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CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL POLICY

Cost of Meeting House and Senate Proposed Head Start Teacher Qualification Requirements

This analysis provides a preliminary estimate of the necessary level of funding needed to raise the degree qualifications to meet the requirements in the Head Start reauthorization legislation currently proposed in the House and Senate. While each bill is designed to improve the quality of Head Start programs by requiring an increase in the number of teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher, there are important differences in the two proposals.

CLASP's analysis demonstrates that it will cost at least \$2.7 billion over six years to cover the cost of educating the necessary number of teachers in the House bill and raising their compensation to the levels of kindergarten teachers. To pay for the cost of the Senate requirements for increased education and raising compensation, CLASP estimates that it will cost as much as \$3.4 billion over six years. These estimates include the cost of tuition and books, substitutes and raising Head Start salaries so that those teachers with bachelor's degrees were earning salaries comparable to kindergarten teachers with the same levels of education in their states or nationally.

Teachers with higher levels of education in early childhood development can improve outcomes for preschool children. Some studies look at any higher education and include both two- or four-year college degrees, and some studies only look at the four-year level. For example:

- *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, a study of early childhood development by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, concludes that “both formal education levels and recent, specialized training in child development have been found quite consistently to be associated with high-quality interactions and children’s development in center-based, family day care and even in inhome sitter arrangements.”¹
- The National Research Council’s volume on preschool education, *Eager to Learn*, recommends, “Each group of children in an early childhood education and care program should be assigned a teacher who has a B.A. degree with specialized education related to early childhood.”²
- The *National Child Care Staffing Study* found that teachers with B.A. degrees were “more sensitive, less harsh and detached, and more appropriate... than were teachers with less formal education.” Moreover, children with sensitive and responsive teachers scored higher on language measures and exhibited a higher level of peer play than other children.³

¹ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. J.P. Shonkoff and D.A. Phillips (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

² National Research Council. (2001). *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*. B.T. Bowman, M.S. Donovan, and M.S. Burns (Eds.). Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

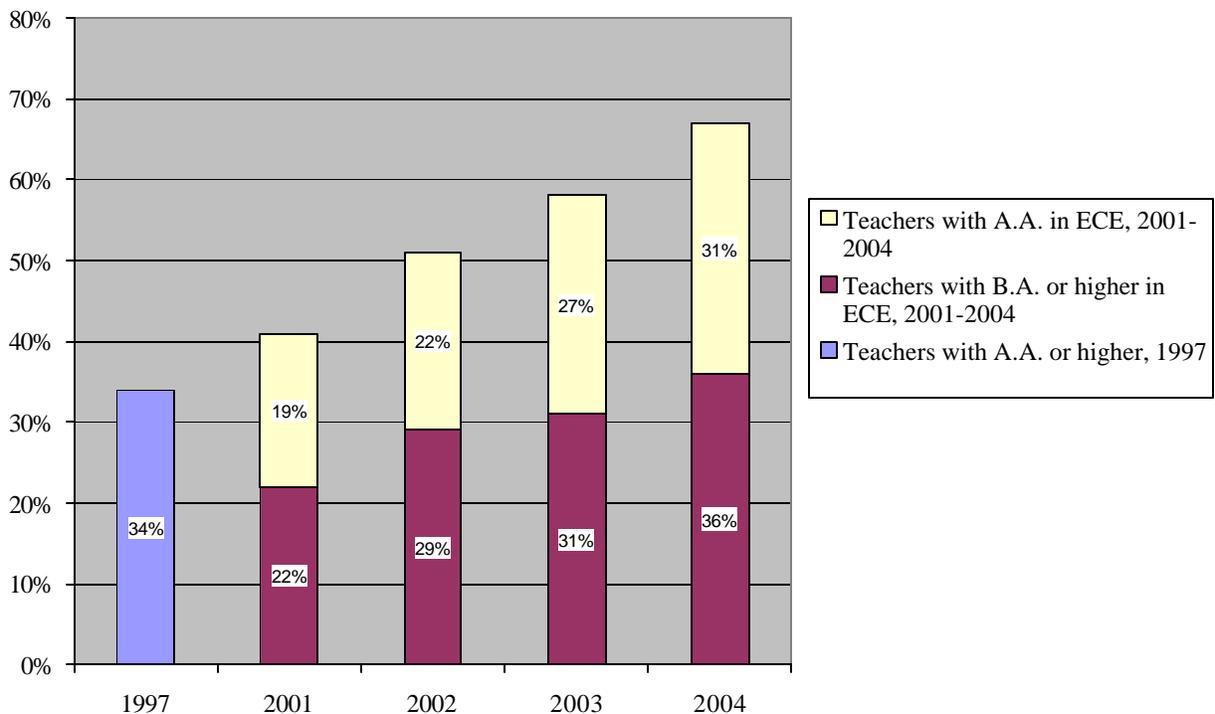
³ Whitebook, M., Howes, C., & Phillips, D. (1989). *Who Cares? Child Care Teachers and the Quality of Care in America: Final Report, National Child Care Staffing Study*. Oakland, CA: Child Care Employee Project.

