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NEBRASKA GETS FAILING MARKS FOR TEACHER POLICIES IN NEW REPORT-- LABELED 'LAST IN CLASS'

—Today the National Council on Teacher Quality released a 50-state encyclopedia on states' teacher policies, concluding that many Nebraska's policies are counterproductive to the nation's teacher quality goals—

Washington, DC -- The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is the first project of its kind to provide a 360-degree detailed analysis of how states are hurting or helping teacher quality--and what they can do to fix broken and anachronistic policies.

Nebraska ranks at the very bottom of states with no grade higher than "D" in any of the six areas NCTQ assessed, ranging from teacher admissions standards, licensure to compensation reform—the state earned four "D" grades two "F" grades.

"Nebraska's policies, like all states', are in need of an overhaul," said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ. "It's time to exchange the gas-guzzling clunker for a hybrid."

Among the findings:

- State licensing rules make it very difficult for knowledgeable, qualified individuals to switch careers to go into teaching without burdensome coursework demands.
- The state neglects the preparation of special education teachers, failing to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities.
- The state does not require that schools evaluate teachers annually, as is standard in most professions, nor does it require that a teacher's classroom effectiveness be the preponderant consideration of an evaluation.

Despite these bleak findings, there are a few bright spots. For example, unlike many states, Nebraska requires its teacher candidates to pass a basic skills test before entering a school of education.

To download copies of the Nebraska report, which includes national comparisons, or to purchase printed copies of the report, visit the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org. For

questions about the report, please contact Lisa Cohen at (310) 395-2544 or lisa@lisacohen.org or Molly Jackman at (202) 393-0020 (ext. 15) or mjackman@nctq.org.

NCTQ -- comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies and seeks to lend transparency and accountability to the three institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: state governments, colleges of education, and teachers' unions.

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