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MASSACHUSETTS EARNS “B-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

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

Massachusetts received an overall grade of B-, up from a C in 2011, the last year the state’s full portfolio of teacher policies was graded. 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.* Massachusetts 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 require student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* Massachusetts is one of 20 states where evidence of student learning is considered in tenure decisions.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-nine states, including Massachusetts, now articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Massachusetts requires districts to consider teacher performance in making layoff decisions.

Progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers but there is much more to be done:

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

- *Science of reading.* Massachusetts is one of 17 states that helps to ensure elementary teacher know the science of reading by requiring elementary teachers to pass a test measuring that knowledge.
- *Student teaching.* Massachusetts is one of just four states that requires teaching candidates to complete at least 10 weeks of full-time student teaching and requires that cooperating teachers have demonstrated that they are effective in the classroom.
- *Special education.* Massachusetts is one of 16 states that does not offer a K-12 special education license; these licenses wrongly presume special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.
- *Strengthening elementary teacher preparation.* However, because the state's content tests for elementary school licensure do not provide separate passing scores for every subject, Massachusetts does not ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.
- *Admission requirements.* Massachusetts does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records. The state has no requirements for candidates to demonstrate academic proficiency, such as a minimum GPA requirement.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* In addition, Massachusetts 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 on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession:

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Massachusetts requires all teachers to receive feedback on their evaluations and requires improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluation ratings. The state could improve its policy by also requiring professional development to be informed by evaluation findings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Massachusetts offers performance pay in a limited way in select districts and schools.

Very few states are providing flexible pathways into teaching:

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

The 2013 Massachusetts 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