



**National School  
Boards Association**

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# LEADERSHIP Insider

PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL LAW & POLICY

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## Highly Qualified Teachers—The Promise and the Challenge

### Three perspectives on meeting the requirements of NCLB

Few factors are more important to a child's academic success than good teachers. Congress recognized this fundamental reality when it passed the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). And research has confirmed it time and again, frequently finding that excellent teachers are the most important school variable and can even outweigh factors from outside the school walls.

The promise of NCLB is that every public school student in America will have "highly qualified" teachers by 2006. That is also NCLB's challenge. In fulfilling this promise, as the act requires, states and local school boards confront a painful irony: Within schools, among schools, and among school districts, students with greater academic needs frequently are taught by less-qualified teachers.

#### What the law says

A teacher meets NCLB's definition of "highly qualified" if he or she:

- Holds a bachelor's degree;
- Has full state teacher's certification or licensure and has not had requirements for such certification or licensure waived

on a temporary or emergency basis, unless the teacher teaches at a charter school in a state that sets less stringent requirements for charter school teachers;

- For a new elementary school teacher, has demonstrated subject matter knowledge and teaching skills by passing a rigorous state test;

- For a new middle or high school teacher, has demonstrated high competency in each academic subject he or she teaches by passing a rigorous state subject matter test, completing an academic major or equivalent coursework, or completing a graduate degree or advanced certification; and

- For a teacher who is not new to the profession, meets the applicable requirements for a new teacher, except that the teacher may demonstrate subject matter competency through a "high objective uniform State standard of evaluation," to be established by the state.

NCLB already requires that school districts hire only highly qualified teachers for programs supported by Title I. By the end of the 2005-06 school year, all teachers must be highly qualified, and the district must have a plan in place now for meeting this challenge. The district must notify parents in writing if their child is taught for four consecutive weeks by teachers who are not highly qualified.

In addition, each state must develop a

plan to make sure all teachers in core academic subjects are highly qualified by 2006 and must ensure that, proportionally, the number of less-qualified teachers in Title I schools is no greater than in other schools.

#### In this issue

The three guest columns featured in this issue of *Leadership Insider* represent key recommendations from three prominent, national organizations on how to meet the "highly qualified" challenge.

The first provides the national context by framing some of the key, overarching issues that local school boards need to be aware of as they try to fulfill NCLB's aspirations. The No Child Left Behind Act represents a seismic shift in the federal government's role in local education programs. No exploration of teacher quality issues would be complete without examining the many ways local school boards will depend for success on effective and credible federal and state leadership. This new report by the Education Trust calls on the federal government to take 10 steps to ensure that states and school districts succeed in raising teacher quality for all students.

Still, school boards know that criticism of other levels of government, even where

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## About NSBA

The National School Boards Association is the nationwide advocacy organization for public school governance. NSBA's mission is to foster excellence and equity in public elementary and secondary education in the United States through local school board leadership. Founded in 1940, NSBA is a not-for-profit federation of state associations of school boards across the United States and the school boards of the District of Columbia, Hawai'i, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## About the National Affiliate Program

The National Affiliate Program extends NSBA's services directly to local school districts. School districts are eligible to join provided they are members in good standing of their state school boards association.

## About the National Education Policy Network

The National Education Policy Network (NEPN) helps foster better communication, understanding and management of local school districts through better policy-making. It offers access to a sample policy clearinghouse and current policy-related resources, as well as publications and tools to help districts keep their policy manuals well-organized and up-to-date.

## About the Council of School Attorneys

The Council of School Attorneys provides information and practical assistance to attorneys who represent public school districts. It offers legal education, specialized publications, and a forum for exchange of information, and it supports the legal advocacy efforts of the National School Boards Association.

## In Need of Improvement

### Ten ways the U.S. Department of Education has failed to live up to its teacher quality commitments

#### The Education Trust

The education world is currently focused on the testing and accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This is understandable, as this basic information is the foundation of future school reform. But once we know which schools need improvement, we have to get down to the hard business of actually improving them.

Fortunately, NCLB also contains provisions designed to do just that, by focusing on the single most important factor in student learning—teachers. Through new programs, requirements, and funding, NCLB makes an essential promise: All students will have a highly qualified teacher.

The U.S. Department of Education will play a central role in making this promise a reality. We do not doubt Secretary Rod Paige's commitment to improving the achievement of American youngsters and to closing the achievement gap that for too long has separated poor and minority students from other young Americans. We also know that he understands how important quality teaching is to both goals.

Yet for the past two years, Paige's team at the department has acted as if it believed that better accountability alone will bring about better achievement. The teacher quality provisions of NCLB have been at various times ignored, misinterpreted, and misunderstood. As a result, NCLB is seen by many as an attempt to punish experienced teachers, instead of what it actually is—a law that embraces the central importance of those teachers to helping students learn.

States and districts have gotten reams of federal guidance on NCLB's accountability provisions. Department officials have examined state accountability plans microscopically. But the teacher quality provisions of the law are another matter entirely. Questions from the field, if answered at all, are often answered with confusing or conflicting "advice." Instead of asking for state plans to improve teacher quality, the department has left states and districts on their own.

Placed on this "honor system," many states are ignoring their obligations under

the law. A recent Government Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that most states still have not put into place the data systems needed to find out how many highly qualified teachers they have and where they're teaching.

This conspiracy of silence has added immeasurably to the already enormous confusion about what the law requires. Rural school districts and politicians who represent them are up in arms. Community-based organizations are now cynical about the administration's commitment to their children. Across the country, state boards of education are wrestling with how to measure the content knowledge of veteran teachers, with no guidance from the department.

It's not too late, though. If the department acts quickly, it can reverse the perception that this administration cares nothing about teacher quality. Indeed, by using its authority under NCLB and the Higher Education Act, the department can become a real partner with the states, school districts, and institutions of higher education that are struggling responsibly to make sure that American students get the teachers they need to succeed.

#### Powerful new tools

The department has a number of powerful tools at its disposal to address the problem. In 1998, Congress passed a new version of the Higher Education Act (HEA). HEA now requires states to take a hard look at their public colleges and universities, which produce 70 percent of new teachers. States must evaluate each institution based on the quality of its teaching graduates and hold that institution accountable for results. Since 1998, HEA has provided almost \$500 million to states, schools, and universities to increase teacher quality and teacher education.

