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ALASKA TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES INADEQUATE

New Report from NCTQ Finds Alaska Well Behind Most States in Efforts to Enact Policies that Support Effective Teaching; State Earns a Grade of “D-”

December 8, 2015 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its ninth annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, which includes a 360-degree analysis of every state law, rule and regulation that shapes the effectiveness of the teaching profession in Alaska.

Alaska received an overall grade of D-. Only one state (Montana) received a lower grade. The average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is a C- this year.

Yearbook Goal Areas	Alaska’s 2015 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	F
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	F
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	D+
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	D-
Average Overall Grade	D-

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "Alaska is becoming the exception to the rule on teacher effectiveness policy, and not for the better. Nationwide the glass is really starting to look half full on states efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. While most states still have plenty of room for improvement, Alaska has not kept pace with the progress being made on these issues across the country."

On teacher preparation and licensing, Alaska has done little to ensure that teachers are prepared for the demands of college- and career-readiness standards:

- *Admission requirements.* Alaska does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency, such as a minimum GPA requirement.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Alaska does not require elementary teacher candidates to take any content knowledge tests for initial licensure to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.
- *Science of reading.* Alaska does not ensure elementary teachers’ knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Alaska does not require secondary teachers to pass a content test in every subject for initial licensure.
- *Special education teachers.* Alaska is one of 21 states that offer only a K-12 special education license, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject-specific content knowledge.
- *Teacher prep accountability.* Unlike 37 other states, Alaska does not collect performance data on teacher preparation programs. Nor does the state set any program performance standards.

Alaska requires evaluations of teacher effectiveness but doesn't use them to inform policy or practice:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Alaska requires student achievement/growth to be included as the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations, and the state is one of 28 in the nation articulating that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for teacher dismissal.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In Alaska, however, teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after three years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Prohibiting "last in, first out" policies.* Alaska makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.
- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Alaska does not require that teachers receive feedback on their evaluation ratings. The state also fails to specify that professional development should be informed by evaluations.

There has been little action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining effective teachers in the profession in Alaska:

- *Support for performance pay.* Alaska does not support performance pay or differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas.
- *Alternate routes.* Alaska no longer provides an alternative pathway to teacher certification.

The *2015 Alaska State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is immediately available for free download at: www.nctq.org/statepolicy. The newly 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.

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The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government.

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group committed to modernizing the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. To that end we work to achieve fundamental changes in the policy and practices of teacher preparation programs, school districts, state governments, and teachers unions. Our Board of Directors and Advisory Board come from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives, and they all believe that policy changes are overdue in the recruitment and retention of teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.

	Overall State Grade 2015	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B+	B	C
Indiana	B	B-	C+	D
Louisiana	B	B	C-	C-
New York	B	B-	C	D+
Tennessee	B	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	B-	C-	D+
Delaware	B-	C+	C	D
Georgia	B-	B-	C	C-
Massachusetts	B-	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	B-	D+
Rhode Island	B-	B	B-	D
Illinois	C+	C+	C	D+
Michigan	C+	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	C+	B-	D+	D+
Utah	C+	C	C-	D
Virginia	C+	C+	D+	D+
Colorado	C	C+	C	D+
Kentucky	C	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	C	D+	D+
New Mexico	C	D+	D+	D+
South Carolina	C	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	C-	D+	D+
Idaho	C-	D+	D+	D-
Maine	C-	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	C-	D-
North Carolina	C-	C	D+	D+
Pennsylvania	C-	C-	D+	D
Texas	C-	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	C-	D+	D+
Alabama	D+	C-	C-	C-
District of Columbia	D+	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D+	D-	D-
Kansas	D+	D	D	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D+	D
California	D	D+	D+	D+
Iowa	D	D	D	D
Nebraska	D	D-	D-	D-
New Hampshire	D	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D	D-	D-
Wisconsin	D	D+	D	D
Wyoming	D	D	D	D-
Alaska	D-	D	D	D
South Dakota	D-	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F	F