

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NCTQ RESPONDS TO FORMER SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ARNE DUNCAN'S  
OPEN LETTER TO HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS, CALLS FOR ACTION**

*Kate Walsh Commends Duncan for Calling Out Lack of Rigor in Higher Ed Programs,  
Urges College Presidents and Deans to Listen and Act*

Washington, DC — Today former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan published an [open letter](#) to higher education leadership, urging them to ensure that their teacher prep programs are sufficiently rigorous. In the letter, Duncan states: "Lowering our expectations not only does a disservice to the teaching candidates in these programs, but also to the students they'll soon teach."

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released a report, *Easy A's*, that found that grading standards for teacher candidates are much lower than for other students on campus. NCTQ also found a link between high grades and lack of rigorous coursework with the primary cause being assignments that fail to develop the skills and knowledge every teacher needs.

Kate Walsh released the following statement today, "This is an issue of profound importance to teacher quality but even more notably, it is fixable. Starting tomorrow, the nation's teacher preparation programs could make some fundamental changes in the quality of assignments they ask of teacher candidates. These are changes that don't have to get mired down in red tape or years of study. It's a simple matter of teacher educators creating higher expectations."

Kate Walsh is available to discuss this issue. To schedule an interview, please contact Stephen Buckley. To review NCTQ's *Easy A's Report*, go [here](#).

## **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 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](http://www.nctq.org).*