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FEW STATES CONSIDER PRIOR JOB PERFORMANCE WHEN LICENSING OUT-OF-STATE TEACHERS

In Spite of Many Hurdles States Require of Out-of-State Teachers Seeking a Teaching License, Some Neglect Key Factors, Including Conducting Criminal Background Checks

Washington, D.C. – New [data](#) from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reveal that the majority of states (35) do not ask for evidence of prior successful teaching for those teachers coming from out of state who are applying for a teaching license—in spite of imposing many demands covering a host of other factors. As important, there are seven states that do not require a criminal background check on such teachers.

For example, 14 states require out-of-state teacher applicants to take additional coursework, without providing a test-out option. Nineteen states maintain requirements that make it harder for out-of-state applicants to qualify for a license if they were prepared by a non-traditional route or program.

“The process of transferring a teaching license is famous for its difficulty, often causing the teacher to forego a year or more of work,” commented NCTQ President Kate Walsh. “So we were surprised to find so many states neglecting factors addressing effectiveness and student safety.”

While 16 states’ policies make reference to out-of-state teacher applicants’ prior job performance, only four states (**the District of Columbia, New Jersey, New York, and North Carolina**) have adopted air-tight requirements regarding effectiveness, by maintaining precise language that requires out-of-state teachers to provide evidence of having been effective in the classroom, using objective measures of student learning and growth.

Notably, a number of states have lower expectations for out-of-state teachers than for teachers trained in-state. Of the 19 states that purport to assess teacher knowledge of how to teach reading to young children, 13 exempt out of state teachers from that same requirement.

All states as well as the District of Columbia require teachers trained in-state to pass a criminal background check to earn an initial license, but there are seven states (**Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Rhode Island**) that do not explicitly require that of out-of-state applicants.

To facilitate the movement of successful teachers and maintain high standards for teacher quality and student safety, NCTQ recommends that states maintain the following requirements when licensing out-of-state teachers:

- Require objective evidence of successful prior teaching performance.
- Require out-of-state teachers to demonstrate sufficient mastery of the content knowledge they will be teaching, including how to teach reading.
- Eliminate unnecessary barriers for out-of-state teachers.
- Conduct a background check to investigate any past criminal activity.

See all the comparative data, best practices, and recommendations for states in the full report: [NCTQ Databurst: Licensure Requirements for Out-of-State Teachers](#).

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To schedule an interview with NCTQ, please contact Samantha Jacobs at (202) 393-0020 ext. 714.

About the National Council on Teacher Quality: *The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and 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. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.*