January 27, 2011

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# NEW REPORT MAPS OUT NEXT STEPS FOR NEW MEXICO ON TEACHER POLICIES IN NEED OF REFORM

## New Mexico received a D+ in 2009 from the National Council on Teacher Quality without significant progress noted over the past year; 2010 *Blueprint for Change* outlines priorities for improving policies to ensure that students have effective teachers

January 27, 2011 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its fourth annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, reviewing state laws, rules and regulations that govern the teaching profession. The 2010 edition differs from earlier versions, providing a *Blueprint for Change* to help state policymakers prioritize among the many areas of teacher policy in need of reform.

Each state report identifies the policy areas most in need of critical attention, as well as "low-hanging fruit," policies that can be addressed in relatively short order. The *Blueprint for Change* is based on an updated-for-2010 review and analysis of New Mexico's teacher policies. The state received an overall grade of D+ in 2009. Although there were no major policy changes in New Mexico over the past year, this year's *Yearbook* found the state had directed a working group to look at whether teacher preparation programs are addressing scientifically based reading instruction.

The *Blueprint for Change* is designed as a companion to the 2009 *State Teacher Policy Yearbook,* NCTQ's most recent comprehensive report on teacher policies. NCTQ President Kate Walsh said, "Our goal with this year's *Yearbook* is not just to provide analyses of where states are, but to give state policymakers a tool for getting started on the road to reform. To do this, we made this year's *Yearbook* a compilation of where states were last year, the progress they've made, and the areas in which they need to continue to work toward reform."

Among the findings for New Mexico:

***Critical Attention Areas*** -- Some of New Mexico's highest priorities include:

- Connecting teacher evaluation, tenure and dismissal to classroom effectiveness;
- Ensuring that elementary teacher candidates are well prepared to teach reading and mathematics;

- Ensuring that teachers have adequate content knowledge by improving testing requirements; and

- Expanding the teacher pipeline through increased flexibility for alternate route candidates and by allowing diversity of providers of alternate route programs.

***Low-Hanging Fruit*** – Examples of policy areas for New Mexico where a small adjustment would result in significantly stronger policy:

- Ensuring that out-of-state teachers meet New Mexico's testing requirements

- Reporting school-level data to support the equitable distribution of teachers.

The *Blueprint for Change* also identifies performance management, pension reform, and certification of special education teachers as **longer term systemic** issues that New Mexico needs to keep in mind as it works on improving its teacher policies.

Walsh continued: "We are encouraged by the significant changes we saw in a number of states during the past year, largely spurred by the Race to the Top competition, but states still have much work to do to ensure that every student is taught by an effective teacher."

The *Blueprint for Change in New Mexico,* which includes national comparisons, is immediately available for free download at: www.nctq.org/stpy. For questions about the report, please contact Sarah Brody at (202) 393-0020 or sbrody@nctq.org.

**Funding**

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, Gleason Family Foundation, The George Gund Foundation and The Joyce Foundation.

*NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government.*

**About NCTQ**

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, led by 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.