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SOUTH DAKOTA EARNS “D-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives South Dakota poor grades for lack of policies that support effective teaching

January 30, 2014 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its seventh annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, which includes a 360-degree analysis of every state law, rule and regulation that shapes the effectiveness of the teaching profession in South Dakota.

South Dakota has consistently earned low grades in the *Yearbook* while the average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is an improving “C-”.

NCTQ President Kate Walsh said, "This year's *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* proves that it is both possible and practical for states to drive teacher effectiveness policy. Many states once argued that raising the bar for teacher preparation, licensing and evaluation and tying personnel decisions to results for kids couldn't be done. Now these policies are on the books in increasing numbers of states across the nation."

Key Yearbook Findings

Teacher effectiveness is increasingly being factored into personnel decisions across the states, but not in South Dakota:

Yearbook Goal Areas	South Dakota's 2013 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	D-
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	D+
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	F
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	D-
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	F
Average Overall Grade	D-

- *Teacher evaluation.* While South Dakota requires that student achievement/growth is a significant criterion in teacher evaluations, the state has no guidelines for districts about how to take objective evidence of student learning into account when evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In South Dakota, teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after three years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* South Dakota is one of 22 states that does not articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* South Dakota makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

In many states, progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but South Dakota still does little in this area:

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* South Dakota's content knowledge tests for elementary school licensure fail to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.

- *Admission requirements.* South Dakota sets a low academic bar (2.5 GPA) for admission to teacher preparation programs.
- *Science of reading.* South Dakota is one of 34 states that does not ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* South Dakota has significant loopholes in its requirements for secondary teacher licensing and does not ensure secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* South Dakota is one of 35 states that still offers a K-12 special education license, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

There has been little action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states:

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* South Dakota does not require that teachers receive feedback on their evaluation ratings. The state also fails to specify that professional development should be informed by evaluations or require improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluating ratings.
- *Support for performance pay.* South Dakota is one of 26 states that does not support performance pay. South Dakota also does not support differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas.

Very few states provide truly flexible pathways into teaching:

- *Alternate routes.* South Dakota's alternative pathways to teacher certification are in need of improvement.

The *2013 South Dakota State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is immediately available for free download at: www.nctq.org/statepolicy. The newly redesigned website also provides searchable access to the entire *Yearbook* dataset, including topical pages with up-to-date data on state teacher policy, a customized search tool and user-friendly options for generating graphic results that can be exported and shared.

The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* was funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government. The National Council of Teacher Quality comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents is a non-partisan research and policy group committed to restructuring the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. More information about NCTQ, including a list of the Board of Directors and Advisory Board, can be found on the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org

	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B	C
Louisiana	B	C-	C-
Rhode Island	B	B-	D
Tennessee	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	C-	D+
Georgia	B-	C	C-
Indiana	B-	C+	D
Massachusetts	B-	C	D+
Michigan	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	B-	D+	D+
New York	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	D+
Colorado	C+	C	D+
Delaware	C+	C	D
Illinois	C+	C	D+
Virginia	C+	D+	D+
Kentucky	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	D+	D+
North Carolina	C	D+	D+
Utah	C	C-	D
Alabama	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	D+	D+
Maine	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	D-
Pennsylvania	C-	D+	D
South Carolina	C-	C-	C-
Texas	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	D+	D+
California	D+	D+	D+
District of Columbia	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D-	D-
Idaho	D+	D+	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D
New Mexico	D+	D+	D+
Wisconsin	D+	D	D
Alaska	D	D	D
Iowa	D	D	D
Kansas	D	D	D-
New Hampshire	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D-	D-
Wyoming	D	D	D-
Nebraska	D-	D-	D-
South Dakota	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F