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## **NCLB Commission Statement on U.S. House Hearing on Improving Teacher Quality**

Washington, DC – Today the Commission on No Child Left Behind made the following statement in response to the hearing held by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor titled, “ESEA Reauthorization: Boosting Quality in the Teaching Profession.”

Our nation’s children deserve teachers who are effective at guiding them to high achievement, and our nation’s teachers deserve the support they need so they can succeed. Therefore, the Commission urges Congress to shift the focus in making teacher quality determinations from credentials for entering the profession to effectiveness in the classroom.

The Commission’s recommendations outline a clear, actionable plan that supports teachers and ensures that students—particularly disadvantaged students who are too often taught by the least experienced and prepared teachers—receive effective instruction.

Specifically, we recommend that teachers who produce learning gains for students and receive a positive principal evaluation or peer review be recognized as “Highly Qualified Effective Teachers (HQETs).” This approach would ensure that limited professional development dollars are more efficiently targeted. Teachers that initially struggle should be given access to assistance with high quality professional development targeted to their needs and designed to help them reach the effectiveness standard.

The Commission also recommends allowing states to use growth models in adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations to ensure that teachers and schools receive appropriate credit for significant improvement in student achievement, and that teacher effectiveness determinations are fair and based on accurate data. To ensure that states have the information necessary to produce accurate and fair measures of student progress and teacher effectiveness, the Commission recommends that the federal government provide \$400 million dollars over four years to partner with states to implement data systems sufficient to track individual student progress from year to year.

We must also take additional steps to ensure that disadvantaged students have the same access to

effective teachers as their more advantaged peers. The Commission recommends ensuring comparability of access to effective teachers by requiring that all schools, including Title I schools, have similar expenditures for teacher salaries and comparable numbers of HQETs so that all students have the same opportunity to be taught by an effective teacher.

The Commission further proposes requiring districts with high teacher turnover in their schools to develop plans that maximize the use of bonus pay, nontraditional routes into the profession, multiple career paths and mentoring to recruit and retain effective teachers, particularly those that teach in hard to staff subject areas such as math, science, special education and English language learners. Districts with high teacher turnover must also include plans for improving working conditions for all school staff based on independent audits of such conditions.

To ensure that all students are taught by the most effective teachers, we also recommend that those who spend more than a quarter of their school day teaching English language learners be required to receive specialized professional development and obtain a state-sponsored endorsement for instructing this growing population of students.

These common sense recommendations recognize teachers who are effective in improving student achievement and drive support through targeted, high-quality professional development to those who need it most. When teachers are successful, students are successful. Putting the needs of students first means putting an effective teacher in every classroom. We hope Congress will agree.

[Click here](#) for a fact sheet on the Commission's "Highly Qualified Effective Teacher" proposal. To access the Commission's full report, "Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children," please [click here](#).

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