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

### **MASSACHUSETTS BOASTS ONE OF THE TOP 16 SECONDARY PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY, GORDON COLLEGE; BOSTON COLLEGE IS ALSO NEAR THE TOP**

Washington DC – Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including 13 in Massachusetts.

Of the 16 programs nationally to be named to NCTQ’s list of the “Nation’s Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs,” Massachusetts can claim one program, Gordon College, in Wenham, MA.

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 teaching how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

#### **Teacher Prep Programs in Massachusetts**

Other programs in Massachusetts also do well; although not earning “Top Tier” status, Boston College ranks in the 93rd percentile and Simmons College ranks in the 87th percentile.

However, the state also has two programs in the bottom 10 percent. Eastern Nazarene College and Worcester State University are both in the 8th 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.

- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all programs in Massachusetts earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.

- 93 percent of programs in Massachusetts earn an A for content preparation in the social studies, compared to only 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 Findings:**

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. But in Massachusetts, 37 percent of secondary preparation programs 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 Massachusetts, 56 percent of programs earn a C or lower, meaning that they are not sufficiently selective. For a list of programs' selectivity rank in each state, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs, half also meet diversity goals. In Massachusetts, 25 percent of programs are both selective and diverse, including Boston, Simmons, Mount Holyoke, and Stonehill Colleges. For a list of national programs that are selective and diverse, 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 Massachusetts takes both of these steps to protect the quality of their student teaching. In Massachusetts, 92 percent of programs do not adequately monitor the quality of mentor teachers, and more than sixty percent do not even require that program staff evaluate student teachers. For a list of programs with strong student teaching in each state go [here](#).
- Fewer than half of all programs nationally (44 percent) expect teacher candidates to demonstrate the most effective strategies for managing classrooms while student teaching. However, all programs reviewed in Massachusetts perform well in this area. In 2016, Massachusetts implemented a new version of its mandatory, statewide student teacher performance evaluation, raising most programs' grades in this area significantly. 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 are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score on another. For instance, Massachusetts has adequate tests in the sciences. But one of the state's two social studies certification pathways, Political Science/Political Philosophy, has an inadequate test. 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)*