

December 10, 2014

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

Some Minnesota 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 Minnesota'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 more focus than ever on ensuring students are ready for college and careers, it would stand to reason that Minnesota would be making key changes to requirements for teacher preparation and licensure. And there is no better place to start that than where new teachers begin to learn their craft—in teacher preparation programs."

Key Yearbook Findings:

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

- Unlike most states, Minnesota'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 across all grade levels.

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

- Minnesota is one of 18 states that ensures that elementary teachers have knowledge of the science of reading. The state also requires early childhood-licensed teachers who teach in the elementary grades have knowledge of the science of reading.
- Minnesota is one of just 5 states in the nation that requires all secondary teachers to pass a content test in every licensed subject.
- However, Minnesota does not require elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test that provides a separate passing score for all core subject areas, which makes it difficult to ensure teachers have mastered all of the content they are licensed to teach.
- Minnesota also offers a K-8 teaching license under certain circumstances, which fails to differentiate between the preparation of elementary teachers and middle school teachers.

The preparation needs of special education teachers continues to be a largely neglected area.

- Minnesota is one of 34 states that still offers or exclusively grants K-12 special education teacher licenses. Minnesota also does not require special education to demonstrate subject matter knowledge as a condition of licensure.

Minnesota's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

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

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

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

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