

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Thursday, August 9, 2018**

**Contact**  
**Nicole Gerber**  
**National Council on Teacher Quality**  
**ngerber@nctq.org**  
**(202) 393-0020 ext. 712**

**MAJORITY OF STATES' EFFORTS TO BOLSTER NEW TEACHERS' PREPARATION TO  
TEACH READING ARE VASTLY INSUFFICIENT**

*NEW NCTQ REPORT FINDS ONLY 11 STATES HAVE ADEQUATE SAFEGUARDS IN PLACE FOR  
BOTH ELEMENTARY AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS*

Washington, DC — More than two decades after the National Institutes of Health declared the high rate of reading failure among Americans to be “a public health crisis” and more than two decades after scientific consensus was achieved on the specific teaching methods needed to produce the highest numbers of successful readers, many states fail to maintain the necessary requirements regarding elementary and special education teachers’ knowledge of reading instruction.

In an NCTQ databurst: *Strengthening Reading Instruction Through Better Preparation of Elementary and Special Education Teachers* that reviews the current status of states’ requirements governing teachers’ reading knowledge, 40 states still either do not have sufficient licensing tests in place for both of these groups of teachers, or have no test at all. A handful of states have adequate tests in place for elementary teacher candidates, but not special education teacher candidates, a perplexing stance given that 80 percent of all students are assigned to special education because of their struggle to read.

Those states that have adopted adequate tests of teachers’ reading knowledge for both elementary and special education teacher candidates are **Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Virginia, and Wisconsin**. For a full listing of how the remaining states fare, go [here](#).

“The failure of such a high percentage of our children to learn how to read is tragically unnecessary,” says Kate Walsh, NCTQ President. “We’ve known for decades what needs to change. Educational trends and priorities ebb and flow. Our responsibility to children should not.”

Although many states maintain teacher preparation program standards that require the science of reading to be part of the elementary and special education teacher curricula, standards alone have proven insufficient to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach the science of reading, generally because they are hard to enforce. NCTQ’s review of program practice in all states reveals that a majority of teacher preparation programs do not meet those standards. While there has been some improvement among programs in the past few years, still only 37 percent of elementary and special education programs can provide evidence that they teach scientifically-based reading methods to their teacher candidates.

“If states want to use standards as their primary mechanism for delivering well-prepared teachers, they have to be prepared to also provide constant monitoring and enforcement. Few states have shown themselves to be so inclined,” continued Walsh. “The most efficient means available to states are strong tests backed up by annual reviews of how successful programs are preparing their candidates to pass this test.”

The National Institutes of Health spent 40 years examining best practices for how children and adults learn to read. These findings were recently updated and affirmed by the Institute of Education Sciences, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Education. The research concluded that if teachers and schools properly implemented instructional practices regarding scientifically-based methods of literacy, then all but a small percent of students could learn to read.

To help provide all students with the support they need to become competent and confident readers, NCTQ recommends the following:

- All states should require elementary and special education teacher candidates to pass a rigorous test in reading knowledge that is aligned with the scientific findings about how to produce the highest numbers of successful readers.
- When states adopt an assessment serving multiple purposes—that is, one that tests knowledge of other subjects alongside reading knowledge, it must report a separate subscore on a candidate’s reading knowledge.
- States should increase transparency by reviewing their teacher preparation programs and making information reflecting programs’ success in preparing candidates available to the public.

Read the full report and explore data for each state [here](#).

###

To schedule an interview with the report’s author, Elizabeth Ross, or Kate Walsh, President of NCTQ, please contact Nicole Gerber at (202) 393-0020 ext. 712.

***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 and 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. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, [www.nctq.org](http://www.nctq.org).