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

Some Pennsylvania 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 Pennsylvania'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. Pennsylvania 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:

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

- Unlike most states, Pennsylvania'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 Pennsylvania aren't ambitious enough to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- Pennsylvania does not require elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test that provides separate scores for all four core subject areas, which makes it difficult to ensure that elementary teachers have mastered the content they are licensed to teach.
- Pennsylvania does not ensure that teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.
- Pennsylvania, along with 37 states, has significant loopholes in its licensing requirements for high school teachers.

Pennsylvania's effort to prepare teachers to educate special education students is stronger than most other states.

- Pennsylvania is one of just 17 states that does not grant K-12 special education teacher licenses. Pennsylvania also requires both elementary and secondary special education teachers to demonstrate subject matter knowledge as a condition of licensure.

Pennsylvania's teacher preparation admissions requirements are selective.

- With a 3.0 GPA required for admission to teacher prep programs, Pennsylvania sets a relatively high bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

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

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

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