

For Immediate Release
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**NATIONAL COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY RELEASES FIRST
REPORT EVALUATING ALL EDUCATION SCHOOLS IN TEXAS,
FINDS MAJOR PATTERNS OF WEAKNESS**

***“CONSUMERS” OF EDUCATION SCHOOLS—INCLUDING ASPIRING
TEACHERS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS LOOKING TO HIRE—NOW HAVE
STRONG, SPECIFIC DATA ON PROGRAM QUALITY***

Washington, D.C. –The National Council on Teacher Quality today released a first-of-a-kind report covering 67 undergraduate schools of education in the Lone Star state. *“Ed School Essentials: Evaluating the Fundamentals of Teacher Training Programs in Texas”* finds that many of the state’s programs are flawed in their design, without the fundamentals in place to provide teacher candidates with the best possible preparation for the classroom. And despite state regulations, schools vary in the number and kinds of courses they require to become a teacher, with no apparent rationale. The results include:

- Three out of four schools ignore a state regulation requiring that elementary-teacher candidates be trained in effective methods of reading instruction.
- Only 4 of the 67 schools provide the proper content in mathematics that elementary teachers need.
- Just 18 percent of the programs provide middle-school teacher candidates with adequate preparation in the subjects they're slated to teach.

NCTQ's study measures each of the education schools on 25 standards for teacher preparation, including admissions standards, preparation to teach reading and mathematics, content preparation, and special education.

More than 30 Texas superintendents, signing a letter of endorsement, intend to use the report to inform their own recruitment practices. Says Terry Grier, superintendent of the Houston ISD, the state’s largest district, "This gives us enough information to make responsible decisions about where to recruit. What district wouldn't want this data?"

"With this report, we set out to determine whether or not Texas education schools have the fundamentals in place to prepare teachers," said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ, a non-partisan research and advocacy group. "We do not offer any determination on the quality of instruction at these institutions. But no matter how great the instruction, if the fundamentals are askew and large areas of teacher preparation are either being neglected or mishandled, teachers aren't getting what they need."

NCTQ's study focuses on the *design* of each program, assessing whether the *fundamentals* are in place to produce the best possible teachers. Also illustrative of the hodgepodge nature of the programs in Texas are the study's following results:

- 256 textbooks are used to teach 198 reading courses across the state, with few teaching scientifically based methods.
- Not one undergraduate training program provides elementary-teacher candidates with comprehensive preparation in all subjects.
- With the state's overt permission, almost all programs fail to ensure that aspiring high school science teachers take sufficient coursework in all areas of science.

The report also highlights Texas' ed-school strengths:

- Two schools serve as national exemplars in the preparation of elementary reading instruction: **Texas A&M University** and **Southern Methodist University**.
- Nearly two-thirds of the programs have relatively high admission standards, admitting only students who were in the top half of their high school class.
- Four education schools are singled out for overall strong program design: **Dallas Baptist University**, **Southern Methodist University**, **The University of Texas - Pan American** and **The University of Texas at Austin**

Eight schools, however, are identified as needing serious attention: **Lamar University**, **Midwestern State University**, **Our Lady of the Lake University**, **Texas A&M University – Commerce**, **Texas Christian University**, **Texas Tech University**, **Texas Woman's University** and **The University of Houston**. They graduate a significant number of teachers out of programs whose designs need significant improvement.

Another seven programs—at **Arlington Baptist**, **East Texas Baptist University**, **Houston Baptist**, **Howard Payne University**, **Southwestern Adventist University**, **Texas Wesleyan University** and **Wiley College**—also require significant design improvement, but do not receive the "serious" designation, as they produce much lower numbers of teachers and are less of a priority for the state.

The remaining 48 schools are not given an overall rating, but the report does contain individual ratings for the many components of their programs.

NCTQ's interest in ed schools is not unique. Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education, has stated, "America's university-based teacher preparation programs need revolutionary change," and the Texas legislature recently passed Senate Bill 174, requiring a new level of accountability from schools when it comes to reporting data.

To view the full report, including all of the findings and recommendations, go to www.nctq.org or contact Rich Shea at: (202) 393-0020 ext. 103 or rshea@nctq.org.

The two-year study was made possible with a grant from Houston Endowment, Inc.

About NCTQ: NCTQ is a non-profit organization comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. The organization supports reforms in a broad range of teacher policies and seeks to lend transparency and accountability to the three institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: state governments, colleges of education, and teachers unions.