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NEW REPORT GIVES PENNSYLVANIA A GRADE OF “D+” FOR TEACHER POLICIES

While many states have shown dramatic progress, report finds Pennsylvania has made little progress on policies to support and measure teacher effectiveness

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.

The 2011 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* provides a detailed analysis of Pennsylvania’s 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.

Pennsylvania received an overall grade of **D+**, based on the following grades:

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

Pennsylvania’s overall grade improved from a **D** in NCTQ’s 2009 *Yearbook*.

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. 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." She added, "While Pennsylvania hasn't done much about improving teacher evaluations, that state has made some progress on teacher preparation policies."

Key findings about Pennsylvania's teacher policy:

- In a new era, when teacher effectiveness in the classroom is becoming a matter of consequence and teacher evaluations will no longer be regarded as simply a formality, Pennsylvania's teacher evaluations give no consideration to teacher effectiveness and include no objective measures of student performance.
- Pennsylvania does not use teacher evaluations to inform any decisions of consequence. The state fails to articulate, either through dismissal or evaluation policy, that ineffectiveness in the classroom is grounds for teacher dismissal. Furthermore, time on the job, rather than teacher effectiveness in the classroom, is the basis for granting teachers tenure or permanent status in Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania requires that all teacher preparation programs address the science of reading and requires teacher candidates to pass a test to ensure knowledge.
- Pennsylvania deserves credit for discontinuing K-12 certification for special education teacher in the state, a completely generic license which allows special education teachers to be certified without any attention to grade and subject specific content required of any other teacher.
- Pennsylvania could do more to improve alternate routes by requiring them to be more flexible, streamlined and geared to the immediate needs of new teachers.
- Pennsylvania's pension system is underfunded, requires excessive contributions, and is not portable, flexible or fair to all teachers.

For copies of the Yearbook

Pennsylvania's *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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The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, George Gund Foundation, Gleason Family Foundation and the Joyce Foundation.

NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government.

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 |