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CALIFORNIA TEACHER PREPARATION IS NOT ALIGNED WITH COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS STANDARDS

Although stronger than many states in some key areas, California’s teacher preparation policies as a whole do not ensure that new teachers are ready to help students achieve to the high levels necessary for college and careers.

December 10, 2014 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) today released its eighth annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*. This year’s edition focuses on California’s efforts to align its requirements for teacher preparation and licensure with the skills needed to prepare students for college and careers.

NCTQ Vice President and Managing Director for State Policy Sandi Jacobs said, “With such a profound change occurring in K-12 student standards across the country, it would stand to reason that parallel changes would occur on the teacher side. California needs to ensure that teachers are adequately supported in the transition and beyond. And there is no better place to start than where new teachers begin to learn their craft—in teacher preparation programs.”

Key Yearbook Findings:

California’s requirements for elementary teachers are more explicit than most states’ requirements for preparing teachers for college- and career-readiness standards.

- California’s licensure tests for new elementary teachers include the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards, such as using informational texts, incorporating literacy skills in all subjects and supporting struggling readers.
- Unfortunately, requirements for new middle and high school teachers don’t articulate these same kinds of instructional shifts.

State content knowledge requirements for prospective teachers in California aren’t ambitious enough to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- While California is one of 18 states that ensures prospective elementary teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading, the state does not require elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test that provides separate scores for all core subject areas, which makes it difficult to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they will be licensed to teach.
- Under some circumstances, California issues K-12 licenses, which fail to differentiate between the preparation of elementary and secondary school teachers.
- California is one of only 8 states that does not require secondary teaching candidates to pass a content test in every subject for licensure.

The preparation needs of special education teachers continues to be a largely neglected area, with the introduction of more challenging academic standards in California having little to no impact on requirements for teachers who educate special education students.

- California is one of 34 states in the nation that still offers or exclusively grants K-12 special education teacher licenses.
- California does not require special education teachers to demonstrate subject matter knowledge as a condition of licensure, although it does require elementary special education teachers to demonstrate knowledge of the science of reading.

California's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

- With no minimum GPA or test of academic proficiency required for admission to teacher preparation programs, California sets a low bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

California neither collects meaningful data about the quality of teacher prep programs nor holds programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce.

- California is one of 41 states that does not connect student achievement data to teacher preparation programs.
- California does not set explicit minimum performance standards for teacher preparation programs in the state.

Looking at NCTQ's traditional *Yearbook* metrics, California earns an overall grade of D+ for teacher preparation.

- The average grade for all states for teacher preparation in 2014 is a C, up from a D in 2011.

The [2014 California State Teacher Policy Yearbook](#) is immediately available for free download. The 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, Gleason Family Foundation, J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, 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.