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NCTQ and TNTP Call on the Minnesota Court of Appeals to Reverse Lower Court & Allow Trial on Rights of Schoolchildren to Quality Teachers

March 30, 2017 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) and TNTP submitted an amicus brief today in support of four Minnesota parents challenging the state’s laws on teacher tenure, dismissal, and layoffs. In the case, *Forslund v. Minnesota*, the parents argue that the state violated their children’s constitutional rights when they were assigned to chronically ineffective teachers because of these laws.

The amicus brief urges the Minnesota Court of Appeals to reverse a lower court’s dismissal of the case and let the four parents make their argument at trial. It explains how Minnesota’s students are harmed by laws enabling ineffective teachers to remain in the classroom indefinitely, and cites examples of alternative approaches to tenure, dismissal, and layoff policies—approaches that prioritize teacher effectiveness instead of seniority alone—that have contributed to stronger teaching and increased student achievement in several school systems across the country.

NCTQ’s Elizabeth Ross explains, “This case concerns Minnesota students’ fundamental right to an education. Great teachers help ensure that every student has an opportunity for educational success and Minnesota students are ill-served by statutory requirements that fail to require appropriate consideration of teacher effectiveness in decisions about teacher tenure, dismissal, and layoffs. This brief provides evidence that the status quo in Minnesota need not be maintained; many states are implementing substantially stronger policies and Minnesota can and should follow suit.”

“Debates about teacher tenure, dismissal and layoff rules often play out as a false choice between two extremes: keep today’s broken policies exactly as they are, or eliminate job protections for teachers entirely,” said Daniel Weisberg, CEO of TNTP. “Our brief shows that it’s possible to create laws and policies that achieve a better

balance between the due process rights of teachers and the educational rights of students. We hope the Court of Appeals will let parents make their case that Minnesota's kids deserve better than outdated laws keeping ineffective teachers on the job for life.”

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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

About TNTP

*A national nonprofit founded by teachers, TNTP helps school systems end educational inequality and achieve their goals for students. We work at every level of the public education system to attract and train talented teachers and school leaders, ensure rigorous and engaging classrooms, and create environments that prioritize great teaching and accelerate student learning. Since 1997, we've partnered with more than 200 public school districts, charter school networks and state departments of education. We have recruited or trained more than 50,000 teachers, and redefined critical education issues through acclaimed studies like *The Widget Effect* (2009) and *The Mirage* (2015). Learn more at tntp.org.*