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NCTQ RELEASES NEWEST TEACHER PREP RATINGS IDENTIFYING TOP PROGRAMS PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

*ALTHOUGH MANY PROGRAMS DO WELL ON SOME ASPECTS OF TEACHER PREPARATION,
OTHERS STILL STRUGGLE TO DELIVER TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS;
MAJOR WEAKNESSES FOUND IN PREP FOR SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS*

The University of Alabama in Huntsville Rated in Top Ten Percent & Best in State;
91 Percent of Programs Statewide Earn An A for Content Preparation in Social Studies

Washington DC –Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) releases its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including 10 programs in Alabama.

Of the 16 programs nationally named to NCTQ’s “National Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” list, none are located in Alabama. The closest “Top Tier” program is the University of Southern Mississippi in neighboring Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Programs achieve “Top Tier” status because they have solid admission standards, provide sufficient preparation in each teacher candidate’s intended subject area, and show candidates how best to teach that subject. Many also do well in evaluating candidates on how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in Alabama

Although not earning “Top Tier” status, University of Alabama in Huntsville (96th Percentile) ranks in the top 10 percent nationally.

Alabama has no program falling in the bottom 10 percent.

Alabama Undergraduate Secondary Program	Percentile
University of Alabama in Huntsville	96th
Auburn University	83th
Birmingham Southern College	54th

University of North Alabama	40th
University of Mobile	34th
University of West Alabama	31st
Troy University	21st
Miles College	18th
Alabama State University	16th
Athens State University	16th

Key National Findings: As for overall performance of the 700+ programs, a common problem that surfaced in the analysis is the weak content preparation provided to science and social studies teacher candidates. That weakness contrasts sharply with almost uniformly strong preparation in English and mathematics content in the same institutions. A sizeable portion of programs (43 percent across the country) struggle to prepare teachers who will be qualified to teach the subjects under the umbrella of either science or social studies. For example, even though history is the subject most teachers with general social studies certification will be asked to teach, one out of five programs requires minimal to no history courses of their candidates.

- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all programs in Alabama earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- 91 percent of programs in Alabama earn an A for content preparation in the social studies, compared to only 64 percent of programs nationally.

To see how programs in each state perform on their coverage of science go [here](#), and for social studies go [here](#).

Only 42 percent of programs succeed at teaching future teachers both the content and teaching methods for their subject. For a list of these programs in each state, go [here](#).

Other Findings:

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. In comparison, 36 percent of secondary programs in Alabama do not require teacher candidates to take a methods course in the subject area they will be certified to teach.
- There are early signs of some programs becoming more selective in their admissions, but it is still the case that 44 percent of programs set the bar too low for who gets into their programs. In Alabama, 55 percent of programs earn a grade of C or lower for selection criteria, meaning they are not sufficiently selective. For a list of programs by selectivity in states, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs, half also meet diversity goals. For a list of selective and diverse programs in each state, go [here](#).
- Only 6 percent of programs pay sufficient attention to the quality of student teaching by establishing an expectation that only skilled teachers should be allowed to mentor a future teacher and requiring student teachers to be regularly observed by program staff.

Unfortunately, no program in Alabama does well in this area because none sufficiently monitors the quality of mentor teachers and more than half of programs do not require student teachers to be observed frequently. For a list of programs with strong student teaching in each state, go [here](#).

- Fewer than half of all programs (44 percent) evaluate teacher candidates on their use of the most effective strategies for managing classrooms while student teaching. Although half of the programs reviewed in Alabama evaluate future teachers on most or all of these strategies, another third do not evaluate student teachers on any of these strategies. For a list of programs that do well on classroom management, go [here](#).

Recommendations: Based on this research, NCTQ recommends that states make sure that high school teachers have a deep understanding of the content they will teach students, a goal that can be met by better licensing tests. Most states, including Alabama are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. For instance, Alabama has inadequate licensing tests for General Science and General Social Science certification. Currently, only Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri have strong tests in all core subject areas.

NCTQ also calls on programs to raise subject content requirements to require a solid education in *all* the subjects the future teacher will be licensed to teach, even in the broad categories of science and social studies. For more on what programs do to successfully ensure the preparation of all candidates in science, go [here](#), and for social studies, go [here](#).

This edition of the *Teacher Prep Review* analyzes undergraduate programs preparing secondary school teachers. The next set of ratings from NCTQ will appear in Fall 2017 and will cover graduate and alternative (or nontraditional) programs preparing elementary teachers. The ratings for graduate and nontraditional secondary programs will follow in Spring 2018, followed by undergraduate and graduate special education programs in Fall 2018.

To read the *Landscape* report, click [here](#). To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Kate Walsh, please contact Stephen Buckley at (202) 393-0020 ext. 129.

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About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

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