Congress extended this federal commitment through NCLB's mandates for highly qualified teachers and for state attention to the disproportionate assignment of less qualified teachers to disadvantaged students. Title II of NCLB also provided almost \$3 billion in 2003 to improve teacher quality, making it the second-largest NCLB program after Title I.

So we find ourselves at a high water

mark, both in the critical need to increase teacher quality, and in the resources and legal authority available to the federal government to do so. The issue is using that authority wisely and spending those resources well.

What should the department do? Here are 10 common-sense answers, 10 things the U.S. Department of Education can do to help schools raise achievement for all students and close the achievement gap by increasing the quality of teachers.

### 1. Make improving teacher quality job one.

Now that every state has developed and implemented its accountability plan under NCLB, the department should make improving teacher quality the first priority of national school improvement.

The department recently announced the creation of a Teacher Assistance Corps to give states technical assistance on meeting the teacher requirements of NCLB. But state participation with the corps will be purely voluntary. The central importance of teacher quality needs to be elevated much higher, and NCLB's teacher quality provisions need to be much more aggressively enforced.

Secretary Paige should start by appointing a high-profile "Teacher Quality Czar" to advance an overall vision for teacher quality. This office could coordinate federal efforts and serve as a reliable source of information for policy makers, education leaders, and journalists on how NCLB and HEA can help states meet the challenge.

### 2. Insist on good data.

Both HEA and NCLB create systems driven by data—about schools, universities, students, and teachers. This embodies the important principle that education improvement needs to be driven by objective, verifiable measures of success. The integrity and accuracy of such information is absolutely crucial. Without good data, the whole system falls apart.

The department serves a critical role in collecting important data from states and schools, setting data quality standards, and analyzing the data in a way that promotes student learning. But the department is consistently falling short on its mission when it comes to teacher quality data. When the department asks states for data, it has an obligation to make sure that the information is accurate.

For example, in a recent HEA-mandated report to Congress on teacher quality, the department reveals that almost 11,800

teachers disappeared from the state of Utah in the past year. Where they went is unclear, although they may have all moved to Alabama, which reported an increase of 11,444 teachers. No reason for these dramatic changes is provided, because the likely explanation is that states are simply providing unreliable information to the department, which dutifully tabulates it and sends it to Congress.

The department also has an obligation to analyze and present the data accurately. It falls short of this mark as well in its recent teacher quality report. The department did use reliable and accurate data to come up with an estimate of the number of teachers nationwide meeting NCLB's "highly qualified" standard. But good data still need to be interpreted correctly, and that didn't happen.

Alarming news accounts quoted the report: "Only 54 percent of our nation's secondary teachers were highly qualified during the 1999-2000 school year. These data suggest that out-of-field teaching is a serious problem across the country." But



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buried in a footnote, the report explains that the 54 percent figure is based on a definition that is *not* the real NCLB "highly qualified" standard at all, because it doesn't include teachers who demonstrated subject matter knowledge by means other than having a major in their fields.

Since we know that many thousands of teachers are defined as highly qualified because they passed a subject matter test or otherwise demonstrated subject matter knowledge, the report significantly overstates the extent of a problem. This kind of sloppiness causes the public needless confusion and anxiety. The department needs to do a better job of collecting important teacher quality data, ensuring its reliability, and analyzing it accurately.

### 3. Ensure that states address the distribution of underqualified teachers to disadvantaged students.

We can't meet the NCLB goal of bringing all children to proficiency without

closing the achievement gap among low-income and minority students, and we can't close the achievement gap without stopping the indefensible practice of consistently assigning those students to the least-effective, least-prepared teachers. This is the irreducible minimum of school improvement, the one thing at which no state can afford to fail.

NCLB is unambiguous on this—it requires states to measure the extent of the maldistribution and take steps to fix it. Unfortunately, the department has so far displayed remarkably little interest in this most important issue. States have received no guidance whatsoever from the department on how to comply with the following provisions:

- *States must report on teacher distribution...*

On its NCLB-required state report card, each state must report on the distribution of highly qualified teachers. In addition to reporting the overall percentage of classes throughout the state not taught by highly qualified teachers, states must compare these percentages in their

highest- and lowest-poverty schools. But, so far, states have been allowed to be derelict in their responsibility to document how they deploy their teachers.

The first look at state reporting on the distribution of highly qualified teachers under NCLB was due Sept. 1, 2003. By that date, each state was required to submit a document to the department showing the percentage of classrooms across the state without a highly qualified teacher.

Inexplicably, instead of asking states to compare the percentage of highly qualified teachers in high-poverty schools to the supply in low-poverty schools (as required on the state report card), the department asked states to compare high-poverty schools to the *overall* state average. This approach will mask the true extent of the disparity, since low-poverty schools tend to have the highest percentage of qualified teachers.

- *...and ensure that poor and minority*

students get their fair share of qualified and experienced teachers.

In addition to measuring and reporting, NCLB requires states to take action to fix the problem. Each state plan must include the “steps that the State will take to ensure that poor and minority children are not taught at higher rates than other children by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers.” Crucially, this provision addresses the inequitable distribution of such teachers not only to low-income students, but also to minority students.

Minority and low-income parents would no doubt be eager to learn what states are doing to help their children get their fair share of quality teachers and what progress is being made. But the federal government has done nothing to guarantee that states are developing and implementing these plans. It has asked

be made contingent on states meeting these commitments.

#### 4. Help dispel the myth that getting better teachers is an unattainable goal.

Naysayers will argue that the goal of having all teachers highly qualified is “a nice idea” but “unrealistic” because the profession already suffers from a shortfall of qualified candidates, a problem that will supposedly grow exponentially if we raise standards for teacher quality. They’ll also say that asking for better teachers will drive disproportionate numbers of minorities out of the field, suggesting that people of color are somehow unable to meet higher standards.

These objections don’t hold water, and the department should say so loud and clear. It’s true that there are specific teacher shortfalls in some hard-to-fill sub-

quality teachers—who they are, where they’re needed, and how schools can find them. The department should also support and draw attention to successful strategies for attracting, honoring, and retaining high-quality teachers in the hardest-to-staff schools.

#### 5. Relieve some of the pressure on K-12 by putting greater pressure on higher education to increase its production of teachers in the areas of greatest need.

To help with geographic or subject-specific teacher shortages, states should be encouraged by the department to expand the accountability systems they put into place under HEA to measure how well colleges and universities are addressing the supply of new teachers. Each college and university should have explicit goals for producing more high-quality teachers in the subject areas that are most needed, including goals for recruiting and graduating minority candidates.

