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MAINE EARNS “C-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Maine 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 Maine.

Maine received an overall grade of C-, a significant improvement from its grade of D- in 2011, the last years the state’s full portfolio of teacher policies was graded. In 2013, the average grade 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.* Maine does not require annual evaluations for all teachers and while teacher evaluations are required to include some objective evidence of student learning, the state is one of only 16 that does not requires student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In Maine teacher tenure decisions are made virtually automatically after three years without any consideration of teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Maine is, however, one of 29 states that articulates that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Maine is also 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 Maine has done little:

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Maine’s content tests for elementary school licensure now provide separate passing scores for each subject which helps to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach.

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

- *Special education teachers.* Commendably, Maine does not offer 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.
- *Science of reading.* However, Maine is one of 34 that does not ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Admission requirements.* Maine does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records. Nearly all states set a low academic bar but Maine sets no such bar for admission. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency, such as a minimum GPA requirement.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* In addition, Maine has significant loopholes in its requirements for secondary teacher licensing and does not ensure secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.

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

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Unlike most states, Maine requires that all teachers receive feedback on their evaluations, requires professional development to be informed by evaluation findings, and mandates improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluation ratings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Maine has some limited performance pay initiatives in the state but does not support differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas.

Very few states are providing flexible pathways into teaching:

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

The 2013 Maine State Teacher Policy Yearbook is immediately available for free download at: 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.

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, 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

	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