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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*

**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA RANKS AS BEST IN STATE;  
GRAMBLING STATE UNIVERSITY RANKS IN BOTTOM TEN PERCENT 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 seven in Louisiana.

None of the 16 programs on NCTQ’s list of the “Nation’s Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” are in Louisiana. The closest “Top Tier” program is University of Southern Mississippi in neighboring 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 high quality of practice opportunities.

### **Teacher Prep Programs in Louisiana**

Two programs in Louisiana do relatively well, although none earn “Top Tier” status Louisiana State University-Alexandria and Northwestern State University of Louisiana are ranked in the top 25 percent nationally. However, the state has one program in the bottom 10 percent, Grambling State University.

Grambling State University (8th percentile)  
Louisiana State University-Alexandria (76th percentile)  
Louisiana State University-Shreveport (32 percentile)  
Nicholls State University (46 percentile)  
Northwestern State University of Louisiana (87th percentile)  
Southeastern Louisiana University (69th percentile)  
Southern University and A&M College (11th percentile)

**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 Louisiana earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- Six of the seven programs evaluated in Louisiana earn an A or B for content preparation in the social studies.

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. However, 86 percent of programs in Louisiana 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. Eighty-six percent of Louisiana programs earn a C or lower, meaning that they are not sufficiently selective. No programs in Louisiana earn an A or A+. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs nationwide, 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. Commendably, 43 percent of programs in Louisiana take both of these steps. 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. Two Louisiana programs, Northwestern State University of Louisiana and Southeastern Louisiana University, evaluate future teachers on most or all of these strategies. 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 Louisiana, 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, Louisiana has inadequate licensing tests for General Science and Social Studies 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](http://www.nctq.org)*