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

Virginia received a D+ in 2009 from the National Council on Teacher Quality without significant progress noted over the past year; 2010 *Blueprint for Change* shows that Virginia still has much work to do 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 Virginia's teacher policies. The state received an overall grade of D+ in 2009. Although there were no major policy changes in Virginia over the past year, this year's *Yearbook* noted that elementary, middle and secondary history and social sciences teacher candidates must now take coursework that includes local government and civics instruction specific to Virginia.

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 Virginia:

Critical Attention Areas -- Some of Virginia's highest priorities include:

- Connecting teacher evaluation, tenure and dismissal to classroom effectiveness;
- Ensuring that elementary teacher candidates are well prepared to teach mathematics and holding teacher preparation programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce; and

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

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

- Making passing a basic skills test a requirement for entry into a teacher preparation program rather than a condition of receiving a license
- Ensuring that struggling teachers receive support

The *Blueprint for Change* also identifies performance management, pension reform and certification of special education teachers as **longer term systemic** issues that Virginia 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 Virginia*, 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.

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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.