Few states can say this can’t be done, since few states have tried it. Those that have tried have made real progress. For example, the Texas A&M University System met state goals for dramatic improvement in producing teachers, then set its own higher goals. The total number of its new teaching graduates who passed the state certification test increased by 20 percent from 2000 to 2002, while the number of African-American teacher candidates increased by 116 percent and the number of bilingual/ESL candidates by 84 percent. The number of candidates increased by 64 percent in special education, 41 percent in math, and 34 percent in science. And despite these increases, the pass rate on the state licensure exam did not decline. This shows that it’s possible to raise the quantity of teachers, enhance diversity, and maintain standards of teacher quality.

#### 6. Send clear, unequivocal signals that “highly qualified” means just that.

States have flexibility in implementing the “highly qualified teacher” provisions of NCLB. The department needs to make sure that this flexibility isn’t abused, that states adhere to both the letter and the spirit of the law. For example, the law says teachers need *full* state certification to be “highly qualified.” They can’t have “had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary, or provisional basis.”

That said, the law acknowledges that many states have alternative routes to



**The unfair assignment of unqualified teachers to poor and minority students is not just an important issue: It’s the most important issue.**



states to submit rudimentary *schedules* of improvement over the next two years, with the goal of having zero classes without a qualified teacher by the end of the 2005-06 school year.

And that’s it. No details are demanded about how this difficult problem will be fixed; no information will be forthcoming about steps that will be taken. Just vague promises, and then deafening silence. These “plans,” if they exist at all, have been left on the shelf in state departments of education, unseen, unheard of, and very likely unimplemented.

The unfair assignment of unqualified teachers to poor and minority students is not just *an* important issue: It’s *the* most important issue. Whether or not this problem is taken seriously will have a huge impact on whether the entire enterprise of NCLB will be a success or a failure. Every state should be required to submit a detailed, realistic plan for giving low-income and minority students their fair share of highly qualified teachers. Plans that contain only vague goals and platitudes—and there will be many—should be rejected. Distribution of funding should

be made contingent on states meeting these commitments.

ject areas and in some high-poverty urban and rural schools, but there are *surpluses* of teachers in other subjects and geographic regions. A 2001 report by the National Center for Education Statistics suggests that there is no massive attrition of new teachers, either. Among recent college graduates, “those who taught at the K-12 level were among the most stable of all employed graduates with respect to their occupations 3 years later.”

Schools often bemoan the difficulty of hiring good candidates, and for many schools that serve large numbers of low-income students and are hampered by inequitable funding schemes, this is substantially true. But that doesn’t mean nothing can be done. For example, the New Teacher Project recently has shown great success in helping districts like New York City and Baton Rouge recruit qualified mid-career professionals with backgrounds in math, science, and other high-need areas to teach in the most needy schools.

The department should meticulously research and publish information about the production and retention of high-

teacher certification, some of which have been quite successful in bringing talented, motivated individuals into the classroom. But in its zeal to support such alternatives, the department has allowed some alternative-route teachers to be considered highly qualified without any pre-service training whatsoever. This takes the idea of “streamlining” teacher training past its logical limit; it is patently inconsistent with the law. The department should add a preservice training requirement of at least six weeks for all alternate route teachers.

NCLB also says that highly qualified teachers have to know the subject they’re teaching. Most teachers satisfy this requirement before they even enter the classroom. But some don’t, and research shows that disturbing numbers of teachers nationwide have no formal training in the field they teach. These teachers have several options to demonstrate their knowledge:

- *They can take a state subject matter test.* This is the simplest option. States should offer these teachers coursework or professional development to deepen their knowledge and help them pass the test. NCLB provides funds for this.

- *States can provide teachers with enough additional coursework and professional development to give them the equivalent of a college major or an advanced credential.* This needs to be a legitimate standard, however. California, for example, originally tried to set this bar significantly below the number of credits actually required to earn a college major. The department should provide guidance on this issue.

- *States can develop an alternative assessment of teacher knowledge, something other than a test.* This is known as a “high objective uniform State standard of evaluation.” These processes don’t yet exist—states get to make them up. Without careful guidance and monitoring from the department, this is likely to become a huge loophole in the rule that every child must have a highly qualified teacher. We recommend that the department immediately convene a working task force to suggest how states should go about this and what principles should govern the department’s review of state plans.

## **7. Make clear that NCLB provides flexibility for schools, particularly those in small, rural communities, to hire and retain highly qualified teachers.**

The challenge of NCLB is to create a system that treats all students equally in insisting on a quality education but that

accommodates the unique circumstances of different schools across the country. For example, in many schools science teachers must teach a variety of sciences. Does this mean that Mr. Smith, who teaches chemistry, physics, and biology in a small, rural high school, should have to go back to college and get three new bachelor’s degrees?

No, of course not. That’s just unreasonable, and it’s not what the law requires. The department needs to be clear that teachers meet the “highly qualified” requirements as long as they have a major in the general subject area they teach. So if Mr. Smith has a science major, under NCLB he should be considered highly qualified to teach all three science classes.

That said, many teachers are often assigned to teach subjects beyond even the general disciplinary family of their college major. Of course, these teachers can take a subject matter test in these other areas. Knowledgeable teachers should have no problem with this—it’s hard to argue that teachers are highly qualified to teach a subject on which they themselves can’t pass a test. However, given the prevalence of out-of-field teaching in small, rural schools and the difficulty of arranging on-site professional learning, the department should encourage the higher education community to provide distance learning opportunities for teachers in more remote areas. Grants under HEA provide funding for precisely this kind of assistance.

The department hasn’t provided enough clarity on these issues, leading to needless worry in communities that already have many challenges in complying with the law.

## **8. Support parents’ right to know.**

Many parents are starved for good information about their children’s schools. NCLB helps them by requiring schools to notify parents if their children are taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

Some states have lagged behind in putting in place data systems that can track this kind of information. In addition, many schools appear to be simply ignoring the law, withholding information from parents in deference to some teachers’ dissatisfaction with the new requirements. The Alabama State Board of Education even passed a resolution to ignore the notification provisions for the upcoming year.

This is startlingly bad behavior, denying parents vital public information about their children’s education. The department needs to insist that parents’ right to know be upheld in all cases and send a clear message to administrators and officials that no exceptions will be tolerated.

