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**--TENNESSEE TEACHER POLICIES
EARN HIGH RANKING
BUT STILL GET MEDIOCRE MARKS
IN NEW REPORT--**

–Today the National Council on Teacher Quality released a 50-state encyclopedia on states’ teacher policies, concluding that while Tennessee takes a leadership role, some policies are counterproductive to the nation’s teacher quality goals –

Washington, DC -- The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook 2007* is the first project of its kind to provide a 360-degree detailed analysis of how states are hurting or helping teacher quality-- and what they can do to fix broken and anachronistic policies.

Although Tennessee is in an elite group of four states, its overall performance shows how much work is still ahead. In the six areas of teacher policy reviewed, the state earned mixed grades of one B, four Cs, and one D.

“As is true for all states, Tennessee’s approach to the teaching profession needs an overhaul,” said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ. “Unlike many states, Tennessee does appear to recognize this need and is showing real signs of progress.”

Among the findings:

- Tennessee has sound policies regarding teacher preparation. It monitors the students going in, and the teachers coming out of its ed schools.
- It requires teachers to pass licensure exams before entering the classroom.
- Unlike other professions where employees are evaluated at least annually, Tennessee only requires that teachers are evaluated twice in a ten-year cycle, with only cursory reviews in the intervening years. Teacher quality is further hampered by state tenure laws that give teacher permanent status after only three years on the job.
- Tennessee neglects the preparation of special education teachers, failing to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities.

To download copies of the Tennessee report, which includes national comparisons, or to purchase printed copies of the report, visit the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org. For questions about the report, please contact Lisa Cohen at (310) 395-2544 or lisa@lisacohen.org or Molly Jackman at (202) 393-0020 (ext. 15) or mjackman@nctq.org.

NCTQ -- comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- advocates for 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.

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