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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*

**THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA-LAS VEGAS AND NEVADA STATE COLLEGE RANK
IN BOTTOM QUARTER NATIONALLY**

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

None of the 16 programs on NCTQ’s list of the “Nation’s Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” is in Nevada. The closest “Top Tier” program is the University of Utah.

“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 Nevada

Nevada’s highest-ranked program ranks at the 64th percentile nationally, while the state’s other two rank in the bottom quarter.

Undergraduate Secondary Programs in Nevada	Percentile
Great Basin College	64
University of Nevada-Las Vegas	21
Nevada State College	18

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 falls in sharp contrast to 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.

- None of the three programs evaluated in Nevada earns an A for content preparation in the sciences, which contrasts with 81 percent of programs nationally.
- Two of the three programs evaluated in Nevada earn an A for content preparation in social studies, which is comparable to the national average.

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](#).

Additional Key Findings:

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. However, all three programs in Nevada 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 Nevada, only Great Basin College is sufficiently selective. For a list of programs' selectivity rank in each state go [here](#).
- Of those programs that were found to be sufficiently selective, 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. Of the programs evaluated in Nevada, only Great Basin College meets both of these criteria. 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. Two Nevada programs, Nevada State College and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, score moderately well in this area. 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 Nevada, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score on another. Currently, only Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri have strong tests in all core subject areas. Nevada could improve in this area by requiring licensing tests in Biology, Earth Science, and Physics and by improving inadequate licensing tests for Biological Science, General Science, Physical Science, and Social Studies certification.

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