

January 30, 2014

Contact: Maegan Rees
Phone 202.393.0020 ext. 117
mrees@nctq.org

TENNESSEE EARNS “B” FOR TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES

New report from the National Council on Teacher Quality gives Tennessee high 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 Tennessee.

Tennessee received an overall grade of B, up from a B- in 2011, the last year the state’s full portfolio of teacher policies was graded. Tennessee is one of just four states to receive a grade of B or higher 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.* Tennessee is one of 28 states that requires annual evaluations for all teachers and is one of 35 states that requires student achievement/growth to be an important criterion in evaluating teacher effectiveness.
- *Tying performance to tenure.* For teachers to be able to be granted tenure they must demonstrate evidence of classroom effectiveness as measured by student learning. Tennessee is one of 20 states where student achievement must inform such decisions.
- *Dismissing ineffective teachers.* Twenty-nine states, including Tennessee, now articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for a teacher’s dismissal.
- *Prohibiting “last in, first out” policies.* Tennessee is one of 18 states that requires performance to be considered (rather than only seniority) 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:

- *Science of reading.* Tennessee is one of 17 states that ensures elementary teacher know the science of reading by requiring elementary teachers to pass a test measuring that knowledge.

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

- *Student teaching.* Tennessee 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.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* Tennessee is one of only four states that requires secondary teachers to pass a content test in every subject for which they are licensed or have an endorsement to teach.
- *Special education.* Tennessee is one of 16 states that does not offer a K-12 special education license; these licenses wrongly presumes special education teachers do not need to master grade and subject specific content knowledge.
- *Raising admission requirements.* Tennessee should strengthen teacher preparation by raising admission requirements to ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records, such as requiring a minimum GPA of 3.0 (which only seven states do now).
- *Strengthening elementary teacher preparation.* Unfortunately, Tennessee's content knowledge tests for elementary school licensure fail to ensure that teachers have mastered the content they are required to teach.

There has been much less action on policies aimed at recruiting and retaining the best teachers in the profession across the states, but Tennessee is a leader:

- *Use of evaluations for improving practice.* Unlike many states, Tennessee requires teachers to receive feedback on their evaluations and professional development to be informed by evaluation findings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Tennessee supports performance pay as well as differential pay for teachers in high-needs schools and subject area shortages.

Few states providing flexible pathways into teaching:

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

The *2013 Tennessee 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