

MISSISSIPPI EARNS “C” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New Report from NCTQ Finds Mississippi 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 Mississippi.

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

Mississippi received an overall grade of a 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, Mississippi has made some strides but has more work to do."

Key Yearbook Findings

While some teacher licensing requirements are becoming more in step with teacher effectiveness, Mississippi can do more:

- *Admission requirements.* Mississippi is one of 24 states that set a high academic bar for admission to teacher preparation programs.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Mississippi'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.* Mississippi is one of 18 states that administer an adequate test to ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Mississippi 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.
- *Special education teachers.* Mississippi offers only a K-12 special education license, which wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

While there is room for growth, Mississippi is taking steps to strengthen evaluations of teacher effectiveness:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Mississippi is one of 28 states that require annual evaluations for all teachers and is also one of 35 states that require student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Mississippi is one of 26 states where tenure is earned virtually automatically and evidence of teacher performance is not considered in tenure decisions.
- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Mississippi requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations, requires professional development to be informed by evaluation findings and mandates improvement plans for teachers with the lowest evaluation ratings.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Mississippi does not articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.

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

- *Support for performance pay.* While Mississippi does support performance pay bonuses, it also is one of 15 states that still require 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 Mississippi.

Mississippi has significant room for improvement on several other critical policy fronts:

- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Mississippi does not require districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions.
- *Teacher preparation program accountability.* While Mississippi does collect some 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.

The *2015 Mississippi 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 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government.

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