

OKLAHOMA TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES STRONG; STATE EARNS SOLID B- GRADE

New Report from NCTQ Finds Oklahoma Is a Leader on Policies that 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 Oklahoma.

Oklahoma earned a B- this year, holding steady from a B- in 2013, despite NCTQ raising expectations in several key policy areas, including aligning teacher licensing policies with the requirements of states' college- and career-readiness standards. The average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia for 2015 is a "C-".

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

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "Most states still have plenty of room for improvement, including Oklahoma, but on the whole the glass is really starting to look half full on states' efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Oklahoma is among the national leaders."

Key Yearbook Findings

Oklahoma doesn't do enough to ensure that teacher licensing requirements are in step with teacher effectiveness:

- *Admission standards.* Oklahoma sets a high academic bar for admission to teacher preparation programs.
- *Science of reading.* Oklahoma is one of 18 states that ensure elementary teachers know the science of reading instruction. The state also requires early childhood teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading instruction.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* However, Oklahoma's content assessments for elementary teacher licensure do not ensure that candidates have mastered all content areas they are required to teach.
- *Secondary licensure.* Oklahoma has significant loopholes in its licensing requirements for secondary teachers.
- *Special education.* Oklahoma is one of 21 states that offer only a K-12 general license for special education teachers, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.
- *Middle school licensure.* Oklahoma allows 1-8 generalist licenses and does not require middle school teacher to pass content tests in all the subjects they are licensed to teach.

Oklahoma is implementing evaluations of teacher effectiveness and connects teacher performance to some policies of consequence:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Oklahoma does not require annual evaluations for all teachers but is one of 16 states that require student achievement/growth to be the most significant criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Evidence of student learning is technically the preponderant criterion in tenure decisions in Oklahoma. However, the state has created a loophole by allowing principals to petition to override student learning requirements.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Oklahoma is among the 28 states that now articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting "last in, first out" policies.* Oklahoma also is one of 19 states that require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

Oklahoma has made progress on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states:

- *Professional support.* Oklahoma requires all teachers to receive feedback on their evaluations and requires structured improvement plans for teachers who receive unsatisfactory evaluations.
- *Support for performance pay.* Oklahoma supports performance bonuses for teachers as well as differential pay for teachers in high-needs schools and subject area shortages.

Oklahoma still has room to improve on several critical policy fronts:

- *Teacher preparation accountability.* Oklahoma does not collect program performance data on teacher preparation programs or set minimum standards for program performance. The state also does not connect student achievement to teacher preparation programs.
- *Compensation for advanced degrees.* Oklahoma is one of 15 states that continue to require increased pay for teachers earning advanced degrees, even though there is no evidence that such degrees have an impact on teacher effectiveness.
- *Alternate routes.* Oklahoma could do more to ensure the quality of all alternate routes to certification.

The *2015 Oklahoma 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