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***NEW STUDY: DESPITE MOVES TO DILUTE ADMISSIONS STANDARDS, MANY
TEACHER PREP PROGRAMS MAINTAIN HIGH BAR FOR ENTRY***

***NCTQ identifies how watering down admission standards to teacher prep does
not solve shortage or diversity issues***

Washington DC – A strong body of research, and the example of other nations, supports a relationship between student performance and the selectivity of admissions into teacher prep programs. Therefore, America’s institutions training teachers should set high standards to admit only the best candidates to become the teachers who will educate our nation’s future.

According to a new report by NCTQ, 25 states set high admissions standards in 2015, but many that increased admissions requirements indirectly through the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) admissions policies backed away from that higher standard for entry when CAEP agreed to let programs delay verifying their students’ academic ability *until graduation*. As a result, the number of states requiring an average GPA of 3.0 or higher before being admitted to a teacher prep program fell from 25 to just the 11 states which established strong admissions policies in state law. The number requiring a test taken by general college applicants (such as the ACT or SAT) dropped from 19 to three.

This report, *Within Our Grasp: Achieving Higher Admissions Standards in Teacher Prep*, presents new research showing that programs did not need this reversal. Many had already set high standards for candidate admission on their own.

NCTQ President, Kate Walsh, stated that, “Teaching is the equivalent of intellectual tightrope, absorbing information from all directions, making rapid fire decisions, and pivoting in an instant. That’s why teacher preparation programs cannot ignore academic ability when considering applicants--not because all teachers need to be able to explain the theory of relativity.”

The report challenges many of the claims by advocates for diluting admission standards. It proposes that low admissions standards not only weaken the quality of teacher candidates, but also may actually exacerbate teacher shortages by discouraging many talented students. Similarly, there is evidence of programs maintaining selective admissions criteria while recruiting a diverse cohort of teacher candidates.

Given the pushback states and CAEP encountered when trying to raise program admissions standards, one of the most surprising findings of this study is that a majority of programs do in fact meet this higher standard, even in states where this is no longer required.

NCTQ investigated the policies of up to 10 institutions with the largest preparation program enrollment in each of the 11 states that independently passed laws requiring high admission standards and 14 states requiring CAEP accreditation. In the states with their own laws, 72 percent of the programs studied likely met the higher admissions standard and only 11 percent likely did not. Even in the CAEP states that no longer require high admissions standards, over half of the programs examined likely met CAEP's original requirements, compared to only 13 percent that likely did not.

NCTQ State Policy Director, Nithya Joseph, said, "States and accreditation entities should set a high bar for program admissions, since most preparation programs can or already do rise to that expectation. Despite concerns that strengthened entry requirements will only worsen teacher shortages and work against efforts to increase teacher diversity, the reality is that these issues cannot be solved by lowering those requirements."

States are using multiple measures to ensure both high standards and flexibility. For instance, most states with GPA requirements base them on the average for the entire class, rather than each individual, to provide programs with more options for individual applicant admissions decisions.

According to the report, states, CAEP, and programs themselves all can play a major role in creating more meaningful admissions standards. Specifically:

- 1. States should maintain a commitment to stronger admissions requirements.**
- 2. CAEP should identify a pathway to achieve higher admissions standards.**
- 3. Teacher prep programs can and should implement a more meaningful bar for admission to their programs.**

To read the study, click [here](#). To schedule an interview with Ms. Walsh, please contact Stephen Buckley at (202) 393-0020 ext. 129.

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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