

## **NCLB Commission Recommendations Issues of Interest to Reading Recovery**

The NCLB Commission released its recommendations for reauthorization to much fanfare on Tuesday, February 13, 2007. Senator Kennedy and Representative Miller (chairs of the Senate and House education committees, respectively) presided over the event, which speaks to the traction the recommendations will have on Capitol Hill.

The full report (230 pp) is a very interesting read:

([http://www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/%7BDEB6F227-659B-4EC8-8F84-8DF23CA704F5%7D/NCLB\\_Book.pdf](http://www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/%7BDEB6F227-659B-4EC8-8F84-8DF23CA704F5%7D/NCLB_Book.pdf)), although a shortcut in the Table in Section 3 (36 pp.) compares the recommendations to current law.

In addition, below are some key recommendations of interest to the Reading Recovery community. Page numbers refer to the full report.

1. Reading First - while the report applauds Reading First generally (p. 48) it also recognizes the problem in implementation with a recommendation (p. 99) that the USDE be statutorily barred from interfering with the selection and use by a state, district or school of a curriculum or program if it meets the requirements outlined in a program funded under the law. (Lucy's note - there is already a prohibition against curriculum mandates in the NCLB, so it will be interesting to see how it might be modified to have more impact).
2. Highly Qualified Effective Teachers (HQET) - the Commission recommends requiring all teachers to be Highly Qualified Effective Teachers. Under this system, teachers would need to produce learning gains and receive positive principal or teacher peer review evaluations (p. 48).
3. Teacher supply - Institutions of Higher Education must set goals for increasing the number of graduates qualified to teach in shortage areas (p. 52) in order to participate in student financial aid programs under the Higher Education Act.
4. Enforcement - The Commission recommends that states establish a procedure to allow individuals or groups of citizens to bring complaints against a district or state to the state, and possible to the USDE. (Lucy's note - it will be interesting to see how this is different than the role of the Office of Inspector General).
5. Research Funding - The Commission recommends doubling the research budget of the Institute for Education Sciences (p. 98).
6. National Reading Assessment - The Commission has several recommendation related to assessments, with an emphasis of developing a national or common scale between states. The report mentions the Lexile Framework for Reading as a widely adopted method for measuring reader ability and text difficulty on a common scale (p. 123). (Lucy's note - the Lexile Framework was developed under a grant from NICHD).
7. State reading standards - The commission recommends that state assess their reading or language arts, mathematics and science standards against requirements for success in college and in challenging jobs (p. 125).
8. English language learners (ELL) - Chapter 8 includes a number of recommendations related to ELLs, including withholding funds from states w/o English language proficiency standards, developing alternate assessments, requiring states to establish an endorsement for teaching ELLs and requiring the USDE to develop a common scale across states (pp. 147 - 151).