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THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SHOULD DO MORE TO ALIGN TEACHER PREPARATION WITH COLLEGE- AND CAREER- READINESS STANDARDS

Some District of Columbia teacher preparation policies are on the right track for ensuring that new teachers are ready to help students achieve to the high levels necessary for college and careers; others fall short.

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 the District of Columbia'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. The District of Columbia 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:

The District of Columbia's teacher preparation requirements are not explicit about preparing teachers for college- and career-readiness standards.

- The District of Columbia's standards for new teachers don't sufficiently articulate the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards, such as using informational texts, cross-disciplinary literacy, and intervention for struggling readers.

State content knowledge requirements for prospective teachers in the District of Columbia have room for improvement to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- The District of Columbia is one of 21 states that requires elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test that provides separate scores for all core subject areas.
- However, the District of Columbia does not ensure that teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.
- The District of Columbia, along with 37 other states, has significant loopholes in its licensing requirements for high school teachers.

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

- The District of Columbia along with 33 states still offers or exclusively grants K-12 special education teacher licenses. In addition, the District does not require special education teachers to demonstrate subject matter knowledge as a condition of licensure.

The District of Columbia’s teacher preparation admissions requirements may be more selective than most states.

- Based on accreditation standards, the District of Columbia requires a 3.0 GPA and a test of academic proficiency normed to the college-bound population for admission to teacher preparation programs. As a result, the District is setting a higher bar than most states for the academic performance of prospective teachers – if accreditors and the District hold preparation programs to these standards.

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

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

Looking at NCTQ’s traditional *Yearbook* metrics, the District of Columbia earns an overall grade of C- 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 District of Columbia 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.