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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*

University of South Dakota Ranks as Best in State While Black Hills State University Ranks as Weakest

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

South Dakota has no programs on NCTQ’s list of the “Nation’s Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs” list. The closest “Top Tier” programs are in Iowa and Minnesota which have two each:

- Coe College (Cedar Rapids, IA)
- University of Iowa (Iowa City)
- St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN)
- University of Minnesota - Duluth

“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 evaluating candidates on how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in South Dakota

While South Dakota has no program that ranks in the top 10 percent nationally, none are in the bottom tenth either. South Dakota programs include:

- Augustana College (69th percentile)
- Black Hills State University (18th percentile)
- Mount Marty College (52nd percentile)
- Northern State University (46th percentile)
- South Dakota State University (49th percentile)
- University of Sioux Falls (71st percentile)
- University of South Dakota (86th 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 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.

- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all programs in South Dakota earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, six of seven programs in South Dakota earn an A 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 offer a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject.
- 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. For a list of programs' selectivity rank in each state go [here](#). In South Dakota 56 percent of programs are not sufficiently selective.
- Among sufficiently selective programs nationally, 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. Unfortunately, no program in South Dakota takes both of these steps, and a third do neither. For a list of programs across the country that score well on 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. Only 40 percent of programs in South Dakota meet this criterion. For a list of programs nationally that score 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 South Dakota, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. Currently, South Dakota has inadequate licensing tests for Composite Science, Physical Science, and Composite Social Studies certification. 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