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

Some Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts'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. Massachusetts 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:

Massachusetts's teacher preparation requirements are not explicit about preparing teachers for college- and career-readiness standards.

- Massachusetts's standards for new teachers don't sufficiently articulate the instructional requirements of college- and career-readiness standards, including the use of informational texts and cross-disciplinary literacy.

State content knowledge requirements for prospective teachers in Massachusetts could be improved to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- While Massachusetts' MTEL math subtest continues to set the standard for the nation by challenging elementary teaching candidates, the state's elementary content test does not provide for separate scores in each of the four core content areas, making it difficult to ensure that prospective teachers have mastered all of the content they will be licensed to teach.
- Massachusetts is one of 18 states that requires prospective elementary teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading. The state also requires this test for early childhood-certified teachers who are permitted to teach in the elementary grades.
- Massachusetts, along with 37 other states, has significant loopholes in its licensing requirements for high school teachers.

Massachusetts's preparation for special education teachers is stronger than most states.

- Massachusetts is one of only 17 states in the nation that does not grant K-12 special education teacher licenses. Massachusetts also requires elementary special education teachers to demonstrate subject matter knowledge and pass the elementary science of reading test as conditions of licensure.

Massachusetts's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

- With no minimum GPA or academic proficiency test required as conditions for admission, Massachusetts sets a relatively low bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

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

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

Looking at NCTQ's traditional *Yearbook* metrics, Massachusetts 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 Massachusetts 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.