

## Why NCTQ and US News are rating the nation's teacher preparation programs

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Each year America's public school districts hire some 240,000 new teachers, with all but a tiny fraction of these teachers supplied by the nation's education schools. The quality of these individuals is paramount. Our future economic prosperity will be dictated by our ability to train and prepare students for the jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What is more, every young American, regardless of background or zipcode, has the right to receive a great education. And since teacher quality is the most important factor in student learning, how -- and how well -- those teachers are trained are obviously crucial questions to address as we make our education system into the best in the world.

That is why our two organizations recently joined together to study the nation's teacher preparation programs. There are currently more than 1,400 institutions preparing teachers for public schools in the United States, but we know very little about them. Like the teacher preparation programs themselves, our goal is to help future teachers succeed. Our effort seeks to provide future teachers, districts that hire future teachers, and students with an accurate picture of the quality of teacher preparation today -- and from there, to find ways to improve teacher preparation.

Our survey will be fairly administered and the process will be transparent. We are making every effort to be responsive and are making the entire process available to see online. We will be launching forums on our web site where schools will have the opportunity to challenge our ratings. We welcome a healthy dialogue about our process, methodology and findings.

The standards we use to rate education schools represent what school principals and district superintendents routinely seek from their new teachers. They are drawn from research, where there is any; the best practices of high performing nations and states; and for a few, by bringing together leading experts and practitioners in such fields as student teaching and special education. The standards have been vetted and endorsed by a distinguished panel of experts, including a number of respected teacher educators.

We are confident that the standards we are using are grounded in the fundamentals of what constitutes strong teacher preparation. Our review is, for example, looking at whether schools of education are teaching good classroom management skills and how to teach math, and whether they are requiring their aspiring high school teachers to thoroughly know the subject they are going to teach.

Many institutions have signed up to be a part of this effort and we thank them for working with us. Some institutions are on the fence and for them, we are setting up a number of opportunities to provide more information about what we are trying to accomplish. We invite those

institutions that have declared their intention not to participate to reconsider and start again with an open mind. After all, our goals are the same.

We understand that we are the first to take on the enormous task of rating education schools, and we understand that there are questions. No review can be perfect, and if we were to wait until every question was answered, we would never be able to get started. We can assure you that our organizations will go about the process with the same level of transparency and accountability that we are asking of the institutions we are rating.