

**Position Statement on Highly Qualified Teachers
under No Child Left Behind**

Under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), new guidelines for teacher preparedness have been established to ensure that teachers in every classroom in the United States are highly qualified. With NCLB's primary emphasis on core subjects and content-area mastery, NCLB's definition of a highly qualified teacher does not readily recognize those specialists who have received training to address the instructional needs of English language learners, such as English as a second language (ESL) or bilingual educators.

Highly qualified teachers of English language learners who are credentialed in bilingual education, ESL, or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) have not only met the core curriculum requirements in education, but have also received specialized training in second language acquisition, bilingualism and biliteracy development, linguistics and applied linguistics, second language pedagogy and methodology, literacy development, curriculum and materials development, assessment, cross-cultural communication, and multiculturalism. Effective teacher education programs, such as those that follow the TESOL/NCATE P-12 ESL Teacher Education Program Standards, not only prepare teacher candidates in core content areas and teaching competency, but also in the specialized skills necessary to teach in linguistically diverse and cross-cultural settings.

ESL and bilingual educators are responsible not only for helping English language learners acquire English, but are also the first teachers responsible for teaching according to standards for core subjects. This requires the competence to present challenging content to students with limited English skills. Therefore, TESOL recommends that those ESL and bilingual educators who are fully credentialed by their state be recognized as and considered highly qualified under NCLB.

*Approved by the Board of Directors
February 2005*