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VIRGINIA EARNS “C+” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New Report from NCTQ Finds Virginia Ahead of Most States But Could Be Doing More to 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 Virginia.

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

Virginia received an overall grade of C+, the same grade it received in 2013, despite the fact that NCTQ raised expectations in several key policy areas, including aligning teacher licensing with the requirements of states' college- and career-readiness standards. The average grade for 2015 across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is a C-.

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "On the whole, the glass is really starting to look half full on states' efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Like most states, Virginia has made some strides but has more work to do."

Key Yearbook Findings

Although there is room for growth, Virginia is working to ensure its teacher licensing requirements are in step with teacher effectiveness:

- *Admission requirements.* Virginia is one of 24 states that set a high academic bar for admission to teacher preparation programs.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Virginia'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.
- *Science of reading.* Virginia is one of 18 states that administer an adequate test to ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Virginia should require that all secondary teachers, including general social studies teachers, pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* Virginia still offers a K-12 special education license, which wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

Virginia is taking steps to strengthen evaluations of teacher effectiveness:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Although Virginia is one of 24 states that does not require annual evaluations for all teachers, it is one of 35 states that require student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Virginia is one of 23 states where evidence of teacher performance is considered in tenure decisions.
- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Virginia requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations, requires professional development to be informed by evaluation findings and mandates improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluation ratings.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-eight states, including Virginia, articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting "last in, first out" policies.* Virginia is one of 19 states that require districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions while also prohibiting seniority from being the only factor in these same decisions.

Virginia has work to do on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession:

- *Support for performance pay.* Virginia does not support performance pay that rewards teachers for their effectiveness, although it does provide differential pay for teachers in high-need schools and shortage subject areas.
- *Alternate routes.* Alternative pathways to certification are in need of improvement in Virginia.

The *2015 Virginia 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 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government.

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