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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*

COE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY OF IOWA RANK AMONG BEST IN THE NATION

Washington DC – Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) releases its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including 20 in Iowa.

Of the 16 programs nationally named to NCTQ’s “National Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Program” list, Iowa can claim two programs, Coe College in Cedar Rapids and University of Iowa in Iowa City.

These programs achieved “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 high quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in Iowa

Other programs in Iowa also do well, including three that rank in the top 10 percent nationally:

Iowa State University, 94th percentile
Mount Mercy University, 90th percentile
St. Ambrose University, 92nd percentile

In addition, Iowa has no programs falling in the bottom 10 percent.

Key National Findings: As for overall performance of the 700+ programs, a common problem that surfaced in the analysis was the weak content preparation provided to science and social studies teacher candidates. That weakness contrast 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.

- 74 percent of programs in Iowa earn an A for content preparation in the sciences, lower than the 81 percent of programs nationally.
- 91 percent of programs earn an A for content preparation in the social studies, higher than the 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 Key Findings

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. One third of programs in Iowa 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 Iowa, 75 percent of programs draw the majority of their teacher candidates from the top half of the college-going population. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs nationwide, half also meet diversity goals. No Iowa program is both selective and diverse. 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. In Iowa, 39 percent of programs take both of these steps, much higher than the national average. Nine Iowa programs perform well in this area, more than twice the number in any other state. For a list of strong student teaching programs 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. Only thirty percent of programs in Iowa 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 Iowa, 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, Iowa has inadequate licensing tests for the All Social Sciences and All Science II certifications. 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