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Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-03-631](#), a report to Congressional Requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

In December 2001, Congress passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA). The act required that all teachers of core subjects be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year and provided funding to help states and districts meet the requirement. In general, the act requires that teachers have a bachelor's degree, meet full state certification, and demonstrate subject area knowledge for every core subject they teach. This report focuses on the (1) number of teachers who met the highly qualified criteria during the 2002-03 school year, (2) conditions that hinder states' and districts' ability to meet the requirement, and (3) activities on which states and districts were planning to spend their Title II funds. GAO surveyed 50 states and the District of Columbia and a nationally representative sample of districts about their plans to implement the requirement. GAO also visited and interviewed officials in 8 states and 16 districts to discuss their efforts to implement the law.

What GAO Recommends

To help states determine which teachers are highly qualified and the actions they need to take to meet the requirement, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Education provide more information to states, especially on ways to evaluate the subject area knowledge of current teachers. The Department of Education provided written comments on a draft of this report and generally agreed with GAO's recommendation.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-631.

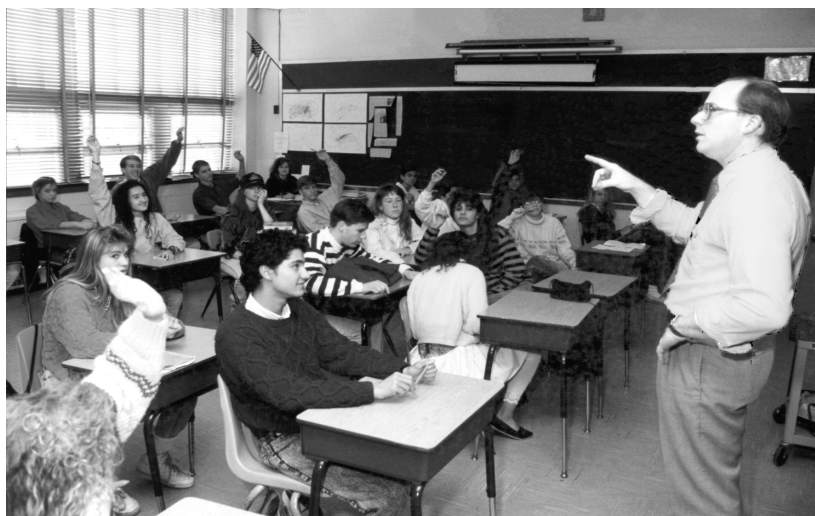
To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Marnie S. Shaul, 512-7215, shaulm@gao.gov.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT

More Information Would Help States Determine Which Teachers Are Highly Qualified

What GAO Found

GAO could not develop reliable data on the number of highly qualified teachers because states did not have the information needed to determine whether all teachers met the criteria. Officials from 8 states visited said they did not have the information they needed to develop methods to evaluate current teachers' subject area knowledge and the criteria for some teachers were not issued until December 2002. Officials from 7 of 8 states visited said they did not have data systems that could track teacher qualifications for each core subject they teach.



Source: U.S. Department of Education.

Both state and district officials cited many conditions in the GAO survey that hinder their ability to have all highly qualified teachers. State and district officials reported teacher pay issues, such as low salaries and lack of incentive pay, teacher shortages, and other issues as hindrances. GAO's survey estimates show that significantly more high-poverty than low-poverty districts reported hindrances, such as little support for new teachers. Rural district officials cited hindrances related to their size and isolated locations. State officials reported they needed assistance or information from Education, such as in developing incentives to teach in high-poverty schools, and Education's strategic plan addresses some of these needs.

To help meet the requirement for highly qualified teachers, state survey respondents reported they planned to spend about 65 percent of their Title II funds on professional development activities authorized under Title II, and districts planned to spend an estimated 66 percent on recruitment and retention. Both state and district officials planned to spend much larger amounts of funds from sources other than Title II funds on such activities. High-poverty districts planned to spend more Title II funds on recruitment and retention than low-poverty districts. State and district officials visited said that most activities were a continuation of those begun previously.