- The *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* study of quality in child care centers found that the proportion of teachers with a college degree or more was positively related to quality.⁴

Increasing the share of Head Start teachers with higher levels of education is a laudable goal and good policy. However, inclusion of a such a provision in Head Start reauthorization legislation must be accompanied by resources and policies to help the program reach this mandate and to ensure that teachers are compensated adequately so that they will be more likely to remain in Head Start programs. Adequate compensation is critical if the long term goal of increasing the number of Head Start teachers with degrees is to be reached. In *Eager to Learn*, the authors found sufficient research to connect salary levels to quality: “employing qualified teachers who are satisfied with their compensation is associated with programs providing higher-quality early childhood experiences for children.”

Since the last reauthorization of Head Start in 1998, the number of Head Start teachers with associate degrees (A.A) and bachelor’s degrees (B.A.) has grown significantly (see chart).⁵

Teachers with Degrees in Early Childhood Education, 1997-2004



ECE=early childhood education

*Note: Data for 1997 simply report whether teachers have a college degree or not and does not break down the proportion with an A.A., B.A., or graduate degree. Therefore, the 1997 column represents all Head Start teachers with any college degree in early childhood education or a related field.

⁴ Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team. (1995). *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers, Public Report*, second edition. Denver, CO: Economics Department, University of Colorado at Denver.

⁵ For additional information on the growth in Head Start teachers with college degrees, see K. Hart and R. Schumacher (2005). *Making the Case: Improving Head Start Teacher Qualifications Requires Increased Investment*. Center for Law and Social Policy.

According to 2004 data:

- 36 percent of Head Start preschool teachers nationwide—over 17,000—have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree.
- 68 percent of Head Start teachers nationwide—about 33,000—have a minimum of an associate’s degree.
- Among those teachers without any credentials or a degree, 33 percent were pursuing a two- or four- year degree and 16 percent were pursuing a child development associate credential (CDA) or equivalent credential.

House Proposal

The House bill (HR 2123) requires that by 2011 at least 50 percent of all Head Start teachers nationwide in center-based programs have either a B.A. or advanced degree in early childhood education or a baccalaureate or advanced degree in a field related to early childhood education, with experience in teaching preschool children by 2011. CLASP estimates that the cost of increasing teacher education and compensation will be **nearly \$2.7 billion over six years**.

- To meet the B.A. requirements in the House bill, more than 7,200 additional B.A. teachers are needed for a total of approximately 23,000 teachers with a B.A.

Senate Proposal

The Senate bill (S. 1107) requires that: 1) all programs have either a minimum of 50% of teachers with a bachelor’s degree or 100% of teachers with B.A.’s (if B.A.’s or a higher requirement are required of state pre-kindergarten teachers) by 2011 and 2) all Head Start teachers nationally have no less than an associate’s degree by 2010.⁶ CLASP estimates that the total cost of increasing teacher education and compensation under this proposal will be **approximately \$3.4 billion over six years**.

- To meet the B.A. teacher requirements in the Senate bill nearly 18,000 additional B.A. teachers are needed for a total of 34,000 B.A. teachers.
- To meet the A.A. teacher requirements in the Senate bill over 15,000 additional A.A. teachers are needed so that 100 percent of Head Start teachers have a minimum of an A.A. degree.

