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ARKANSAS EARNS C+ GRADE FOR TEACHER POLICIES IN NEW EDITION OF NATIONAL YEARBOOK

STATE DEMONSTRATES DECLINE IN STATE TEACHER POLICIES SINCE 2015

Washington, DC--Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its bi-annual *2017 State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, finding that states' previous rapid progress to modernize their teacher policies has largely slowed. Arkansas's overall grade for its teaching policies went from a B- grade in 2015 to a C+ in 2017. By comparison, the overall grade nationally stagnated, staying at a C- grade.

From 2007 until 2015, most states took aggressive steps to improve the teaching profession. However, since the last edition of the Yearbook in 2015, few states have initiated any new actions to improve their policies guiding how teachers are selected, prepared, evaluated, and retained. As a result, state grades have mostly stagnated, with more state grades decreasing than at any other time in the *Yearbook's* history.

This year, among all 50 states and the District of Columbia, 12 states earned a higher grade than Arkansas, six states performed as well as Arkansas, and 32 states earned a lower grade. Florida and Louisiana each earned a B+, the highest grade in this year's *Yearbook*.

"States' teacher policies have an enormous impact on the quality of education in the state," said Elizabeth Ross, Managing Director of State Policy at NCTQ. "By highlighting opportunities for improvement, as well as strong policies, this Yearbook is designed to catalyze state action. We know the progress states are capable of making and urge them to do so. Teachers and students deserve nothing less."

Arkansas has several key opportunities for growth. In its 2017 *Yearbook*, NCTQ reported that the state earned a F grade in the areas of Hiring and Retaining Effective Teachers.

Arkansas earned an A- in Secondary Teacher Preparation and a B+ in Elementary Teacher Preparation. The *Yearbook* highlighted the state's strong work in this policy area, with Arkansas earning a "Best Practice" designation in three areas:

- Teaching Elementary Reading, since the state requires that elementary teacher candidates pass a science of reading test to ensure knowledge of effective reading instruction, that teacher preparation programs address this critical topic, and that candidates are prepared to meet the instructional shifts associated with college- and career-readiness standards;
- Middle School Content Knowledge, since the state requires middle school teachers to pass a rigorous single-subject content test; and,
- Adolescent Literacy, since the state requires that middle school and secondary candidates are fully prepared to meet the instructional shifts associated with college- and career-readiness standards.

The full *2017 State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is available [here](#), with comprehensive information regarding each state's teacher policies available in NCTQ's [State Teacher Policy Database](#).

To compare Arkansas to other states across the country in eight key measures, including teacher pay, teacher diversity, and educator equity, please look [here](#).

For more information, or to arrange an interview with Elizabeth Ross, please contact Eric Duncan at eduncan@nctq.org.

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. NCTQ is the nation's expert on the quality of teacher preparation programs and evaluates national teacher education against evidence-based criteria. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org

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