

# ESEA Alert

*California Teachers Association*

## Parental Notification Requirements Outlined in New Federal Law

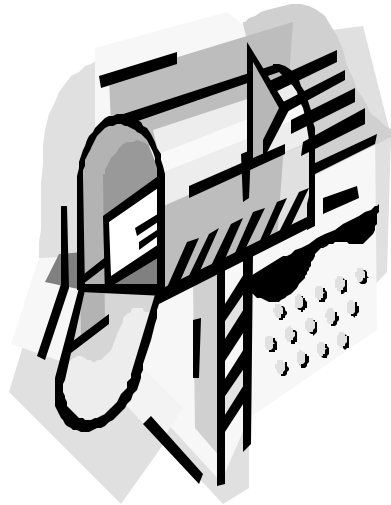
On January 8, 2002, with a stroke of his pen, President George W. Bush established major new federal oversight of America's schools.

The impact of this reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) will be felt for many years to come. The law establishes timetables related to student achievement, requirements for teacher credentialing, and educational requirements for paraprofessionals.

For example, by 2005-2006 the law requires all teachers to be "highly-qualified" (*see story below*). By 2014, the law requires that all students reach "proficiency."

For the current school year (2002-03), ESEA establishes new parental notification requirements. District wide, all parents must be informed that they have right to request information regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher.

This includes whether the teacher has met state credential or license criteria for grade level and subject matter taught, as well as any college and graduate degree(s) held.



### ESEA FEATURES

- Increased Federal Funding
- Annual Student Testing
- Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)
- School Report Cards
- Qualifications of Teachers and Paraprofessionals
- Reading First Program
- Teacher and Principal Professional Development
- Technology Grants
- Funding Transferability
- Safe and Drug-Free Schools
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers

In addition, in Title I schools, parents must be notified if their child is taught by or assigned to a teacher who is not "highly qualified" for four consecutive weeks.

It is CTA's hope that local Associations will work with District administrators to create a 4-week letter that does not stigmatize our members who do not meet the state's definition of "highly-qualified."

**Attached to this ESEA Alert is a sample letter that may be useful to chapter bargainers during discussions with your District. We urge you to get involved now.**

## So What Is a "Highly-Qualified Teacher" Anyway?

One of the most controversial aspects of the ESEA is the new requirement regarding teacher qualifications. The new law requires all newly hired teachers in Title I programs to be "highly qualified." By 2005-2006, all existing teachers will also be required to meet the "highly qualified" definition.

In May, the CA State Board of Education agreed on a definition of "highly qualified" that would exclude only those teachers who are misassigned or are on a credential waiver. Pre-interns and interns who are enrolled in a program leading to a clear credential would be considered "highly-qualified."

Unfounded rumors have circulated that the federal government rejected this definition and some Districts are using the federal law's more restrictive definition in their staffing decisions at Title I schools. CTA suggests that local leaders urge District officials to stick with the State's definition.