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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*

**MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY RANKS AMONG BEST IN THE NATION;  
THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA – WESTERN RANKS AMONG THE WEAKEST**

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

None of the 16 programs on NCTQ’s list of the Nation’s “Top Tier” Secondary Teacher Prep Programs is in Montana. The closest “Top Tier” programs are the University of Utah and Colorado Christian University.

“Top Tier” programs 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 Montana**

Montana State University barely missed earning “Top Tier” status, ranking at the 97th percentile. However, the University of Montana–Western falls in the bottom 7th percentile.

<b>Undergraduate Secondary Programs in Montana</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Montana State University	97
Rocky Mountain College	42
Montana State University Billings	37
University of Great Falls	16
University of Montana-Western	7

**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.

- All programs in Montana earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- Three of the five programs evaluated in Montana earn an A for content preparation in 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. This is the case for a third of the evaluated programs in Montana.
- 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 Montana, two-thirds of programs fall short in this area. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Of those programs that are sufficiently selective, half nationally also meet diversity goals--including Montana State University. For a list of programs found to be 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. In Montana, no program meets both of these criteria. 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. In Montana, three of the five programs do so. For a list of programs that perform well on classroom management in each state, 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 Montana, 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, Montana could strengthen licensing test requirements by setting higher minimum cut scores for all licensing tests.

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)*