



COMMISSION ON
NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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**Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Commission's
Highly Qualified Effective Teachers (HQET), Accountability and
Model National Standards Recommendations**

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

Q: What is a highly qualified effective teacher?

A: A highly qualified effective teacher (HQET) is one who can demonstrate effectiveness, beyond credentials, in the classroom. Effectiveness means producing measurable gains in student achievement—proof that children are learning. The aim is to ensure that effective teachers receive recognition and credit for improving their students' achievement and that those who struggle to produce sufficient student learning gains receive targeted professional development to help them improve. The HQET provision targets additional support to the teachers who need it the most. Currently, many teachers who need professional development are not getting it because it is either unavailable or does not fit their needs. Under HQET, teachers would receive the appropriate support and professional development that they need to improve their instruction, ensure gains in student achievement and become effective.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Q: Is the Commission recommending growth models for all states?

A: The Commission recommends giving states the *option* to include student achievement growth in their adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations. We believe that every school should be held accountable for the achievement of all of its students. However, the current AYP system is a fairly blunt instrument; it fails to recognize the significant progress some schools are making in raising student achievement despite substantial odds. Our recommendations seek to ensure that the AYP system is precise and fair, and that schools remain accountable for moving all students to proficiency.

Q: Would the data for AYP calculations also yield data on teacher effectiveness?

A: Student achievement and growth are directly related to teacher effectiveness. Calculations of student growth are essential in determining whether a teacher is effective in the classroom. The Commission believes that states will take steps to put in place accurate data systems to track student growth because of the strong support for and proven value of using growth models to measure AYP. This data should also be used to determine which teachers are effective in

improving student achievement and for targeting quality professional development to teachers who struggle.

MODEL NATIONAL STANDARDS

Q: Does the Commission's recommendation for the creation of model national standards subvert NCLB's current focus on local control?

A: No. The Commission found through its public hearings and roundtable discussions that there is a great need for states to raise the bar of expectations to ensure that all children are prepared for success after high school. Our proposal calls for the creation of model national standards and tests to reflect high expectations. However, our proposal allows states to choose among three options: (1) voluntarily adopt the model national standards and tests as their own, (2) build their own assessments based on the model national standards, or (3) keep their existing standards and tests. States choosing options 2 or 3 would have the quality and rigor of their standards compared to the national model in a report issued periodically by the U.S. Secretary of Education. While the Commission believes it is important that adoption of model national standards be voluntary, we also believe that parents deserve to know whether their schools are truly preparing students for future success.

Q: Constitutionally, education is a state issue. Don't national standards go too far and take control away from the states, making the national standards proposal unconstitutional?

A: No. There is no constitutional problem with our proposal. The Commission has recommended *model* national standards. No state is required to adopt them.

However, we believe the Commission's model national standards recommendation will serve as the strongest local control policy. The Commission recommends that the Secretary report on the variance among state standards. For the first time, parents will have the information they need to judge how their state's standards compare to those of other states and whether their state's standards are sufficient for preparing students to succeed.
