

## FORUM ON EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

May 15, 2007

The Honorable Ruben E. Hinojosa, Chairman  
Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness Subcommittee  
House Education and Labor Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

***Re: Forum on Educational Accountability Statement for the Record for the May 17, 2007  
Hearing of the House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and  
Competitiveness***

Dear Chairman Hinojosa:

The Forum on Educational Accountability (FEA) commends you for your support to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and for holding a hearing on the specific issues of common concern impacting the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. FEA is composed of some of the national education, civil rights, religious, disability and civic organizations that have endorsed the *Joint Organizational Statement on No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* initially issued on October 21, 2004. There are now over 120 organizations endorsing the Joint Statement.

FEA appreciates the opportunity to submit a Statement for the Record, and looks forward to working with you closely to ensure that the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act and the reauthorization of ESEA/NCLB are aligned to effectively address improved teacher quality and academic achievement for all children.

FEA urges you and the members of the Subcommittee to consider the following recommendations in your final deliberations as you prepare to reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965. Please note that we have proposed amendments to S. 1614, introduced during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, since the Senate bill already contained related provisions to which our amendments could readily be attached. Of course, we would be willing to propose additional legislative language and/or appreciate the opportunity to provide additional clarification of our concerns if so desired.

Specifically, under Section 202 of S. 1614, State Grants, we recommend the inclusion of the following changes in legislative language:

1. *Strategies for teaching higher-order skills*

At the end of Sec. 202(d)(1)(B)(ii), strike “and” and, after Sec. 202(d)(1)(B)(iii), insert “and” followed by a new subsection (iv), that reads: “(iv) enable pre-service teachers to effectively teach higher-order analytical, evaluative, problem-solving and communications skills appropriate for the teacher’s content or specialty area;”

Rationale: The federal role should be to leverage its limited resources in a manner that would result in greater efforts on the parts of States to ensure increased coverage of not only problem-solving and communications skills but also higher-order analytical and evaluative skills as well. It will be essential for students to have higher level skills in the workplace, for higher education and in life.

### *2. Enhanced clinical programs*

In Sec. 202(d)(1)(D), replace “lasting not less than 1 term” with “lasting not less than 2 terms, through integration of education theory and methods coursework into closely supervised clinical practice....”

Rationale: Research now indicates that to be effective, clinical programs must be extended beyond 1 term to as much as 3 terms. We recognize the significant impact with the expansion, but we also recognize that many teacher preparation colleges are moving toward longer clinical programs. Therefore, we recommend increasing the minimal time for clinical programs to be at least two terms. This requirement should be placed on new students so as not to impose new requirements on students currently enrolled in such programs.

Further, research indicates that teacher education programs that are successful in preparing teachers who effectively teach diverse students are ones that closely integrate their theory and methods coursework into extensive clinical experience. Such integration of coursework with clinical practice needs to become the norm.

### *3. Alternative route to certification requirements*

In Sec. 202(d)(2)(D), after “which may include the development of a State test for such areas,” replace the period with a comma, insert the word “and”, and add a new subsection (E) as follows:

“(E) all alternative routes to certification programs are high quality, include substantial mentoring, supervision, and clinical experience, and are successfully completed before teachers are considered ‘highly qualified’ within the meaning of section 1119 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.”

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In Section 202(d)(2), please add a new subsection (F) as follows: "All teacher candidates shall be assessed by the State and have their academic content knowledge and teaching skills considered 'highly qualified' within the meaning of section 1119 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, whether they come from traditional or alternative route programs."

Rationale: Many school officials are concerned that alternative certification programs are viewed as short-cuts to qualification when they should be viewed as an optional process to acquire certification through alternative experiences having similar value.

Comparable changes in teacher preparation to those recommended for Section 202 of S. 1614, State Grants, above, should likewise be made in the parallel Section 203 of S. 1614, Partnership Grants. Specifically, we recommend the inclusion of the following legislative language for Partnership Grants:

*1. Strategies for teaching higher-order skills*

At the end of Sec. 203(e)(1)(B)(iii), insert a new subsection (iv) as follows: "(iv) enable pre-service teachers to effectively teach higher-order analytical, evaluative, problem-solving and communications skills appropriate for the teacher's content or specialty area;" and renumber the current subsection "iv" as subsection "v".

Rationale: The federal role should be to leverage its limited resources in a manner that would result in greater efforts on the parts of States to ensure increased coverage of not only problem-solving and communications skills but also higher-order analytical and evaluative skills as well.

*2. Enhanced clinical programs*

In Sec. 203(e)(1)(D), replace "lasting not less than 1 term" with "lasting not less than 2 terms, through integration of theory and methods coursework into closely supervised clinical practice, ...."

Rationale: Research now indicates that to be effective, clinical programs must be extended beyond 1 term to as much as 3 terms. We recognize the significant impact with the expansion, but we also recognize that many teacher preparation colleges are moving toward longer clinical programs. Therefore, we recommend increasing the minimal time for clinical programs to be at least two terms. This requirement should be placed on new students so as not to impose new requirements on students currently enrolled in such programs.

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Further, research indicates that teacher education programs that are successful in preparing teachers who effectively teach diverse students are ones that closely integrate their theory and methods coursework into extensive clinical experience. Such integration of coursework with clinical practice needs to become the norm.

We very much appreciate your interest in improving the quality of education for all children. Questions related to our recommendations should be directed to Gary Ratner, Executive Director, Citizens for Effective Schools, at 301-469-8000 or to Reginald M. Felton, director of federal relations, National School Boards Association, at 703-838-6782.

Sincerely,

Gary Ratner  
Chairman, Forum on Educational Accountability Capacity-Building Committee  
Executive Director  
Citizens for Effective Schools

Reginald M. Felton  
Member, Forum on Educational Accountability Capacity-Building Committee  
Director, Federal Relations  
National School Boards Association