## **9. Embrace state efforts to develop real measures of teacher effectiveness.**

We know remarkably little about teacher effectiveness in helping students learn—most schools and parents have no objective, quantifiable data about which teachers are actually effective and which are not. As a result, we’re forced to substitute measures of teacher *qualities* for measures of teacher *quality*—instead of measuring which teachers are most successful with their students, we use proxy measures like experience, education, teacher test scores, etc. We need to move from insisting on high qualifications to insisting on high quality.

Fortunately, some states and districts are leading the way. For the past 10 years, Tennessee has measured teacher effectiveness by calculating the amount students learn from the beginning of the year to the end—the “value-added” that teachers provide. By using statistical controls for students’ learning history, the system isolates each teacher’s individual contribution to student learning. This information is being used with great success in Tennessee to help teachers identify strengths and weaknesses with different students and in different subjects. A similar system is used in Dallas, while school districts in Arizona, North Carolina, Minnesota, and other states have also recently begun using value-added teacher data.

Value-added teacher effectiveness data is the future of understanding and improving teacher quality. The department should build on the success and best practices of these early adopters to spearhead a national effort to make value-added measures of teacher effectiveness standard information in America’s schools.

## **10. Push for significant improvements to the Higher Education Act.**

HEA is now up for reauthorization in Congress. It’s time to improve on the successes of the previous version. We can start by increasing the effectiveness of federal grants to states and universities for improving teacher training and teacher quality. While these grants are important, a recent GAO report found that the department has little idea if the money is

being well spent, because it has no system of evaluating whether or not the grants actually made any teachers more effective in helping students learn.

The House of Representatives recently passed new HEA language that requires states asking for grants to measure teacher effectiveness in improving student performance, using value-added measures like those already in place in some areas. The department should actively support this addition to the Act.

HEA also requires states to report annually on the quality of university teacher education programs. Some states have reported data that is inaccurate, incomplete, and generally useless. Others simply allowed their colleges and universities to “game” the accountability system, manipulating reporting requirements to pretend that every single education school graduate is successful.

The department’s attention to the alignment of standards for teachers and

standards for students has also been lax. The department should focus the public’s attention on these shortcomings and propose meaningful reforms in the new legislation.

### **From promise to reality**

The Department of Education’s intense focus on making sure every state complies with the accountability provisions of NCLB stands in marked, positive contrast to past efforts. It shows that the department is quite capable of insisting that states do what the law requires, that it can be a major force in driving forward the cause of immediate, substantial improvement in America’s public schools.

The time has come to apply that same commitment and intensity of effort to getting all children the high-quality teachers they need. The department’s record up to this point isn’t promising, but it’s not too late to change course. Only now are all schools really beginning to realize that

there can be no more delay in working to close the achievement gap, that they have no choice but to take strong action to give all students the quality of instruction they need and deserve.

The department can seize this opportunity to lead the way. If it does so—if it works tirelessly to make the promise of highly qualified teachers a reality for all low-income and minority students, if it is relentlessly focused on using every legal tool at its disposal to get those children the instruction they desperately need—it will fulfill its central mission of meeting the goals of No Child Left Behind and elevating America’s teachers to the prominence they deserve.

*The Education Trust is an independent nonprofit organization in Washington, D.C. This article is abridged from an August 2003 report and is published here by permission. For more information, including the unabridged report, visit [www.edtrust.org](http://www.edtrust.org).*

## **Rethinking Teacher Pay**

### *Differential salaries and the problem of teacher supply and demand*

*By Andrew J. Rotherham and Sara Mead*

**M**uch is made of the idea that the nation faces a staggering overall teacher shortage, but several recent studies debunk that notion. Instead, rather than an overall shortage, these studies show that right now schools face specific shortfalls in subjects like mathematics, science, foreign languages, special education, and English as a second language. Further, there is a dearth of qualified teachers willing to work with challenging students or in poor communities.

This results in a two-fold problem of out-of-field teaching and disparities in teaching quality between low-income and minority students and other students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, about one in four high school math teachers and one in five high school science teachers did not major or minor in the field in which they teach.

But, as with other resource issues in

American education, these “out-of-field” teachers are not randomly distributed in the nation’s schools. Poor and minority students are much less likely than other students to have teachers with college majors in the subjects they teach, according to research by University of Pennsylvania professor Richard Ingersoll and the Education Trust.

In addition, the least-experienced teachers often teach students in high-poverty schools, and studies show that better and more experienced teachers tend to migrate to more affluent schools. Thus, there are issues both within districts and among districts that demand attention. Paul Hill has dubbed the lack of attention to these realities and their consequences for poor students, particularly at the district level, a “conspiracy of silence.”

It is no great secret why these problems exist. In some subjects—such as science, math, and certain languages—business and industry demand and ability to pay for people with these skills outpace the ability of schools to compete. In other cases, the shortfalls are in no small part created by a policy environment many professionals find intolerable. An example is special education. More than 12,000 special edu-

cation teaching positions are unfilled nationwide, and 10 percent of special education teachers lack expertise in the area.

High-poverty schools have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified teachers because teaching in such schools is an incredibly demanding job, and teachers make use of the seniority provisions in most contracts to opt out of those schools. Forthcoming research by economist Eric Hanushek shows that teachers are likely to transfer to less demanding, more affluent schools when given the option.

### **The ‘highly qualified’ requirement**

Considering what research shows (and common sense tells us) about the importance of teachers to student learning, this situation should be particularly troubling. And considering research by William Sanders and June Rivers indicating that disadvantaged students’ achievement is especially sensitive to the quality of their teachers, the status quo for poor and minority students is intolerable. It is imperative that policy makers from local school boards to Washington get on top of this situation.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) took a step to address these issues by requiring all teachers to meet a minimum definition of “highly qualified” by 2006. These provisions require that middle and high school teachers have degrees or demonstrate subject matter expertise in

the subjects they teach in addition to holding state certification. The law requires that elementary school teachers be fully certified by their states and demonstrate mastery of their content as well.

There are varying views on the value of requiring state certification in addition to content expertise, and whole forests are being felled in the furtherance of that debate.

We would argue that there are serious questions about the efficacy of current state certification and licensure policies and little or no empirical evidence to support most such policies. A recent Education Commission of the States report reached essentially the same conclusion. Some certification process is necessary, however; hopefully NCLB will lead to a refinement of certification requirements as states strip away those that lack a research base.

