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## NEBRASKA EARNS “D-” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

### New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Nebraska poor grades for policies that fail to 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 Nebraska.

Nebraska has consistently earned low grades in the *Yearbook*, with its grade of "D-" unchanged since 2009. The average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia is an improving “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 across the states, but not in Nebraska:**

<b><i>Yearbook</i> Goal Areas</b>	<b>Nebraska's 2013 Grades</b>
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	F
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	D-
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	D
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	D+
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	F
Average Overall Grade	D-

- *Teacher evaluation.* Nebraska is one of only 10 states in the nation with no policies requiring that teacher evaluations take objective evidence of student achievement/growth into account when evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* In Nebraska, teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after three years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Nebraska is one of 22 states that does not articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher's dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Nebraska makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

#### **In many states, progress is being made in setting higher standards for the preparation of teachers, but Nebraska still does little in this area:**

- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Nebraska's content knowledge tests for elementary school licensure fail to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.

- *Raising admission requirements.* Nebraska could strengthen teacher preparation by raising admission requirements to admit candidates with strong academic records, such as a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- *Science of reading.* Nebraska is one of 34 states that does not ensure elementary teachers' knowledge of effective reading instruction.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Nebraska has significant loopholes in its requirements for secondary teacher licensing, failing to ensure secondary teachers pass a content test in every subject they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education teachers.* Nebraska is one of 35 states that still offers 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.* Nebraska has no explicit requirements that teachers receive feedback on their evaluation ratings. The state fails to specify that professional development should be informed by evaluations or require improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluating ratings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Nebraska will offer performance bonuses available to all teachers beginning in 2016. Details on this initiative have yet to emerge, including whether teacher performance will include evidence of student learning.

**Very few states provide truly flexible pathways into teaching:**

- *Alternate routes.* Nebraska fails to provide alternative pathways to teacher certification are flexible, efficient, and permit both broad usage and a diversity of providers.

The *2013 Nebraska 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 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](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