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

South Dakota'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 South Dakota's efforts to align their 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. South Dakota 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:

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

- South Dakota's standards for new teachers don't sufficiently 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 South Dakota aren't ambitious enough to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- While South Dakota is one of just 5 states that requires secondary teacher candidates to pass a content test in each and every subject area they will be licensed to teach, the state unfortunately does not require elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test that provides separate scores in each of the four core subject areas. Without separate scores, South Dakota cannot ensure that elementary teachers have mastered the content they will be licensed to teach.
- South Dakota 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.
- South Dakota does not require teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.

The preparation needs of special education teachers continues to be a largely neglected area, with the introduction of more challenging academic standards in South Dakota having little to no impact on requirements for teachers who educate special education students.

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

South Dakota's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

- With a minimum GPA of 2.5 and no test of academic proficiency required for admission to teacher preparation programs, South Dakota sets a low bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

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

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

Looking at NCTQ's traditional *Yearbook* metrics, South Dakota earns an overall grade of D 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 South Dakota 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.