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ALABAMA GETS MEDIOCRE MARKS FOR TEACHER POLICIES IN NEW REPORT-- LABELED 'WEAK BUT PROGRESSING'

—Today the National Council on Teacher Quality released a 50-state encyclopedia on states' teacher policies, concluding that while Alabama takes a leadership role in some areas, many policies are counterproductive to the nation's teacher quality goals—

Washington, DC -- The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is the first project of its kind to provide a 360-degree detailed analysis of how states are hurting or helping teacher quality--and what they can do to fix broken and anachronistic policies.

While Alabama was rated higher than most states, its low overall performance illustrates how much work lies ahead. Across six areas of teacher policy from admission standards into teaching, licensure to compensation reform, Alabama earned one B, three Cs, and two Ds.

“As is true for all states, Alabama's approach to the teaching profession needs an overhaul,” said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ. “Unlike many states, Alabama does appear to recognize this need and is showing signs of changing.”

Among the findings:

- To be admitted into an ed school, candidates do not have to pass even a minimal test of basic skills, signaling a poor investment of public funds and requiring ed schools to focus on remediation rather than preparation.
- Its guidelines for the content preparation of aspiring elementary teachers are too loose to ensure that teachers acquire the knowledge they need for the classroom. For example, there's no requirement that elementary teachers must take American history.
- The state does not require that schools evaluate teachers annually as is standard in most professions, nor does it require that a teacher's classroom effectiveness be the preponderant consideration of an evaluation

Despite these findings, Alabama has some bright spots. The state does a much better job than most states holding its colleges of education accountable for the overall quality of teachers coming out of their programs. Alabama is also relatively more hospitable to teachers moving into the state, offering such teachers an equivalent license without making them jump through a lot of hoops.

To download copies of the Alabama report, which includes national comparisons, or to purchase printed copies of the report, visit the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org. For questions about the report, please contact Lisa Cohen at (310) 395-2544 or lisa@lisacohen.org or Molly Jackman at (202) 393-0020 (ext. 15) or mjackman@nctq.org.

NCTQ -- comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies and seeks to lend transparency and accountability to the three institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: state governments, colleges of education, and teachers' unions.

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