

RHODE ISLAND TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES STRONGER THAN MOST; STATE EARNS SOLID B- GRADE

New Report from NCTQ Finds Rhode Island Supports 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 Rhode Island.

Rhode Island earned a B- this year, dropping from a B in 2013, due largely to changes in the state’s evaluation policies. NCTQ also raised 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	Rhode Island’s 2015 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	B-
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	B-
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	C+
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	C+
Average Overall Grade	B-

NCTQ Sandi Vice President

Sandi Jacobs said, "Most states still have plenty of room for improvement, including Rhode Island, but on the whole the glass is really starting to look half full on states’ efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Rhode Island is among the national leaders."

Key Yearbook Findings

Teacher licensing requirements are becoming more in step with teacher effectiveness:

- *Admission standards.* Rhode Island is one of 24 states that set a high academic bar for admissions to teacher preparation programs.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Rhode Island’s content tests for elementary school licensure provide separate passing scores for each subject which helps to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.
- *Special education.* Rhode Island is one of only 14 states in the nation that, appropriately, does not offer a K-12 general license for special education teachers. Rhode Island also requires elementary special education teachers to pass all the same content tests as other elementary teaching candidates and requires secondary special education teachers to hold certification in a second area.

Rhode Island is implementing evaluations of teacher effectiveness but has backed away from some policies to use results to inform policy and practice:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Rhode Island is one of 35 states that require student achievement/growth to be a significant criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness. However, Rhode Island no longer makes student achievement the preponderant criterion in teacher evaluations and no longer requires annual evaluations for all teachers.

- *Tying performance to tenure and licensure.* Tenure decisions in Rhode Island are made virtually automatically after three years. However, Rhode Island is one of just six states that requiring evidence of teacher effectiveness for licensure advancement.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Rhode Island does not articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Rhode Island is one of 19 states that requires districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

Rhode Island has some promising policies aimed at recruiting and retaining effective teachers:

- *Professional support.* Rhode Island requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations and directs districts to connect professional development to teachers’ identified needs. The state also requires structured improvement plans for teachers who receive poor evaluations.
- *Alternate routes.* Rhode Island is one of just six states that offers high-quality alternative pathways into the profession.

Rhode Island still has room to improve on several other critical teacher policy fronts:

- *Science of reading.* Rhode Island should ensure elementary teacher know the science of reading by requiring all elementary teachers to pass a rigorous test measuring that knowledge.
- *Support for performance pay.* Rhode Island neither supports performance pay nor differential pay for teachers in high-needs schools and subject area shortages.

The *2015 Rhode Island 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