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NEW REPORT GIVES ILLINOIS A GRADE OF “C” FOR TEACHER POLICIES

Illinois has made progress on teacher effectiveness policy but still has room for improvement

Today the National Council on Teacher Quality releases its 2011 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, its fifth annual report grading the states based on the rules and regulations that shape teacher quality

January 25, 2012 (Washington, DC)— A new report released today by the not-for-profit, non-partisan National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) finds major advances in teacher policy across the country, largely driven by state adoption of policies for including student achievement as a measure of effectiveness in teacher evaluations, and using teacher effectiveness evidence in decisions about teacher tenure and dismissal.

Illinois showed more progress against NCTQ’s 36 research-based goals in 2011 than almost any other state, improving from a **D+** in 2009.

The 2011 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* provides a detailed analysis of Illinois’ progress on the policies it sets for teacher preparation, licensure, evaluation, career advancement, tenure, compensation, pensions and dismissal. NCTQ grades the states on the quality and rigor of these policies; the *Yearbook* is not an evaluation of the quality of teachers in the state.

Illinois received an overall grade of **C**, based on the following grades:

Teacher Policy Area	Grade
Delivering well-prepared teachers	D
Expanding the pool of teachers	C
Identifying effective teachers	C-
Retaining effective teachers	D+
Exiting ineffective teachers	A

NCTQ President Kate Walsh said, "There is little doubt that the past two years have seen major changes in states' teacher policies. Rethinking how teacher performance is evaluated and tying teacher evaluations to student achievement marks an important advance in teacher effectiveness policy. Illinois made some good progress. But much work is left to be done by states to design and adopt policies from beginning to end – from entry into the profession to retirement and pensions – to consistently promote teacher quality."

Key findings about Illinois’ teacher policy:

- Illinois is part of an unprecedented effort across the states to adopt policies that use objective measures of student achievement, such as value-added or growth data, as part of teacher

evaluations. Illinois requires student achievement to be a significant part of teacher evaluations, although the state stops short of ensuring that it is the most significant criterion in teacher evaluations.

- Illinois is one of three states (along with Colorado and Oklahoma) that received a grade of “A” for its policies for exiting ineffective teachers. Illinois clearly articulates that ineffectiveness in the classroom, as evidenced by multiple unsatisfactory evaluations, is grounds for dismissal and the state prevents district from basing teacher layoffs on seniority alone, mandating that teacher performance be considered.
- Illinois’ standards for teacher preparation and licensing are too low. Requirements for elementary and secondary teachers are in need of improvement.
- In particular, Illinois sets extremely low expectations for special education teachers. The state only offers a completely generic K-12 certification for special education licensing, meaning the preparation that special education teachers receive pays no attention to grade and subject specific content required of any other teacher.
- Illinois could do a great deal more to improve alternate routes by requiring them to be streamlined, relevant, and focused on the immediate needs of new teachers.
- Illinois continues to require that teacher salaries are tied to advanced degrees, even though research is clear that there is no link to teacher effectiveness.
- Illinois’ pension system is significantly underfunded and is not portable, flexible or fair to all teachers.

For copies of the Yearbook

Illinois’ *Yearbook*, which includes detailed national comparisons, is immediately available for free download at www.nctq.org/stpy. For questions about the report, please contact Sarah Brody at (202) 393-0020 or sbrody@nctq.org.

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About NCTQ

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a Washington D.C. based non-profit, non-partisan research and advocacy group, founded in 2000, to build the case for a comprehensive reform agenda that would challenge the current structure and regulation of the profession. NCTQ advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state, and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers. NCTQ is committed to lending transparency and increasing public awareness about the four sets of institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: states, teacher preparation programs, school districts and teachers unions. For more information, see www.nctq.org.

	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009	Progress Ranking 2009-2011
Florida	B	C	9
Oklahoma	B-	D+	13
Rhode Island	B-	D	5
Tennessee	B-	C-	16
Indiana	C+	D	1
Michigan	C+	D-	3
Ohio	C+	D+	11
Arkansas	C	C-	25
Colorado	C	D+	12
Delaware	C	D	6
Georgia	C	C-	23
Illinois	C	D+	4
Massachusetts	C	D+	13
New York	C	D+	13
Alabama	C-	C-	19
Connecticut	C-	D+	25
Louisiana	C-	C-	20
Minnesota	C-	D-	2
Nevada	C-	D-	7
South Carolina	C-	C-	41
Texas	C-	C-	36
Utah	C-	D	9
Washington	C-	D+	25
Arizona	D+	D+	20
California	D+	D+	51
Idaho	D+	D-	8
Kentucky	D+	D+	41
Maryland	D+	D	17
Mississippi	D+	D+	47
New Jersey	D+	D+	36
New Mexico	D+	D+	39
North Carolina	D+	D+	32
Pennsylvania	D+	D	18
Virginia	D+	D+	41
West Virginia	D+	D+	41
Alaska	D	D	47
District of Columbia	D	D-	25
Iowa	D	D	23
Kansas	D	D-	31
Missouri	D	D	47
North Dakota	D	D-	34
South Dakota	D	D	38
Wisconsin	D	D	41
Wyoming	D	D-	20
Hawaii	D-	D-	32
Maine	D-	F	34
Nebraska	D-	D-	39
New Hampshire	D-	D-	25
Oregon	D-	D-	25
Vermont	D-	F	46
Montana	F	F	47