

ILLINOIS EARNS “C+” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New Report from NCTQ Finds Illinois Ahead of Most States But Could Be Doing More to 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 Illinois.

Yearbook Goal Areas	Illinois's 2015 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	D+
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	C+
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	C
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	B+
Average Overall Grade	C+

Illinois received an overall grade of C+, the same grade it received in 2013, despite the fact that NCTQ raised expectations in several key policy areas, including aligning teacher licensing with the requirements of states' college- and career-readiness standards. The average grade for 2015 across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is a C-.

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "On the whole, the glass is really starting to look half full on states' efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Like most states, Illinois has made some strides but has more work to do."

Key Yearbook Findings

Teacher licensing requirements have yet to become in step with teacher effectiveness:

- *Admission requirements.* Illinois does not require that teacher preparation programs limit admission to candidates with strong academic records. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency for admission, such as a minimum GPA or test requirement.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Illinois's content tests for elementary school licensure do not provide separate passing scores for each subject, making it difficult to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.
- *Science of reading.* Illinois should ensure elementary teacher know the science of reading by requiring all elementary teachers to pass a rigorous test measuring that knowledge.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Illinois has significant loopholes in its secondary teacher licensing requirements. Illinois should require that all secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* Illinois still offers a K-12 special education license, which wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

Illinois is taking steps to strengthen evaluations of teacher effectiveness:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Although Illinois is one of 24 states that does not require annual evaluations for all teachers, it is one of 35 states that requires student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Illinois is one of 23 states where evidence of teacher performance is considered in tenure decisions.
- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Illinois requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations and mandates improvement plans for teachers with the lowest evaluation ratings. The state does not connect evaluations to professional development.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-eight states, including Illinois, articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting "last in, first out" policies.* Illinois is one of 19 states that require districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions while also prohibiting seniority from being the only factor in these same decisions.

Illinois can do more to hold teacher preparation programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce:

- While Illinois does collect objective teacher prep program data, it is one of 24 states that neither sets minimum standards for programs nor makes program performance data available to the public.

Illinois also has work to do on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession:

- *Support for performance pay.* Illinois does not support performance pay or differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas. It is one of 15 states that still requires teachers to be compensated for advanced degrees, even though such credentials have not been shown to have any bearing on teacher effectiveness.
- *Alternate routes.* Alternative pathways to certification are in need of significant improvement in Illinois.

The *2015 Illinois 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.

	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