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## ILLINOIS EARNS “C+” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

### New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Illinois improved grades for policies that support effective teaching

January 30, 2014 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its seventh annual *State Teacher Policy Yearbook*, which includes a 360-degree analysis of every state law, rule and regulation that shapes the effectiveness of the teaching profession in Illinois.

Illinois received an overall grade of C+-, improved from a C in 2011, the last year the state’s full portfolio of teacher policies was graded, and improved from a D+ in 2009. The average grade for 2013 across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is a “C-”.

NCTQ President Kate Walsh said, "This year’s *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* proves that it is both possible and practical for states to drive teacher effectiveness policy. Many states once argued that raising the bar for teacher preparation, licensing and evaluation and tying personnel decisions to results for kids couldn’t be done. Now these policies are on the books in increasing numbers of states across the nation."

#### Key Yearbook Findings

#### Teacher effectiveness is increasingly being factored into personnel decisions:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Illinois does not require annual evaluations for all teachers but is one of 35 states that requires student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Illinois is one of 20 states where evidence of student learning is considered in tenure decisions.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-nine states, including Illinois, articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Illinois is one of 18 states that requires districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions.

#### Progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but not much is being done in Illinois:

- *Admission requirements.* Illinois requires that teacher candidates pass a basic skills test with a significantly higher passing score than is typically found in other states. Unfortunately, this test is not required as a condition of admission to a teacher preparation program, and the

Yearbook Goal Areas	Illinois’s 2013 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	D+
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	C-
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	C+
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	C-
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	A
Average Overall Grade	C+

state has no other requirements that candidates demonstrate academic proficiency for admission, such as a minimum GPA requirement.

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Because the state's content tests for elementary school licensure do not provide separate passing scores for every subject, Illinois does not ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.
- *Science of reading.* Illinois is one of 34 states that does not administer an adequate test to ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Illinois has significant loopholes in its secondary teacher licensing requirements. Illinois should require that all secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* Illinois is one of 28 states that offers only a K-12 special education license, a license that wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.

**There has been little action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states:**

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Unlike many states, Illinois requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations and mandates improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluation ratings. The state could strengthen its policy by also requiring professional development for all teachers to be informed by evaluation findings.
- *Support for performance pay.* However, Illinois is one of 26 states that does not support performance pay.
- *Pay for advanced degrees.* Unfortunately, Illinois is also one of 15 states that requires teachers to be compensated for earning advanced degrees which have little or no impact on student achievement.

**Very few states are providing flexible pathways into teaching:**

- *Alternate routes.* Illinois's alternative pathways to teacher certification are in need of significant improvement.

The 2013 Illinois State Teacher Policy Yearbook is immediately available for free download at: [www.nctq.org/statepolicy](http://www.nctq.org/statepolicy). The newly redesigned website also provides searchable access to the entire Yearbook dataset, including topical pages with up-to-date data on state teacher policy, a customized search tool and user-friendly options for generating graphic results that can be exported and shared.

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The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* was funded by private foundations across the United States, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of Illinois, The Joyce Foundation and The Walton Family Foundation. NCTQ accepts no funding from the federal government. 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 based on 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](http://www.nctq.org)

	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B	C
Louisiana	B	C-	C-
Rhode Island	B	B-	D
Tennessee	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	C-	D+
Georgia	B-	C	C-
Indiana	B-	C+	D
Massachusetts	B-	C	D+
Michigan	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	B-	D+	D+
New York	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	D+
Colorado	C+	C	D+
Delaware	C+	C	D
Illinois	C+	C	D+
Virginia	C+	D+	D+
Kentucky	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	D+	D+
North Carolina	C	D+	D+
Utah	C	C-	D
Alabama	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	D+	D+
Maine	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	D-
Pennsylvania	C-	D+	D
South Carolina	C-	C-	C-
Texas	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	D+	D+
California	D+	D+	D+
District of Columbia	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D-	D-
Idaho	D+	D+	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D
New Mexico	D+	D+	D+
Wisconsin	D+	D	D
Alaska	D	D	D
Iowa	D	D	D
Kansas	D	D	D-
New Hampshire	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D-	D-
Wyoming	D	D	D-
Nebraska	D-	D-	D-
South Dakota	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F