



Highlights of [GAO-06-25](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) of 2001 established qualification requirements that teachers of core academic subjects must meet by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Congress has appropriated approximately \$3 billion a year through the Title II, Part A (Title II), of NCLBA for teacher improvement programs since the law was passed. With the deadline approaching for all teachers to meet the requirements, GAO was asked to examine (1) the status of state efforts to meet NCLBA's teacher qualification requirements, (2) the use of Title II funds in selected districts, and (3) how the U.S. Department of Education (Education) monitors states and assists them with implementation of the requirements. To obtain this information, GAO reviewed teacher qualifications data submitted to Education by 47 states, conducted site visits to 6 states selected for variance in factors such as teacher requirements and geographic location, visited 11 school districts across these states identified as high-need, and interviewed national experts and Education officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Education explore ways to make the Web-based information on teacher qualification requirements more accessible to users of its Web site. In comments, Education officials agreed with our recommendation and reported taking actions to address it.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-25.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Marnie Shaul at (202) 512-6778 or shaulm@gao.gov.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

Improved Accessibility to Education's Information Could Help States Further Implement Teacher Qualification Requirements

What GAO Found

Data reported to Education by 47 states suggest that the majority of core academic classes were taught by teachers who met NCLBA requirements during the 2003-2004 school year. States have improved in their ability to track and report the percentage of core academic classes taught by teachers who met NCLBA qualification requirements, but several limitations on the quality and precision of state-reported data make it difficult to determine the exact percentage of core academic classes taught by teachers meeting the requirements. Five of the 6 states that we visited allowed veteran teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency through a state-developed procedure called High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation (HOUSSE). Officials in states and districts that we visited said that teachers of multiple subjects, such as teachers in rural schools with a small teaching staff, would likely face challenges meeting the requirements by the 2005-2006 deadline.

The 11 school districts that we visited all used Title II funds to provide professional development, and most used Title II funds to reduce class size. Officials in the majority of these districts indicated that NCLBA had led to improvements in the kinds of professional development they funded with Title II funds. Although officials in over half of the districts indicated that they continued to use Title II funds to reduce class size, an activity that was supported under a federal program that predated NCLBA, some district officials told us that they had shifted funds away from class size reduction to initiatives designed to improve teachers' subject matter knowledge and instructional skills, such as professional development. All districts that we visited reported considering student achievement data and targeting Title II funds to improve instruction in the academic subjects in which students were lagging behind. In the 11 districts, few efforts funded with Title II targeted specific groups of teachers, such as teachers in high-poverty schools. Title II funds constituted a small proportion of total funds that districts could use for teacher improvement initiatives, and all districts that we visited used several other funding sources to support their teacher programs.

Education monitored state efforts to meet the teacher qualification requirements and offered multiple types of assistance to help teachers meet the requirements. In monitoring states, Education has found several areas of concern, such as states not ensuring that certain newly hired teachers met NCLBA's requirements. Education's assistance has included professional development for teachers and site visits to provide technical assistance to state officials. Education officials said that their Web site has been an important tool for disseminating resources about the requirements, but officials from most states and districts that we visited told us that they were unaware of some of these resources or had difficulty locating them, despite frequently using the Web site.