Methodology⁷:

⁶ In this analysis we used states as a proxy for programs. Four states -- Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and Virginia -- already have more than 50% of their teachers with B.A. and are just included in compensation cost calculations.

⁷ The same methodology was used for the states that require 50% of teachers to have a B.A. and states that require 100% of teachers to have a B.A. States with the higher pre-kindergarten requirement (as identified by NIEER) are: Alabama, Arkansas, Washington, DC, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

- In each state, the annual cost of tuition for Head Start teachers is estimated based upon the average 4-year public school tuition, books, and transportation costs in six regions of the country (based on the College Board's "Trends in College Prices, 2004"). The total tuition assistance cost for one HS teacher in each year in each state is multiplied by the number of additional teachers in each state requiring a B.A.
- The estimate assumes that the B.A. requirement would be achieved by moving A.A. teachers to a B.A. and that the average Head Start teacher would be able to take no more than 12 credit hours/year (2 courses/semester) as a part-time student. There is no information on the number of credits that current Head Start teachers with an A.A. degree have that may be applied toward a 4-year degree. In this estimate, it is assumed that a fifth of all teachers going for the B.A. in each state would complete their B.A. in each year from 2007-2011.⁸ CLASP believes this is a conservative estimate of tuition costs because it assumes that all teachers moving from an A.A. to a B.A. are coming in with *at least* 60 credit hours to count towards their B.A. whereas many individuals may not have completed this many credits or they may not all matriculate towards the 4-year degree. The estimate also does not include the cost of attrition or additional tuition costs if programs aim to have *more* than 50% of their teachers complete B.A.'s.
- Tuition costs in each state were inflated using the national average rate of tuition increase for 4 year public schools over the past 10 years (4.3%).
- The estimate assumes that substitutes would be required only for teachers currently working in full-day, full-week (5 days per week) Head Start programs. As there is no data showing the number of teachers working full days, the estimate includes a calculated percentage of children enrolled in full-day, full-week centers in each state and assumes it is equal to the percentage of teachers in each state working in full-day, full-week centers, and the percentage of those going for B.A.s who are working in full-time centers. The estimate also assumes that each full-day teacher would need to take an hour off of work for each credit hour/week (6 hours).⁹ The average hourly pay of a Head Start teacher with an A.A. degree in each state was used???? to approximate a substitute's hourly wage. The substitute hourly wage was inflated by using the Employment Cost Index for wages (ECI-w) and the inflated substitute pay in each year was multiplied by the total number of substitutes needed.
- The cost of raising each B.A. teacher's salary to the equivalent of a kindergarten teacher is calculated by comparing the average Head Start B.A. teacher salary with the average Kindergarten teacher salary (Bureau of Labor Statistics data, May 2004) in each state. Salaries were inflated in each year using the ECI. In our model, in Year 1, the current number of B.A. teachers is paid the equivalent of a kindergarten teacher's salary. In

⁸ Assuming that all teachers take the entire six years to complete their degree, the total cost estimate would increase to \$3.7 million, due to the additional costs of tuition each year.

⁹ We do not have data breaking down the exact percentage of post-secondary courses offered during traditional times (i.e. school-year, during the day), so for the purpose of the calculation, the estimate assumes that teachers would only be attending courses offered during the school-day. Consequently, this estimate may be slightly inflated.

year 2, the additional teachers who would have completed their degree (one-fifth of the total number of teachers pursuing a B.A.) are also compensated at this level; by year six all B.A. teachers receive the Kindergarten equivalent salary.

The same methodology is used to calculate the costs associated with achieving the 100% Associate Degree requirement with the following differences:

- The estimate assumes the total annual tuition assistance cost for one Head Start teacher based upon the national average 2-year public school tuition, books and supplies, and transportation fees in “Trends in College Pricing, 2004.” Tuition costs were inflated in each year based on the average rate of 2-year public school tuition increase over the past 10 years (2.5%).
- The additional compensation costs were calculated by comparing the average salary of a HS teacher with an A.A. with the average salary of a HS teacher with a CDA, based on 2004 Head Start PIR data. The estimate calculates the cost of paying the additional A.A. teachers in each year the average HS A.A. teacher salary, compared to the average HS CDA salary.