



Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman
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H.R. 1 Reforms Would Promote Highly Qualified Teachers

America's public schools are facing a growing shortage of highly qualified teachers. To address this serious issue, the leaders of the House-Senate education conference have put forth a proposal based on President Bush's principles of accountability, flexibility and local control, and funding for what works. The proposal, expected to be considered by conferees Friday, is aimed at supporting teachers in their work and ensuring that every public school student has the chance to learn from a highly-qualified educator.

Specifically, the proposal would consolidate current federal programs into a new Teacher Quality Program that provides greater flexibility for local school districts. It would apply "Dollars to the Classroom" principles to teacher quality funds, requiring that 95 percent of funds go to the local level. It would make it easier for local schools to recruit and retain excellent teachers, and require states to have a highly qualified teacher in every public classroom within five years. The proposal would emphasize state and local methods for recruiting qualified teachers and include an explicit ban against any type of federal teacher certification or test.

Also proposed are a number of provisions aimed at streamlining bureaucracy, injecting new common sense and flexibility into federal rules, and making it easier for qualified teachers to do their jobs effectively. The proposal includes a provision to help ensure that teachers, principals, and other school professionals can undertake reasonable actions to maintain order and discipline in the classroom -- **without the fear of being dragged into court or subjected to frivolous lawsuits.**

Message of the Day

All public school students deserve the chance to learn from a highly qualified teacher.

- ❑ *Local schools should have the flexibility to use federal funds to train, recruit, and retain highly qualified teachers.*
- ❑ *Different schools have different needs. The federal bureaucracy should not hamstring local schools from addressing their own unique needs.*
- ❑ *Teachers who take reasonable actions to maintain classroom discipline should be protected by law.*

DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- While prohibiting national teacher testing or certification, the proposal would push states and local school districts to have a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by the end of the 2005-06 school year.
- The proposal would consolidate current teacher programs into a single, flexible program, providing local school districts with greater freedom and resources than ever before.
- The proposal would provide civil immunity to teachers and other education professionals (including local educational agencies and their individual school board members) for actions taken to maintain discipline, order, or control in the classroom or school.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Perhaps the single most important factor in how much a child learns at school is the presence or absence of a good teacher." -- William J. Bennett, "A Few Lessons Public Schools Need to Learn," May 15, 2001