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

Some West Virginia 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 West Virginia'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. West Virginia 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:

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

- West Virginia 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 West Virginia are strong but leave some room for improvement.

- West Virginia is one of 21 states that requires content knowledge tests for elementary teachers that provide separate passing scores for the core subject areas.
- West Virginia is one of 18 states that ensures new elementary teachers' knowledge of the science of reading. Early childhood teachers permitted to teach in the elementary grades also must demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.
- However, West Virginia is one of 38 states with significant loopholes in its licensing requirements for high school teachers.

West Virginia has stronger policies than many states to prepare teachers for special education.

- West Virginia is one of 17 states in the nation that does not grant K-12 special education teacher licenses. West Virginia requires elementary and secondary special education teachers to demonstrate subject matter knowledge as a condition of licensure.
- Elementary special education teachers in West Virginia must pass the same science of reading test that other elementary teachers must pass.

West Virginia's teacher preparation admissions requirements are not selective.

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

West Virginia neither collects important data on the performance of teacher prep programs in the state nor holds teacher prep programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce.

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

Looking at NCTQ's traditional *Yearbook* metrics, West Virginia 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 West Virginia *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is immediately available for free download at: www.nctq.org/statepolicy. 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.