were taught by a 'highly qualified' teacher compared to 82% in the lowest poverty schools."

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

California's deadline for ensuring that all students have highly qualified teachers extended to June 2007

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, seeks to improve student learning by setting high standards for academic achievement and putting into place basic school and district requirements to frame the improvement effort. Among those requirements considered to be paramount are the minimum standards for teacher qualifications, the equitable distribution of experienced teachers among schools, and the levy of federal sanctions on schools with low and stagnant academic performance. The law had originally required that every teacher of core academic subjects be "highly qualified" by the end of the 2005-06 school year but 29 states, including California, have been given a one-year extension to meet this requirement. The law also requires the balanced assignment of beginning and experienced teachers in order to relieve the persistent problem of the maldistribution of underprepared and novice teachers in low performing, high minority schools. This *CenterView* provides an update on California's progress in implementing the teacher quality provisions of NCLB.

"Highly Qualified" Definition

With the passage of NCLB, all states are required to define a "highly qualified" teacher and ensure that its schools hire only "highly qualified" teachers in the core subjects of English, reading/language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography. Confronted by a substantial shortage of fully credentialed teachers, California policy-makers defined "highly qualified" teachers as those who (1) have a bachelor's degree, (2) have demonstrated competence in each subject area they teach, and (3) have at least a preliminary credential or are working toward one

in an approved alternative certification program. New teachers have to meet all three tests in order to be considered NCLB-compliant. Veteran elementary teachers who already have credentials and have previously met their subject-matter competency requirements via coursework and not by written examination must now complete the “high objective uniform state standard of evaluation” (HOUSSE), which verifies teachers’ qualifications and experience.

Extension Granted by Secretary of Education Spellings

To qualify for the one-year extension in meeting the “highly qualified” requirement, California and the other states must have demonstrated that they are making sufficient progress toward this goal. The U.S. Department of Education (USDE), somewhat sensitive to the challenges states have faced meeting the law’s requirements, used four criteria to determine whether or not states were making a good-faith effort to meet the “highly qualified” objective:

- The development of the state’s definition of a “highly qualified” teacher;
- The state’s processes for informing parents and the public about classes taught by teachers who are not “highly qualified”;
- The completeness and accuracy of “highly qualified” teacher data reported to USDE; and
- The measures the state has undertaken to ensure that inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers do not teach poor or minority children at higher rates than other children.

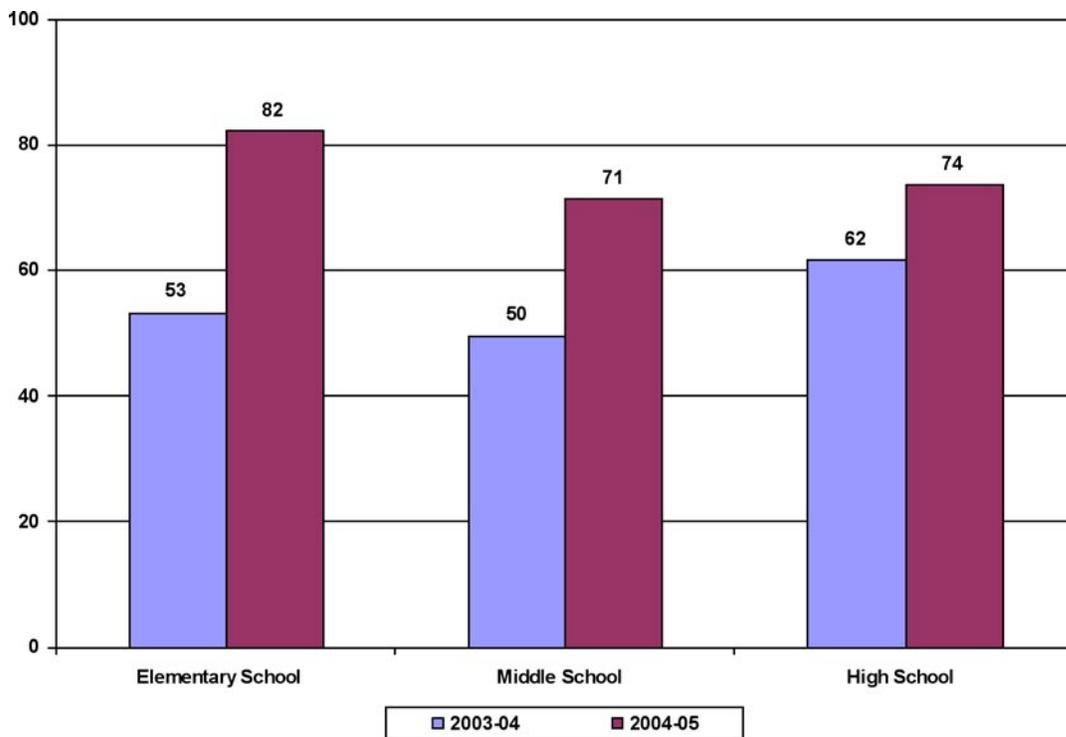
Consistent with the terms of approval of the one-year extension, the California Department of Education (CDE) has developed and recommended to the State Board of Education (SBE) a “plan of activities” that the state and local agencies will take to reach 100% compliance with NCLB by June 30, 2007. CDE has identified 1,368 schools statewide that have not met their growth targets and proposed to the SBE, at its July meeting, a rigorous local monitoring effort to ensure that the 2007 timeline is met.

