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

Colorado Has Two Very Strong Programs -- Colorado Christian University and Colorado State University; Adams State University Ranks Near the Bottom Nationally

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

Of the 16 programs nationally to be named to NCTQ’s “National Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” list, Colorado can claim one program, Colorado Christian University.

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

Teacher Prep Programs in Colorado

Other programs in Colorado also did relatively well; two rank in the top 10 percent nationally:
Colorado Christian University (98th Percentile)
Colorado State University (92nd Percentile)

However, the state has one program falling in the bottom 10 percent -- Adams State University (7th Percentile).

Other Colorado programs include:
Colorado Mesa University (44th Percentile)
Colorado State University - Pueblo (74th Percentile)
Metropolitan State University of Denver(34th Percentile)
University of Colorado - Denver (67th Percentile)
University of Northern Colorado (30th Percentile)
Western State Colorado University (64th Percentile)

Key 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. The majority (89 percent) of Colorado programs have adequate content preparation in science, which is better than the 81 percent nationally. But only 44 percent have adequate content preparation in social studies, compared to 65 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 Key Findings:

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. This is not an issue in Colorado, as all nine secondary programs require teacher candidates to take a methods course in their subject area.
- 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. While the programs at Colorado Christian University and Colorado State University perform well in this area, Colorado mirrors the nation with 44 percent of programs being insufficiently selective. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs, half also meet diversity goals. For a list of selective and diverse programs in each state, go [here](#). No program in Colorado is both selective and diverse.
- 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. Commendably, Colorado State University – Pueblo takes both of these steps. However, none of the other programs reviewed in Colorado performs well in this area, primarily because none sufficiently monitors the quality of cooperating teachers. For a list of programs in each state with strong student teaching 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. However, 56 percent of programs in Colorado do so. For a list of programs in each state 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 Colorado, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. The primary problem in Colorado is that the state makes licensing tests optional for aspiring teachers. Currently, only

Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri require 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