In the meantime, the immediate challenge facing school boards is ensuring that the teachers in all their schools meet the definition of “fully qualified,” including their states’ certification requirements.

### Singular solutions

Despite the multifaceted nature of the problem of teacher supply and demand, policy makers and educators too often attack it with singular solutions. The most common approach to addressing shortages is raising salaries across the board for all teachers. Unfortunately, while appealing on a superficial level, this approach fails on several counts.

For starters, there is just not enough money. Even when state and national coffers are flush—and especially today, when they are not—there simply is not enough money to raise all salaries enough to make hard-to-fill positions attractive. Moreover, fiscal constraints aside, across-the-board raises do nothing to address the differentials between more and less challenging schools or among various subject areas. And, such raises also assume that all teachers equally deserve substantial pay increases, which is a great rhetorical flourish but one that wilts under scrutiny.

Another common approach is to offer loan-forgiveness to teachers who teach in challenging schools or teach subjects where shortages exist. Under these schemes, teachers can get some or all of their student loans forgiven in exchange for teaching in low-income communities. There is a lot of merit to these proposals as part of a panoply of policy tools, but loan forgiveness alone, even generous for-

giveness, is proving insufficient to address the problem. And, it does little to help retain good teachers, because once the loan is forgiven, all the usual dynamics come back into play.

A more promising solution is to break away from traditional “steps and lanes” pay schedules based almost entirely on degrees and experience. Rigid salary schedules are unfair to many talented teachers and have a pernicious impact on poor students. To attract teachers to subjects and schools where their expertise is in demand, we must pay them better, not only compared with those in other professions, but also compared with teachers in more affluent schools and subject areas where there is not a shortage.

Such steps address basic supply-and-demand problems in education. A pay schedule that pays all teachers equally, on the other hand, is directly at odds with the nature of today’s educational environment where some students and subjects are affected by shortfalls substantially more than others.

Just as important, moving away from steps and lanes also recognizes that talented young people are not attracted to jobs that reward longevity and hierarchy instead of performance, initiative, and special skills and responsibilities. Obviously these teachers, whose voices too often are not heeded by established voices, are the future of the profession.

It’s worth noting that despite claims that starting teacher salaries are simply too low to attract good teachers, talented young people are attracted to teaching even in the most challenging schools. In fact, admission to Teach For America, the program that places exceptional recent college graduates in teaching positions in low-income schools, is now more competitive than Harvard Law School and other elite graduate and professional schools.

The problem is not getting these young people into teaching—it’s keeping them there, an effort certainly not helped by pay schedules that send the clear signal that performance, initiative, and special skills matter less than longevity.

### A question of fairness

Why the fealty to steps and lanes? Too often, a bastardized notion of “equality” prevents policy makers from using differential compensation as a carrot in education. Arguments against differential pay rest on the idea that it’s unfair to pay teachers with the same experience and

qualifications differently, even if they possess different skills, expertise, or if there are shortages in one area but not another.

Equality, the argument goes, is fairness. But for whom is it fair? It’s certainly not fair for poor students, who most desperately need the best teachers, or for teachers who would earn more under a compensation system that better reflected existing market failures or outstanding work. The only beneficiaries of the current system are organizations representing teachers, which have a stake in maintain-

“  
**The status quo for poor and minority students is intolerable.**  
”

ing an industrialized approach to collective bargaining and school district management, rather than a professionally based strategy.

A more professional approach views teachers as individuals with differentiated skills and responsibilities rather than interchangeable clones in a standardized system. It’s a great irony that many of the same voices who attack academic standards as leading to standardization unquestioningly accept a standardized pay scale that arguably does much more to limit school and teacher autonomy than state standards do.

Teachers themselves don’t support a standardized pay system. The nonpartisan polling firm Public Agenda randomly surveyed 1,345 teachers and found that 70 percent supported paying more to colleagues who are willing to work in the hardest schools. There is less support for differential salaries among subjects, but teachers are far from uniform in their views about that, too.

Inducing skilled teachers to accept and remain in hard-to-fill positions requires not simply increasing teacher pay but increasing pay for teaching assignments in high-poverty schools relative to teacher pay elsewhere. Likewise, addressing the shortage of qualified math and science teachers will require compensation policies that reflect the market realities of more highly paid options available to these teachers in other fields.

Fortunately, differential pay can help address other policy goals beyond just

recruitment and retention of teachers meeting the NCLB definition. For example, many veteran teachers resent the fact that most upwardly mobile career paths in education require leaving the classroom. There are small stipends for additional assignments now, but substantial salary differentials for teachers who take on additional responsibilities like mentoring or leadership are one way to improve the professional life of teachers while paying more to outstanding ones and helping them stay in the classroom.

### Policy solutions for school boards

School boards can help address these problems in three primary ways:

- **Get a handle on the problem.**

Understanding the nature of a problem is the first step toward solving it. According to the National Association of State Boards of Education, 12 states do not collect data on staffing needs at a statewide level. The Education Trust contends that even with NCLB requirements, states are still not comprehensively evaluating the problem, and a recent report from the General Accounting Office cited data needs as a major challenge for states.

States and school districts alike must track and analyze staffing data to determine the specific shortages that exist. Board members should ensure that their own district adequately tracks the problem and uses the data to inform district policy, and they should encourage state leaders to compile and analyze statewide data as well.

- **Just do it.** Even the most compre-

hensive data collection and analysis regimes are impotent without a will to act. Some districts now engage in “covert” differential pay by, for example, starting some teachers at higher steps on the salary schedule than their actual classroom experience warrants.

That’s a stopgap solution. Instead, school boards facing shortages must enact pay schedules that take these issues into account. If there is a shortage of special education or math teachers, it’s hard to address that problem by giving large raises to English teachers. The issue is not which job is harder, more esteemed, or more valued. Rather, the issue is scarcity and basic rules of supply and demand. A lot of effort goes into creating pay schedules that are “fair” for adults; at least equal effort must be directed at ensuring that they work for students, too.

Just acting is not enough, however. These initiatives must be robust and meaningful. Unfortunately, school districts often offer only token amounts to teachers for taking on additional assignments and responsibilities. For example, one school district in Virginia wanted to inaugurate a mentoring program and pay veteran teachers \$200-\$400 annually for being mentors. You get what you pay for. Differentials must be clearly tied to policy goals, informed by data about comparable opportunities and needs, and measured in thousands, not hundreds, of dollars.

