

January 30, 2014

Contact: Alexandra Wilding
Phone 202.393.0020 ext.131
awilding@nctq.org

ALASKA EARNS “D” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Alaska poor grades for lack of policies that support effective teaching

January 30, 2014 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its seventh 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 Alaska.

Alaska has consistently earned low grades in the *Yearbook*, with its grade of "D" unchanged since 2009. The average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is an improving “C-”.

NCTQ President Kate Walsh said, "This year's *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* proves that it is both possible and practical for states to drive teacher effectiveness policy. Many states once argued that raising the bar for teacher preparation, licensing and evaluation and tying personnel decisions to results for kids couldn't be done. Now these policies are on the books in increasing numbers of states across the nation."

Key Yearbook Findings

Teacher effectiveness is increasingly being factored into personnel decisions across the states, but not in Alaska:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Alaska does not require annual evaluations of all teachers but it is one of 35 states that requires student achievement/growth to be included in teacher evaluations.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In Alaska, teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after three years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Alaska does, however, articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Alaska makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

In many states, progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but Alaska receives a failing grade in this area:

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Alaska is one of four states that does not require elementary teacher candidates to pass a content knowledge test to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.
- *Science of reading.* Alaska is one of 34 that does not ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.

Yearbook Goal Areas	Alaska's 2013 Grade
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	F
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	D
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	D+
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	D
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	D-
Average Overall Grade	D

- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Alaska is one of nine states that does not require secondary teachers to pass a content test in every subject for licensure or to add an endorsement.
- *Admission requirements.* Alaska does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records. Nearly all states set a low bar but Alaska sets no bar for admission. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency, such as a minimum GPA requirement.
- *Special education teachers.* Alaska offers only a K-12 special education license, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

There has been little action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states:

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Alaska does not require that teachers receive feedback on their evaluation ratings. The state also fails to specify that professional development should be informed by evaluations or require improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluating ratings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Alaska is one of 26 states that does not support performance pay. Alaska also does not support differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas.

Very few states provide truly flexible pathways into teaching:

- *Alternate routes.* Alaska fails to provide alternative pathways to teacher certification that are flexible, efficient, and permit both broad usage and a diversity of providers.

The *2013 Alaska State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is immediately available for free download at: www.nctq.org/statepolicy. The newly redesigned 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.

The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* was funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government. The National Council of Teacher Quality comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents is a non-partisan research and policy group committed to restructuring the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. More information about NCTQ, including a list of the Board of Directors and Advisory Board, can be found on the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org

	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B	C
Louisiana	B	C-	C-
Rhode Island	B	B-	D
Tennessee	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	C-	D+
Georgia	B-	C	C-
Indiana	B-	C+	D
Massachusetts	B-	C	D+
Michigan	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	B-	D+	D+
New York	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	D+
Colorado	C+	C	D+
Delaware	C+	C	D
Illinois	C+	C	D+
Virginia	C+	D+	D+
Kentucky	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	D+	D+
North Carolina	C	D+	D+
Utah	C	C-	D
Alabama	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	D+	D+
Maine	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	D-
Pennsylvania	C-	D+	D
South Carolina	C-	C-	C-
Texas	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	D+	D+
California	D+	D+	D+
District of Columbia	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D-	D-
Idaho	D+	D+	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D
New Mexico	D+	D+	D+
Wisconsin	D+	D	D
Alaska	D	D	D
Iowa	D	D	D
Kansas	D	D	D-
New Hampshire	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D-	D-
Wyoming	D	D	D-
Nebraska	D-	D-	D-
South Dakota	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F