

**FLORIDA TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES AMONG NATION’S BEST;  
STATE EARNS B+**

*New Report from NCTQ Finds Florida Leads the Nation in Having  
Policies that Support Effective Teaching*

December 8, 2015 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its ninth annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, which includes a 360-degree analysis of every state law, rule and regulation that shapes the effectiveness of the teaching profession in Florida.

Florida received the highest grade in the nation, earning a B+. Florida’s grade held steady from a B+ in 2013, despite NCTQ raising expectations in several key policy areas, including aligning teacher licensing policies with the requirements of states’ college- and career-readiness standards. The average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia for 2015 is a “C-”.

<b>Yearbook Goal Areas</b>	<b>Florida’s 2015 Grades</b>
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	B+
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	B-
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	B+
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	B
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	B+
Average Overall Grade	B+

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said,

"Most states still have plenty of room for improvement, including Florida, but on the whole the glass is really starting to look half full on states’ efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Florida has been a consistent national leader."

**Key Yearbook Findings**

**Teacher licensing requirements are becoming more in step with teacher effectiveness:**

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Florida’s content tests for elementary school licensure now provide separate passing scores for each subject which helps to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.
- *Science of reading.* Florida is one of 18 states that helps to ensure elementary teacher know the science of reading by requiring all elementary teachers to pass a test measuring that knowledge.
- *Student teaching.* Florida is one of 13 states that require that cooperating teachers that mentor future teachers have demonstrated that they are effective in the classroom.
- *Teacher prep accountability.* In Florida, teacher preparation programs report and are accountable to a number of measures of effectiveness, including the effectiveness of program graduates as measured by student achievement.

**Florida continues to lead on evaluations of teacher effectiveness:**

- *Teacher evaluation.* Florida is one of 27 states that require annual evaluations for all teachers and is one of 35 states that require student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

- *Tying performance to tenure.* For teachers to be able to renew their annual contracts in Florida they must demonstrate evidence of classroom effectiveness as measured by student learning. Florida is one of just nine states that where teacher performance is required to be the most significant criterion in such decisions.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-eight states, including Florida, now articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting "last in, first out" policies.* Florida is one of 19 states that require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

**There has been much less progress nationwide on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states, but Florida is a leader:**

- *Support for performance pay.* Florida is one of just seven states that require performance to be factored into teacher pay for all teachers. Florida also supports differential pay for teachers in high-needs schools and subject area shortages.
- *Alternate routes.* Florida is one of just six states that provides real alternative pathways to teacher certification that are flexible, efficient, and permit both broad usage and a diversity of providers.

**Florida still has room to improve in several critical policy fronts:**

- *Raising admission requirements.* Florida could strengthen teacher preparation by raising admission requirements to ensure that programs admit only candidates with strong academic records.
- *Strengthening secondary teacher preparation.* Florida should require that all secondary teachers, including general social studies teachers, pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Discontinuing K-12 licenses for special education teachers.* Florida is one of 21 states that still offer only a K-12 special education license, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

The *2015 Florida State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is immediately available for free download [here](#). The website also provides searchable access to the entire *Yearbook* dataset, including topical pages with up-to-date data on state teacher policy, a [customized search tool](#) and user-friendly options for generating graphic results that can be exported and shared.

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The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group committed to modernizing the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. To that end we work to achieve fundamental changes in the policy and practices of teacher preparation programs, school districts, state governments, and teachers unions. Our Board of Directors and Advisory Board come from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives, and they all believe that policy changes are overdue in the recruitment and retention of teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org).

	Overall State Grade 2015	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B+	B	C
Indiana	B	B-	C+	D
Louisiana	B	B	C-	C-
New York	B	B-	C	D+
Tennessee	B	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	B-	C-	D+
Delaware	B-	C+	C	D
Georgia	B-	B-	C	C-
Massachusetts	B-	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	B-	D+
Rhode Island	B-	B	B-	D
Illinois	C+	C+	C	D+
Michigan	C+	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	C+	B-	D+	D+
Utah	C+	C	C-	D
Virginia	C+	C+	D+	D+
Colorado	C	C+	C	D+
Kentucky	C	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	C	D+	D+
New Mexico	C	D+	D+	D+
South Carolina	C	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	C-	D+	D+
Idaho	C-	D+	D+	D-
Maine	C-	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	C-	D-
North Carolina	C-	C	D+	D+
Pennsylvania	C-	C-	D+	D
Texas	C-	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	C-	D+	D+
Alabama	D+	C-	C-	C-
District of Columbia	D+	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D+	D-	D-
Kansas	D+	D	D	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D+	D
California	D	D+	D+	D+
Iowa	D	D	D	D
Nebraska	D	D-	D-	D-
New Hampshire	D	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D	D-	D-
Wisconsin	D	D+	D	D
Wyoming	D	D	D	D-
Alaska	D-	D	D	D
South Dakota	D-	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F	F