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WASHINGTON EARNS “C-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Washington average grades for 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 Washington.

Washington’s overall grade of “C-” is unchanged from 2011, the last year the state’s full portfolio of teacher policies was graded. In 2013 the average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is now also a “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:

- *Teacher evaluation.* While Washington is one of 28 states that require annual evaluations of all teachers, and teacher evaluations are required to include some objective evidence of student learning, the state is one of only 16 that does not require student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Washington is one of 20 states where evidence of student learning is considered in tenure decisions.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-nine states, including Washington, articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Washington is one of 18 states that requires districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions.

Progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but not in Washington:

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

- *Raising admission requirements.* Washington could strengthen teacher preparation by raising admission requirements to admit candidates with strong academic records, such as a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Washington's content tests for elementary school licensure provide separate passing scores for some subjects; however, having separate scores for every subject is necessary to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.
- *Science of reading.* While Washington's teacher preparation requirements address the science of reading, Washington is one of 34 states that does not administer an adequate test to ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Washington is one of nine states that does not require secondary teachers to pass a content test in every subject for licensure or to add an endorsement.
- *Special education teachers.* Washington is one of 28 states that offers only 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.* Unlike many states, Washington requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations and that teachers with poor evaluations be put on improvement. The state's policy would be improved if professional development for all teachers was required to be informed by evaluation findings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Washington is one of 26 states that does not support performance pay.

Very few states are providing flexible pathways into teaching:

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

The 2013 Washington 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 Washington, 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