NCLB Update: California

Statewide, in 2004-05, 74% of all core academic classes¹ were taught by NCLB-compliant teachers, but access to highly qualified teachers varied by grade level. In 2004-05, an average of 82% of all core academic classes in elementary schools were taught by an NCLB-compliant teacher, compared with 71% in middle schools and 74% in high schools (see Exhibit 1). While these figures represent an improvement over the previous year, clearly a focused effort will be required at the state, regional and local levels to achieve complete compliance with the law in all of California's schools within the required timeline.

Exhibit 1

Mean Percentage of Core Academic Classes Taught by "Highly Qualified" Teachers in California, 2003-04 & 2004-05



Sources: California Department of Education; SRI analysis.

1. NCLB requires states to report the percentage of core academic classes taught by "highly qualified" teachers rather than the percentage of "highly qualified" teachers due to the fact that teachers may be "highly qualified" while teaching some of their classes but not others. For example, a "highly qualified" high school biology teacher assigned to teach one period of geometry would not be considered "highly qualified" for that class but would be "highly qualified" for all biology classes she teaches.

Critically important is the fact that schools serving large proportions of minority, English learning, or poor students were less likely to have classes that were taught by “highly qualified” teachers than other schools. In schools with large numbers of minority students (91-100% of the school population), on average, 73% of all core academic classes were taught by a “highly qualified” teacher compared to 84% in schools with few minority students (0-30% of the population). A similar pattern also can be found in comparisons of schools with varying percentages of poor students. In high-poverty schools (those in which 76-100% of students are on free and reduced price lunch), on average, 76% percent of all core classes were taught by a “highly qualified” teacher compared to 82% in the lowest poverty schools (where 0-25% of students are on free and reduced price lunch).

The Center View

NCLB points to a core dilemma faced by California policy-makers: the need to maintain high standards for teacher quality despite ongoing teacher shortages in high-need schools, special education and certain subject areas. Looking forward, significant changes will be required for California to meet not only the letter, but also the spirit of NCLB—that is, to provide every child with a qualified and effective teacher who has the skills to help them succeed. To do so, California must tackle the very significant challenges of developing a more robust supply of teachers, correcting the inequitable distribution of underprepared teachers across California’s schools, ensuring that all routes into the profession are adequate in quality, and supporting and developing the capacity of the existing teacher workforce. The Center recommends providing a strong base for strengthening the teacher workforce and bringing the state into compliance with federal NCLB regulations. The general categories for these recommendations include:

- Improving and expanding teacher recruitment efforts targeted at low performing, high minority schools.
- Providing financial incentives to college and university students considering a career in teaching.
- Removing barriers into the profession by eliminating duplicative credential requirements.
- Increasing the number of candidates prepared to serve as teachers in high need schools and subject areas, such as math, science, and special education.
- Addressing the inequitable distribution of fully prepared and experienced teachers by creating incentive programs to attract them to high need schools. Such programs could include loan forgiveness, housing subsidies, tax credits, etc.

To view a full, detailed, set of recommendations in these important areas, please visit our Web site at www.cftl.org.