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NCTQ'S YEARBOOK FINDS STATE POLICIES TO SUPPORT TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS NO LONGER THE EXCEPTION IN THE U.S.

Average State Teacher Policy Grade C- for 2015; NCTQ Predicts a Tipping Point Has Been Reached as 44 States Have Improved Overall Grades Since 2009

December 8, 2015 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) today released its ninth annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, a 52 volume, 360-degree analysis of every state law, rule and regulation that shapes the teaching profession, from teacher preparation, licensing and evaluation to compensation, professional development and dismissal policy.

Across the 50 states and the District of Columbia, states average a C- for their teacher policies in 2015, up from an overall grade of D in 2009. The average state grade has held steady since NCTQ's last comprehensive report card in 2013, despite the bar being raised on several key topics, including aligning teacher licensing policies with the expectations of college- and career-readiness standards adopted by many states.

Florida earned the highest overall teacher policy grade in the nation, a B+. Indiana, Louisiana, New York and Tennessee earned a strong grade of B for 2015. Eight other states received a B- for their efforts to adopt policies to promote effective teaching and improved student achievement. New Mexico is the most improved state on the 2015 teacher report card by earning a grade of C this year, improving on the D+ it received in every *Yearbook* since 2009.

At the other end of the spectrum, a handful of states remain stubbornly out of step with important teacher reform trends across the nation. Montana has consistently earned an F in the *Yearbook* for its record of inaction. Alaska, South Dakota and Vermont earned a D- for 2015, and California, Iowa, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Wisconsin and Wyoming all earned Ds overall.

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "Most states still have much room for improvement, but on the whole, the glass is really starting to look half full on states' efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Evaluations of teacher effectiveness, policies tying tenure and dismissal to teacher performance, and a higher bar for teacher preparation are no longer the exception across the states."

Key Yearbook Findings

Some licensing requirements are becoming more in step with teacher effectiveness.

- Just six years ago, not a single state required elementary teacher candidates to demonstrate adequate knowledge in all core subjects as a condition of licensing. Twenty-two states now require that elementary teachers demonstrate content knowledge by obtaining passing scores on academic content tests in each core subject.

- For the first time ever, a majority of states (26) adequately measures new elementary teachers' knowledge of math. Up until 2011, NCTQ recognized only Massachusetts for its preparation of teachers in mathematics.
- The majority of states (26) also now require all middle school teachers to pass a test in each and every core subject they will teach

Many states have raised teacher preparation admission requirements.

- Twenty-four states set a high academic bar for admission to teacher prep programs, through either GPA and/or test requirements, a major advance in policy compared to 2009 when 36 states did not require even a basic skills test for admission into teacher preparation programs.

The vast majority of states now have laws on the books requiring teacher evaluations to include objective measures of student achievement.

- Twenty-seven states require annual evaluations for all teachers in 2015, compared to just 15 states in 2009, and 45 states now require annual evaluations for all new, probationary teachers.
- Forty-three states require teacher evaluations that include measures of student achievement.
- Sixteen states include student achievement and growth as the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations, up from only four states in 2009. An additional 19 states include growth measures as a “significant” criterion in teacher evaluations.
- In 2015, there remain just five states in the nation – California, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska and Vermont – that still have no formal state policy requiring that teacher evaluations take objective measures of student achievement into account in evaluating teacher effectiveness
- In 2009, not a single state tied evidence of teacher effectiveness to decisions of consequence. In 2015, 23 states now require that tenure decisions are tied to teacher performance.
- In nine states – Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, New York, Oklahoma and Tennessee – evidence of teacher performance is required to be the most significant criterion for granting teachers tenure or teacher contracts.

State policy increasingly recognizes the need to provide teachers with professional support.

- Twenty-three states now require that districts provide teachers with strong induction programs and a majority of states (32) require mentoring for all new teachers.
- In light of state efforts to improve teacher evaluations, NCTQ has tracked the extent states are connecting teacher evaluation results and findings to improving classroom practice. In 2011 NCTQ identified 24 states requiring teachers receive feedback on their evaluation results. That number rose to 31 states in 2013 and 38 states in 2015.
- Thirty-one states specifically require in state policy that teacher evaluation results be used to inform and shape professional development for all teachers, up from 12 states in 2011

The majority of states now recognize that evaluations of teacher effectiveness can help inform dismissal and layoff policies.

- Twenty-eight states now articulate that ineffective teaching is grounds for teacher dismissal. This is not only a majority of states but a large shift in state policy since 2009 when only 11 states specified that teachers with multiple unsatisfactory evaluations should be eligible for dismissal.

- Nineteen states that explicitly require performance to be considered in making layoff decisions. An even more promising 22 states prevent seniority from being the sole factor determining which teachers are laid off if cutbacks must be made.

On several critical fronts there are still only a precious few state leaders paving the way forward on teacher effectiveness.

- *Early childhood.* In 38 states, teachers can teach in elementary school grades on an early childhood license. However, only 7 require early childhood teachers to pass a content test with separate scores for reading and mathematics among other subjects.
- *Secondary licensing.* Just five of the 42 states that generally require secondary teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of the subjects they will teach -- Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, South Dakota and Tennessee--do so without loopholes around general science and social studies.
- *Special education.* 21 states still allow special education teachers to earn a generic special education license to teach any special education students in any grade, K-12; 16 other states offer K-12 licenses as an option. Just 14 states require elementary special education teachers to know their subject-matter, and only Missouri, New York and Wisconsin require secondary level special education teachers to pass a test in every subject they are licensed to teach.
- *Accountability for preparing effective teachers:* While 37 states now collect meaningful objective data on teacher preparation programs that reflect program effectiveness, only 10 use the data to set minimum standards for program performance.
- *Alternate routes:* NCTQ identifies just six states in 2015 that can be said to provide real and genuine alternative pathways to certification for the non-traditional teaching candidate – Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, New Jersey and Rhode Island.
- *Teacher compensation:* Just seven states – Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Nevada and Utah – directly tie teacher compensation to teacher evaluation results.

State Yearbook Dashboard

The NCTQ *Yearbook* website provides free download of the [national and state-specific Yearbook reports](#) for 2015, as well as a new and improved [dashboard](#) that 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.

Funding for the Yearbook

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.

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 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. 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