- **Hold what you’ve got.** Salaries alone will not solve these problems. School boards must guard against problems that

increase teacher turnover or encourage newer teachers to move on to other jobs. This means that effective hiring strategies and robust and meaningful mentoring and support systems for new teachers are essential. Most new teachers report a sink-or-swim environment and say that mentoring is weak or nonexistent.

Efforts to improve working conditions are not a substitute for reforming archaic pay schedules, but working conditions play a key role in making harder-to-fill positions more attractive and encouraging professionals to stay in education despite other opportunities.

Again, these efforts serve multiple purposes, because they also provide excellent opportunities to give veteran teachers additional responsibility, opportunities for professional growth, and financial rewards.

Teacher shortages are a problem with multiple causes that demand varied solutions. But teacher salaries, a key policy lever that states and school boards possess, have been off the table for too long. Differential pay does not obviate the need to address overall teacher salaries where they are inadequate, and differential pay alone will not solve the problem. Nonetheless, it is difficult to see a serious solution that does not involve reforming antiquated compensation schemes to better reflect today’s educational realities.

*Andrew J. Rotherham is director of education policy at the Progressive Policy Institute, where Sara Mead is a policy analyst. For more information visit [www.ppionline.org](http://www.ppionline.org).*

# A New Vision for Professional Learning

## Using professional development to advance teacher and student learning

By Stephanie Hirsh

**W**e have a problem. Most students are not achieving the results we would like them to achieve. The federal government has assured the American public that no child will be left behind. And yet we remain far from reaching that goal.

NCLB requires states to identify standards for student learning and create accountability systems to measure students' progress toward achieving those standards. Supporters of these strategies believe that schools and teachers know what to do. Teachers just have to work harder and demand more from students to produce the desired results.

Many states and school systems have reached the limit of this strategy. They have aligned curriculum to new standards and instituted frequent testing to monitor student progress, yet the results are not what they want them to be. The only place left to look for solutions is in the classroom.

Students spend the vast majority of their time in school working under their teachers' direction. Naturally enough, what teachers know and can do directly affects the quality of student learning. Other reforms—from smaller classes to charter schools to testing—are effective only to the degree that they affect what goes on within classrooms.

If we want all students to achieve the standards, then all teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to teach to high standards.

### The learning team

The kind of professional development necessary to achieve this goal is vastly different than the kind of professional development most teachers and principals have experienced during their careers.

High-quality professional development supports the goals, objectives, and standards of states, districts, and schools. Sustained, intellectually rigorous staff development is essential for everyone who affects student learning. This means not

only teachers, principals and central office administrators, but also policy makers, school board members, state department personnel, and support staff.

At the core of the new vision for professional development is the learning team. Teacher learning teams meet daily to focus attention on teaching and learning. Members take collective responsibility for the learning of all students represented by the team. Team activities include studying the standards students are required to master, planning more effective lessons, critiquing student work, and identifying areas for future study or help.

Learning teams are also used to facilitate other aspects of school improvement. District teams set direction and monitor progress toward improvement. Central office administrators study together to strengthen knowledge and skills essential for supporting school-based improvements. Administrators meet on a regular basis to deepen their understanding of instructional leadership, identify ways to assist teachers in improving the quality of student work, critique one another's school improvement efforts, and learn other important skills.

### Powerful professional development

Effective professional development is:

1. **Results driven.** Stephen Covey once said "Begin with the end in mind." Results-driven professional development begins with the key question: What do we want all our students to know and be able to do? This leads to two more questions: What knowledge and skills do teachers need to successfully teach what students need to know and be able to do? And what do principals need to know and be able to do?

Professional development is then designed to achieve these results.

2. **Standards-based.** Standards for students clarify expectations and provide focus for professional learning. Standards for teachers and leaders describe performance expectations and create additional priorities and direction for staff development. Standards for staff development describe what is necessary to produce improved practice for adults and increased learning for students.

The Standards for Staff Development published by the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) represent

the consensus of more than 15 national education associations, (including the National School Boards Association) regarding the characteristics of staff development that contribute to improved student learning.

3. **Job-embedded.** Not all professional development is created equal. "One-shot workshops" are not effective in helping teachers acquire new ideas and put them into practice into the classroom. Typically, teachers use only about 10 percent of what they hear at a one-shot workshop. To be effective, staff development must go

“**If we want all students to achieve the standards, then all teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support necessary to teach to high standards.**”

beyond this “adult pull-out program” model.

Job-embedded professional development makes professional learning a part of every teacher's work day. Job-embedded forms of learning include team learning, classroom observations, peer coaching, and classroom-based assistance from master teachers. These approaches give teachers access to the tools and assistance they need to improve on a daily basis.

### Opportunities for school boards

How can school boards help advance high-quality professional development for all employees? Consider the following actions:

#### Establish high-quality professional learning as a district priority.

Make professional development a priority for achieving your district student achievement goals. Connect it to the personnel goals that address recruitment, development, retention, and recognition. Measure progress through program audits, surveys, participation numbers, classroom observations, and student results.

The data can assist with future improvement planning and provide evidence for No Child Left Behind that more teachers each year experience high-quality professional development.

### **Adopt staff development standards.**

Adopting staff development standards commits your district to high-quality professional development. You may want to start with model standards. For example, determine whether the NSDC standards are consistent with your goals or whether they need revision to reflect additional community priorities.

Pass a resolution to signify the district's commitment to effective staff development. Then, use the standards as the basis for decisions about issues that have staff development implications, such as reviewing programs, approving school improvement plans, adopting budgets, and negotiating employee contracts.

### **Address professional development through the superintendent's evaluation.**

Experience teaches us that what gets measured gets done. Make completing a comprehensive plan and providing high-quality professional development priorities in the superintendent's action plan. Consider establishing a cycle of review of professional development and an annual "state of professional learning" report for the public.

### **Fund professional development adequately.**

Allocate the money necessary for effective professional development. In addition to its standard on resources, NSDC has a resolution that calls for school systems to dedicate at least 10 percent of the budget to staff development and 25 percent of an educator's work time to learning and collaborating with colleagues. Resources make it possible to implement a comprehensive professional development system that includes the following:

- In-house trainers who help teachers prepare to teach to high standards, use new instructional strategies, and apply new technologies.
- School-based coaches who provide classroom-based support for teachers implementing new curriculum in areas.
- Professional resource materials, travel, registration, and substitutes so teachers and administrators can attend professional meetings and conferences.

