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## **Push for Quality Faces Uphill Climb for Wyoming's Teacher Preparation Programs**

### **National Council on Teacher Quality Releases Second Annual Review of Teacher Preparation Programs**

#### *Wyoming Program Does Not Earn 'Top Ranked' Status*

Washington, DC—The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its [2014 Teacher Prep Review](#), with a much expanded and more comprehensive evaluation of 1,612 teacher preparation programs across the United States, and for the first time, a numeric ranking of programs. No program in Wyoming earned national 'Top Ranked' status—a distinction awarded to 107 programs in the nation for overall strong performance.

The one Wyoming program fully evaluated, the undergraduate elementary program at the University of Wyoming, was strong enough to receive a national ranking. Programs whose performance was in the bottom half of the national sample did not receive a numeric rank. No secondary program in Wyoming was evaluated.

Wyoming is one of 17 states and the District of Columbia without a program making the national 'Top Ranked' list. To ensure that all teachers are well-prepared, state leaders and local school districts need to demand that programs improve and, if necessary, look across their state lines for the best sources of well-trained teachers. Districts are also advised to dig deeper into the NCTQ findings to identify programs which may not do well overall but do well on particular standards to meet specific district needs, such as teachers with strong preparation in reading instruction.

“Given the increasing knowledge and skills expected of teachers, it is indeed disappointing that we could not identify an exemplary program in Wyoming. However, Wyoming is by no means unique,” noted Kate Walsh, President of the National Council on Teacher Quality. “The dearth of high-quality programs is a national problem that public school educators, state policymakers and advocates, working alongside higher education, must solve together.”

### ***Teacher Prep Review Results for Wyoming***

**Highest ranked elementary program** (national rank):

- University of Wyoming – Undergraduate (107)

A [complete list of Wyoming rankings](#) is available on the NCTQ website.

NCTQ's review of teacher preparation programs focuses on the knowledge, skills, and academic attributes new teachers need to be classroom ready when they graduate. Drawing from a set of 18 standards, NCTQ applies the relevant standards to elementary, secondary or special education programs. Findings for Wyoming include:

**Selectivity:** The single program evaluated in Wyoming fully met this standard. This program selects candidates above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile in the population of college-attending high school graduates, a relatively modest bar compared to what other high-performing nations require. Nationally, an average of 28 percent of programs met this standard.

**Early reading instruction:** The one evaluated elementary program in Wyoming is not preparing teacher candidates in effective, scientifically-based reading instruction. 34 percent of programs either meet or nearly meet this standard nationally.

**Student teaching:** The program in Wyoming was not found to ensure a high quality student teaching experience, in which candidates are assigned only to highly skilled teachers and receive frequent concrete feedback. Five percent of programs nationally require such an experience.

**Classroom management:** The evaluated Wyoming program did not fully meet the standard by providing feedback to teacher candidates on concrete classroom management strategies to improve classroom behavior. This standard was met by 15 percent of programs across the country.

**Elementary content preparation:** The one program evaluated in Wyoming does not meet this standard. Nationally, 11 percent of all elementary programs either meet or nearly meet this standard.

In addition to analyzing colleges and universities providing traditional teacher preparation, NCTQ [reviewed a sample of secondary alternative certification providers](#) not managed by a university or college. The results for these 85 providers, none of which are located in Wyoming, were even weaker than for traditional programs. NCTQ found their admissions standards to be too low, efforts to assess subject matter knowledge inadequate, and too little training or support provided to candidates who are asked to hit the ground running in the classroom. Only one provider out of 85 earned high marks (Teach For America, Massachusetts).

The widespread attention surrounding the *Review* has helped to precipitate considerable activity by policymakers to strengthen teacher preparation. Over the last two years, 33 states have made *significant* changes to laws and regulations to improve teacher preparation, and another seven states have taken steps forward. Wyoming is one of ten states which made no policy changes.

In April of this year, the federal government also made an important move to improve teacher preparation by announcing its intention to strengthen accountability measures for teacher preparation programs and restrict millions in grants to only high-performing programs.

“While we are encouraged by the action that has been taken by some states, we have a lot more work to do to provide future teachers with the world-class training that both they and students deserve,” added

Walsh. “We urge policymakers and higher ed leaders to make this issue priority number one so that teachers in this country get the best possible training for the classroom.”

The full [2014 Teacher Prep Review report](#) is available on NCTQ’s website. NCTQ has identified [steps Wyoming can take to make meaningful improvements to teacher prep](#) and has provided [guidance to districts](#) on how to identify the best trained teachers.

### **About NCTQ**

The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research and policy organization located in Washington DC. Founded in 2000, NCTQ is committed to restructuring the teaching profession, led by our vision that every child deserves effective teachers. NCTQ is committed to lending transparency and increasing public awareness of the four institutions having the greatest impact on teacher quality: states, teacher preparation programs, school districts, and teachers unions.

Funding for the second edition of the *Review* is provided by 54 foundations, located in 22 states.

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