

June 27, 2007

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

–Today the National Council on Teacher Quality released a 50-state encyclopedia on states' teacher policies, concluding that while Arkansas 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 2007* 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 Arkansas did better than most states, its overall performance shows how much work is still ahead. In the six areas of teacher policy reviewed, the state received one "B" grade, two "C" grades, and three "D" grades.

"Arkansas' policies, like those in all states', are in need of a massive overhaul," said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ. "It's time to turn in the gas-guzzling clunker in exchange for the hybrid."

Among the findings:

- Arkansas neglects the preparation of special education teachers, failing to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities.
- The state pays little attention to the content preparation of elementary teachers, failing to lay out the specific knowledge needed to teach in the elementary classroom. The state has no specific requirements in any of the core subjects such as American history that elementary teachers need to know.
- The state has lax oversight of its education schools; doing little to ensure the quality of students going in and teachers coming out.

Despite these bleak findings, there are some bright spots. Arkansas is showing some promise in its alternate path to teacher licensure. It is one of the only states to promote a genuine route into the classroom for career changers. Its programs are both sufficiently selective and flexible.

To download copies of the Arkansas 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.

Funding for the State Teacher Policy Yearbook was provided by many private foundations, including the Achelis and Bodman Foundations, Bradley Foundation, Daniels Fund, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Gleason Foundation, Joyce Foundation, IBM Foundation, Koret Foundation, Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, Milken Family Foundation, and Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. NCTQ accepts no government funding.