



The NCLB Fix

THE LAW

To meet the “Highly Qualified Teacher” (HQT) definition in NCLB, new high school teachers must either have majored in the subject that they are teaching or pass California’s rigorous California Subject Examination for Teachers.

THE PROBLEM

As districts strive to improve the rigor of their Career and Technical Education courses and have those courses approved by the state universities to meet college entrance requirements, the HQT requirements for new teachers become increasingly problematic. If a district hires a nurse with a nursing degree to teach a health-career course that could also be considered a physiology and anatomy course, a district would be unable to consider that teacher as meeting HQT because of its narrow definition.

The Highly Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE) has proven to be an effective and efficient way to determine a teacher’s subject matter competency, because it allows teachers to use their experience, professional development and leadership to demonstrate their competency in lieu of an arbitrary assessment. This option must not be taken away from districts.

THE NUMBERS —

109,296

fewer students enrolled in vocational education courses 2001-02 to 2005-06, with NCLB being among the factors contributing to this decline.

THE FIX

The definition of “Highly Qualified Teacher” must be revised to allow flexibility for districts to offer rigorous career and technical education courses.

** The “NCLB Fix” is a series outlining the unintended consequences of the No Child Left Behind Act and the reasonable solutions sought by the California School Boards Association — November 2006.*