

December 10, 2014

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

Oklahoma’s teacher preparation policies fail to 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 Oklahoma’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 Oklahoma 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:

Oklahoma’s teacher requirements are not explicit about preparing teachers for college- and career-readiness standards.

- Oklahoma’s standards for new teachers don’t 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 Oklahoma aren’t ambitious enough to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- Oklahoma is one of 18 states that ensures that teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading and the state requires early childhood teachers licensed to teach in the elementary grades to demonstrate this knowledge as well.
- However, Oklahoma 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 elementary teachers have mastered the content they are licensed to teach.
- Oklahoma is one of 14 states that issues a K-8 teaching license, which fails to differentiate between the preparation of elementary teachers and middle school teachers.
- Oklahoma, 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.

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

Oklahoma's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective enough.

- By giving a choice between a 3.0 GPA or passing an academic proficiency assessment that is not normed to the college-bound population (such as the ACT or SAT) as a condition for admission to teacher prep programs, Oklahoma does not set a consistently high bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

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

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

Looking at NCTQ's traditional *Yearbook* metrics, Oklahoma 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 [Oklahoma 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.