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## ***New NCTQ Analysis of Landmark Performance Pay Law Finds Almost No Buy-In from School Districts***

WASHINGTON, DC--As a growing number of states across the nation look for ways to recognize and reward excellent teachers, a new study from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) reveals at least one large pocket of resistance for providing additional compensation to star teachers. Examining the impact of a 2011 Florida law which mandates that Florida school districts provide the highest salary awards available to teachers who are rated "Highly Effective", this study finds little evidence of district buy-in.

The study, *Backing the Wrong Horse: The Story of One State's Ambitious but Disheartening Foray into Performance Pay* shows how 16 out of a sample of 18 Florida districts are continuing to pay higher salary awards to teachers who earn graduate degrees than teachers whose performance stands out. On average the reward for a Master's degree in these districts is four times greater than the reward for being found Highly Effective.

These results demonstrate a clear disconnect between the law's intent and its implementation. Districts appear to skirt the law with unanticipated distinctions made between those rewards paid out for performance and other kinds of salary rewards. Furthermore, compliance with the law is complicated by districts continuing to rate 98 percent of all teachers Effective or Highly Effective (with 44 percent of teachers earning Highly Effective), which may result in suppression of the size of performance rewards absent significant reductions in other ways teachers qualify for raises.

Most of this study's districts have opted to stick with the traditional trigger for a teacher salary award, which is to earn a graduate degree, in spite of conclusive research spanning 50 years demonstrating that teachers with Master's degrees are generally no more effective than teachers without one.

"Schools should be investing in what matters most, teachers who day in and day out, year in and year out pull off miracle wins with kids," commented Kate Walsh, President of NCTQ. "Instead districts are forcing teachers to spend precious time and dollars to earn degrees which rarely add value, and distract from the job of teaching. This is a lost opportunity for Florida's school districts, teachers, and students."

There were two bright spots in the study, Hillsborough and Duval, which both reward teachers more for performance than earning graduate degrees. Hillsborough does not pay its teachers anything extra for completing any kind of advanced degree. Meanwhile, Duval pays its teachers who are rated Highly Effective substantially more than its teachers who earn Master's degrees.

Conversely, the disproportionate size of the salary awards in the Florida districts was so high that a teacher in St. Lucie County Public Schools would need to earn the Highly Effective rating every year for nearly 19 years to achieve the amount granted in a single year to a teacher with a Master's degree. And

a teacher in Escambia County Public Schools would need to earn an Effective rating every year for more than 12 years to achieve the award granted in a single year to a teacher who earned a Master's degree.

The study is timely given that the number of states that are attempting to link teacher bonuses or salary increases to a measure of classroom performance has more than doubled since 2011, climbing from seven to seventeen.

“We hope to alert all states even those contemplating a shift to new teacher compensation systems,” continued Walsh. “Not only do they need to evaluate the fidelity of any implementation effort, there are important lessons to be learned in how to mitigate against the obstacles, inevitably imposed to prevent long overdue reforms.”

For more information about the report or to arrange an interview with Elizabeth Ross, Managing Director of State Policy and author of the report, please contact Eric Duncan at [eduncan@nctq.org](mailto:eduncan@nctq.org).

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***About the National Council on Teacher Quality:***

*The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. NCTQ is the nation's expert on the quality of teacher preparation programs and evaluates national teacher education against evidence-based criteria. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org)*