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

Some Tennessee 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 Tennessee'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. Tennessee 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:

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

- Tennessee'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 Tennessee are strong but could be improved to meet the demands of college- and career-readiness standards.

- Tennessee is one of 18 states that ensures that prospective elementary teachers demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading. Early childhood-licensed teachers who are permitted to teach in the elementary grades are also required to have knowledge in the science of reading.
- Tennessee is one of 5 states in the nation that requires all secondary teaching candidates to pass a content test in each and every subject they are licensed to teach.
- However, Tennessee does not require elementary teaching candidates to pass a content test with separate scores in each of the four core subject areas, which makes it difficult to ensure that teachers have mastered content knowledge in every subject they are licensed to teach.

Tennessee's requirements for special education teachers are stronger than requirements in most states.

- Tennessee is one of only 17 states in the nation that does not grant K-12 special education teacher licenses. Tennessee also requires special education teachers to demonstrate knowledge of the science of reading as a condition of licensure. However, Tennessee does not require special education teachers to pass subject-matter tests.

Tennessee's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

- With no minimum GPA and a test of academic proficiency not normed to the college-bound population (such as the ACT or SAT) required for admission to teacher prep programs, Tennessee sets a relatively low bar for the academic performance of the state's prospective teachers.

Tennessee collects meaningful data about the quality of teacher prep programs but does not yet hold programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce.

- Tennessee is one of 10 states in the nation that connects student achievement data to teacher preparation programs.
- However, Tennessee has not set explicit minimum performance standards for teacher preparation programs in the state.

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