Title I requires that schools eligible for schoolwide improvement funds allocate 10 percent of those funds to professional development. Title II provides additional resources to schools. School boards have a great deal of flexibility in using the funds. A district's decision on how the funds are used reflects its commitment to professional development as a district priority

### **Help schools find more time for professional learning.**

### **Professional learning.**

School boards can offer flexibility and provide incentives to enable schools to increase time for high-quality professional learning. Adequate time allows teachers and administrators to engage in the following activities:

- Daily team learning, which is key to achieving the new vision for professional learning.
- Other classroom-based support, including peer observation, peer coaching, and technical assistance from colleagues and outside experts.
- Powerful learning opportunities offered on staff development days and through extended contracts.

### **Support employee agreements that advance results-driven professional learning.**

Employee contract negotiations provide another venue for school board members to advance a new vision for professional development. Consider these issues as part of the negotiation process:

- Restructure work schedules to facilitate ongoing collaboration and daily learning time for teachers.
- Create a compensation system that provides salary increments for demonstration of knowledge and skills as opposed to additional coursework and or degrees.
- Build recognition systems that reward school- and district-based collaborative efforts that accomplish goals for students.

### **Adopt a district policy on professional development.**

Review research, best practice, goals for student learning, and the views of stakeholders as part of adopting a formal professional development policy. A comprehensive policy can address the following.

- A rationale for professional development, including its contribution to district goals.
- Mission and beliefs guiding the district's professional development program.
- A statement on national or locally adopted standards for professional development.
- Resources dedicated to professional development, including finances, time, and staff.
- District positions on required and optional employee participation in professional development at the local, state, and national levels.
- Compensation and rewards for professional development, including certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

### **Operate as a learning community.**

A school board that is committed to professional learning demonstrates its commitment through its actions. Such boards participate in individual and group learning opportunities. Evidence of the board's commitment to learning community can include the following:

- Study session time allocated to build board knowledge and skills in areas associated with board responsibilities.
- Presentation by a district employee on a key district program at the beginning of each board meeting.
- Special community meetings for study and dialogue on key issues confronting the district.
- Support for association memberships that offer professional learning opportunities.
- Professional journals, newspapers, and leadership books that are read and discussed.
- Participation in professional meetings and conferences.
- Attendance at professional meetings or on visitations with staff members to develop a first-hand understanding of programs being considered for the district.

While individual growth is encouraged, board members recognize the value of group conversations that facilitate deep understanding of complex district issues. Such conversations enable the board to act in accordance with jointly held understandings and stronger convictions.

### **Challenge and responsibility**

In 2000, the Education Commission of the States concluded that "it is the responsibility of state and district policymakers and educators to take the lead in making sure all teachers have the skills, knowledge, and support they need to succeed."

That responsibility is just as real today. Changing school systems is a tremendous challenge as well as an important responsibility. No one is in a better position to do this work than school board members. And few decisions school boards make are more important than those that improve educator and student performance.

As Dee Hock, the founder of Visa, once said, "It is no failure to fall short of realizing all that we might dream. The failure is to fall short of dreaming all that we might realize."

*Stephanie Hirsh is deputy executive director at the National Staff Development Council ([www.nsd.org](http://www.nsd.org)) and a third-term school board trustee in the Richardson ISD, Dallas.*

# What to Do About Teacher Quality

## Options and information for school leaders

School boards and administrators—especially those faced with having to notify parents that their children’s teachers are “not highly qualified” or that their schools are “in need of improvement”—will want to consider their full range of options, like those introduced by our guest authors. The broad recognition by school boards, administrators, teachers, unions, and universities that new realities demand new ways of doing things presents a great opportunity for innovation. However, successful school leaders will go forward with their eyes open to the potential difficulties.

First, many good ideas cost money. At a minimum, they may necessitate a reordering of priorities. While it is true that NCLB focuses more resources on teacher quality, it’s also true that federal funding represents a fraction of local budgets, typically around 7 percent. Many budgets are straining under new federal mandates, state cutbacks, over-reliance on property taxes, increasing or declining enrollment, and growing special needs costs.

In these circumstances, some innovations are proving harder to see through to success than was initially thought. Iowa’s statewide pay for performance system, for example, may be in trouble as the state whets its budget knife. Georgia’s bonuses for teachers to obtain certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are proving to be unexpectedly costly as many teachers complete the prestigious program.

Second, informed board members should be clear-eyed and strategic about the employee relations and collective bargaining outlook. Depending on how they are designed—and on how teachers are consulted or engaged in the process—departures from traditional systems for preparing, hiring, training, and compensating teachers have engendered varying degrees of support, ambivalence, or outright hostility from some teachers and teachers unions.

Rotherham and Mead are correct when they observe that “whole forests are being felled” in the debate over the value of state teacher certification requirements,

and the same is true for many of the other issues this edition of *Insider* explores. For those who want to pursue the strategies we’ve reviewed, we offer select examples of additional resources below.

Every one of these resources and many more are conveniently available online at your National Affiliate page on NSBA’s Web site, [www.nsba.org](http://www.nsba.org). We strongly encourage you to visit the site, which provides a wealth of resources related to No Child Left Behind generally. If you need your National Affiliate password or other help accessing your Members Only resources, contact Diane Skerrett at [dskerrett@nsba.org](mailto:dskerrett@nsba.org).

### NCLB on Highly Qualified Teachers

Federal guidance documents on teacher quality include:

- *Improving Teacher Quality: Non-Regulatory Draft Guidance—Revised*. U.S. Department of Education, September 2003: Review of requirements on preparation, training, and recruitment of high-quality teachers and principals.



Successful school leaders will go forward with their eyes open to the potential difficulties.



- *Title I Paraprofessional Non-Regulatory Guidance*. U.S. Department of Education, November 2002: Review of NCLB provisions regarding Title I paraprofessionals.

### Teacher quality generally

Much debate revolves around what really characterizes effective teachers.

- *Teacher Quality: Understanding the Effectiveness of Teacher Attributes*. Economic Policy Institute, August 2003: Review of empirical studies of the impact of teacher characteristics on teacher effectiveness. Emphasizes the need to base teacher training practices and policies on solid evidence of what really works in the classroom, rather than simplistic measures and assumptions found in state and federal policies, including NCLB.

- *In Pursuit of Quality Teaching: Five Key Strategies for Policymakers*. Education Commission of the States, 2000: Recommendations to state and local poli-

cy makers on teacher preparation, recruitment, training, and accountability.

