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FLORIDA SHOULD DO MORE TO ALIGN TEACHER PREPARATION WITH COLLEGE- AND CAREER-READINESS STANDARDS

Many Florida 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 Florida'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. Florida 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:

Florida's teacher preparation requirements are not explicit enough to prepare teachers for college- and career-readiness standards.

- Unlike most states, Florida's standards for new teachers at least mention the instructional shifts associated with college- and career-readiness standards. However, requirements for new teachers do not sufficiently articulate components such as using informational texts and incorporating literacy skills in all subjects.

State content knowledge requirements for prospective teachers in Florida are strong, but have room for improvement.

- Florida is one of only 21 states that requires elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test in each of the four core subject areas.
- Florida ensures that all candidates licensed to teach in the elementary grades, including early childhood teaching candidates, pass a test to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.
- However, Florida, 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 Florida having little to no impact on requirements for teachers who educate special education students.

- Florida is one of 34 states that still offers or exclusively grants K-12 special education teacher licenses. Florida also does not require special education teachers to demonstrate

subject matter knowledge or knowledge of the science of reading as a condition of licensure.

Florida’s teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

- With a GPA of 2.5 and a proficiency test that is not normed to the college-bound population (such as the ACT or SAT) required for admission into teacher prep programs, Florida sets a relatively low bar for the academic performance of the state’s prospective teachers.

Florida collects important data on the performance of teacher prep programs in the states but ultimately does not hold teacher prep programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce.

- Florida is one of just 10 states in the nation that connects student achievement data to teacher preparation programs.
- However, Florida has not set explicit minimum performance standards for teacher preparation programs in the state.

Looking at NCTQ’s traditional *Yearbook* metrics, Florida earns an overall grade of B+ 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 Florida 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.