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VERMONT EARNS “D-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Vermont 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 Vermont.

Vermont 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 Vermont:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Vermont is one of 10 states in the nation with no policies requiring that student growth or any objective measures of student achievement are included in teacher evaluations.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In Vermont, teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after two years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Vermont 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.* Vermont makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

In many states, including Vermont, progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but there is still a long way to go:

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Vermont improved its grade for teacher preparation by adopting content tests for elementary school licensure that provide separate passing scores for each subject, which helps to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.

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

- *Admission requirements.* Vermont does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency, such as a minimum GPA requirement.
- *Science of reading.* Vermont's teacher preparation requirements include that teachers know the science of reading; however Vermont is one of 34 states without an appropriate test of elementary teachers' knowledge of reading.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Vermont has significant loopholes in its requirements for secondary teacher licensing that does not ensure secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* Commendably, Vermont is one of 16 states that does not offer 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.* Vermont has no clear policy articulated about using evaluation results to provide feedback to teachers. In addition, the state 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.* Vermont, along with 25 other states, does not support performance pay. Vermont 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.* Vermont fails to provide alternative pathways to teacher certification that are flexible, efficient, and permit both broad usage and a diversity of providers.

The *2013 Vermont 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