### Teacher preparation

NSBA’s advocacy staff has been active on Capitol Hill in the reauthorization of Title II the Higher Education Act (H.R. 2211), pushing for more support of local school districts and for stronger accountability to ensure that teacher colleges produce highly qualified and effective teachers. NSBA also supports the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act of 2003 (H.R. 438), which would more than triple student loan forgiveness for math, science, and special education teachers who serve in Title I schools for at least five years.

- The Advocacy and Issues section of NSBA’s Web site includes a page with information on the Higher Education Act and the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act.
- The American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence is a nonprofit organization funded and promoted by the U.S. Department of Education for its Passport to Education, which offers districts and teachers a cheaper, faster ticket to highly qualified

status. To be certified, teacher candidates need only pass two online tests and pay \$500. So far only Pennsylvania has recognized American Board certification, but more states may do so this year. This is the kind of program Education Trust and others criticize for certifying teachers who lack any exposure to the classroom. Not surprisingly, colleges of education also tend to take a dim view of this approach.

### Recruitment

When it comes to recruiting, school districts may be up against factors beyond their control, like an employment market with higher-paying opportunities or a housing market beyond the reach of most teacher salaries. This makes it all the more crucial for the school district to do a good job on those factors that are more within its control.

- *National Teacher Recruitment Clearinghouse*. Maintained by Recruiting

New Teachers, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting school districts and teachers with recruitment challenges. Includes resources available free online or for purchase.

- *Missed Opportunities: How We Keep High-Quality Teachers Out of Urban Classrooms*. New Teacher Project, September 2003: New report describing how slow and cumbersome hiring practices are driving away qualified teaching applicants interested in serving in high-need districts. Includes specific policy and administrative recommendations that may prove helpful for school boards and district leadership.

### Retention

Schools don't realize enough return on their recruitment investment when, with or without pay incentives, new teachers leave after one year.

- *New Teacher Excellence: Retaining Our Best*. Alliance for Excellent Education, December 2002: Report advocating not only financial incentives for teachers to serve high-poverty schools, but also effective state and local induction programs, such as mentoring, to help new teachers succeed. Identifies key obstacles to effectiveness and provides examples of promising existing programs.

### Teacher compensation

In rough order from less to more controversial, extra pay has been proposed for (1) acquiring more skills, (2) serving in challenging schools, (3) teaching hard-to-fill subjects, and (4) performance as measured by student academic achievement. In recent years, both the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have debated how to respond to differential pay proposals. Among the critiques of different proposals:

- They are too "arbitrary" and leave too much discretion to administrators.
- They are too complex for teachers to understand.
- Such experiments are nothing new and have failed to raise student achievement.
- They pit teachers against one another instead of fostering collaboration.
- They exacerbate disincentives to serve disadvantaged children.
- They fail to reflect the acknowledged limitations of standardized testing as a meaningful measure of academic achievement.

For some examples of the debate, see:

- *Reinventing Teacher Compensation*

*Systems*, by Carolyn Kelley and Allen Odden. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, September 1995: Well-known research essay that reviews history of teacher compensation and discusses innovative systems. CPRE, which published the report, operates federally funded research centers and a Teacher Compensation Project, with online resources.

- "AFT On The Issues: Merit Pay." American Federation of Teachers, April 2001: Brief position statement contrasting merit pay, which AFT opposes, with pay for performance, which it may support. Acknowledges shortcomings of traditional compensation in new era of accountability.

- *Stand By Me: What Teachers Really Think About Unions, Merit Pay, and Other Professional Matters*. Public Agenda, 2003: National opinion survey finding that teachers are receptive to extra pay for those who work harder or serve in more challenging schools. Teachers are more skeptical of paying more based on test scores or subject matter. However, younger teachers are more supportive of merit pay.

- "The Folly of Merit Pay," Alfie Kohn. *Education Week*, Sept. 17, 2003:

Commentary arguing that professionalism, not pay, is the issue for teacher effectiveness. Cites previous studies showing that merit pay attempts were unsuccessful and argues that they actually undermine professionalism.

### Value-added analysis

Of the various proposals for differential teacher pay, those linking pay to student test scores are the most controversial. For better or worse, however, the reality for school leaders is that school decisions are increasingly influenced—and success measured—by test scores.

Even proponents of using student test data for teacher evaluation generally argue that simply using absolute test scores will not work because such scores are more closely correlated with family income than with teacher effectiveness. As Rotherham and Mead point out, the focus has shifted to value-added analysis as a way to control for such variables.

- "The Value of Value-Added Analysis," Darrel Drury and Harold Doran. *NSBA Policy Research Brief*, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 2003: Authors from New American Schools advocate value-added analysis to drive continuous improvement in instruction, teacher evaluation, and professional development. They defend against criticisms and link to NCLB mandates.

- *Operation Public Education: A New System of Accountability*. University of Pennsylvania, September 2002: Report proposing various innovations for Pennsylvania's public schools, including value-added measurement of educational effectiveness.

### Professional development

Some nationally prominent resources:

- *Standards for Staff Development—Revised*. National Staff Development Council, 2001: Standards mentioned in Stephanie Hirsh's article, a consensus statement by a coalition of national education associations, including NSBA.

- *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*: Many states and school systems offer bonuses to teachers who complete the rigorous National Board certification.

For Web links to these and other resources, go to the Members Only page of NSBA's National Affiliate Web site, [www.nsba.org/na](http://www.nsba.org/na). ■

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### Promise and Challenge

*Continued from page 1*

entirely warranted, does not absolve them of their own responsibility to rise to the challenge of recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers for every child. Our second guest column, by Andrew J. Rotherham and Sara Mead of the Progressive Policy Institute, explores the use of one potential tool: differential pay, instead of the traditional pay schedule based solely on service years and education. Rotherham and Mead argue that this tool can help school boards address teacher shortages, especially in hard-to-fill subjects and challenging schools.

No teachers, however highly qualified, come to the job knowing everything they will ever need to meet our collective challenge of leaving no child behind. Our third guest piece, by Stephanie Hirsh of the National Staff Development Council, suggests steps school boards can take to ensure that professional development for teachers is sufficiently systematic and rigorous to equip teachers for fulfilling NCLB's lofty goals.

Following these columns, we pick up on some of our guest authors' points by providing additional information and listing other helpful resources for school districts on this important challenge.

—Thomas Hutton, NSBA staff attorney