

ALABAMA TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS POLICIES INADEQUATE

New Report from NCTQ Finds Alabama Falling Behind Most States in Efforts to Enact Policies that Support Effective Teaching; State Earns a Grade of “D+”

December 8, 2015 (Washington, DC) — The National Council on Teacher Quality today released its ninth 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 Alabama.

Alabama received an overall grade of D+, the state’s first grade drop since 2009. Alabama now falls below the average grade across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, which is a C- this year.

Yearbook Goal Areas	Alabama’s 2015 Grades
Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers	B-
Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool	C-
Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers	D
Area 4: Retaining Effective Teachers	F
Area 5: Dismissing Ineffective Teachers	D
Average Overall Grade	D+

NCTQ Senior Vice President for State and District Policy Sandi Jacobs said, "Nationwide the glass is really starting to look half full on states efforts to drive teacher effectiveness through smarter policy. Alabama has made some strides around teacher preparation, but otherwise has not kept pace with the progress being made on teacher effectiveness policy across the country.”

Alabama does promote teacher effectiveness as part of the state’s preparation and licensing policies, including attending to college- and career-readiness standards:

- *Teacher prep admission policy.* Alabama is one of 24 states that set a high academic bar for admission to teacher preparation programs by requiring both testing and strong grade point average.
- *Elementary teacher preparation.* Alabama’s content tests for elementary school licensure provide separate passing scores for each subject which helps to ensure teachers know all of the core content they will teach. Alabama also requires all teachers to demonstrate their knowledge of the science of reading.
- *Middle school preparation.* Alabama does not offer a generic K-8 license and requires middle school teachers to pass content tests in every subject they will teach.
- *Special education.* Alabama is one of only 14 states in the nation that, appropriately, does not offer a K-12 general license for special education teachers.
- *Secondary teacher preparation.* While Alabama has some significant loopholes for secondary teacher licensing for science and social studies, the state’s competencies for secondary teachers specify that teacher candidates are prepared to address college- and career-readiness standards, particularly around literacy across subjects and supporting struggling readers.

But Alabama is way behind other states on evaluation of teacher effectiveness, and evaluations don’t inform policies:

- *Teacher evaluation.* Alabama requires annual evaluations for all teachers. Yet, despite its ESEA waiver promises, it remains one of just eight states in the nation that does not require any objective measures of student achievement to be included in teacher evaluations.
- *Tenure.* In Alabama teachers are granted tenure virtually automatically after three years with no attention to teacher effectiveness.
- *Dismissal and “last in, first out” policies.* Most states articulate that classroom ineffectiveness is grounds for teacher dismissal. Alabama is one of 23 states that have no such requirement. The state also makes no effort to require districts to consider teacher performance (rather than only seniority) in making layoff decisions.

Teacher effectiveness doesn’t inform pay or practice in Alabama. The state receives an F for its efforts around retaining effective teachers once they are in the classroom:

- *Professional development and support.* Alabama does not require that teachers receive feedback on their evaluation ratings. The state also fails to specify that professional development should be informed by evaluations or require improvement plans for teachers with poor evaluation ratings.
- *Support for performance pay.* Alabama does not support performance pay or differential pay for teachers in high-need schools or shortage subject areas. The state is one of 15 that continue to require increased pay for teachers earning advanced degrees, even though there is no evidence that such degrees have an impact on teacher effectiveness.

The *2015 Alabama 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.

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The National Council on Teacher Quality is a nonpartisan research and policy group committed to modernizing the teaching profession based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. We recognize that it is not teachers who bear responsibility for their profession's many challenges, but the institutions with the greatest authority and influence over teachers. To that end we work to achieve fundamental changes in the policy and practices of teacher preparation programs, school districts, state governments, and teachers unions. Our Board of Directors and Advisory Board come from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives, and they all believe that policy changes are overdue in the recruitment and retention of teachers. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org.

	Overall State Grade 2015	Overall State Grade 2013	Overall State Grade 2011	Overall State Grade 2009
Florida	B+	B+	B	C
Indiana	B	B-	C+	D
Louisiana	B	B	C-	C-
New York	B	B-	C	D+
Tennessee	B	B	B-	C-
Arkansas	B-	B-	C	C-
Connecticut	B-	B-	C-	D+
Delaware	B-	C+	C	D
Georgia	B-	B-	C	C-
Massachusetts	B-	B-	C	D+
Ohio	B-	B-	C+	D+
Oklahoma	B-	B-	B-	D+
Rhode Island	B-	B	B-	D
Illinois	C+	C+	C	D+
Michigan	C+	B-	C+	D-
New Jersey	C+	B-	D+	D+
Utah	C+	C	C-	D
Virginia	C+	C+	D+	D+
Colorado	C	C+	C	D+
Kentucky	C	C	D+	D+
Mississippi	C	C	D+	D+
New Mexico	C	D+	D+	D+
South Carolina	C	C-	C-	C-
Arizona	C-	C-	D+	D+
Idaho	C-	D+	D+	D-
Maine	C-	C-	D-	F
Minnesota	C-	C-	C-	D-
Missouri	C-	C-	D	D
Nevada	C-	C-	C-	D-
North Carolina	C-	C	D+	D+
Pennsylvania	C-	C-	D+	D
Texas	C-	C-	C-	C-
Washington	C-	C-	C-	D+
West Virginia	C-	C-	D+	D+
Alabama	D+	C-	C-	C-
District of Columbia	D+	D+	D	D-
Hawaii	D+	D+	D-	D-
Kansas	D+	D	D	D-
Maryland	D+	D+	D+	D
California	D	D+	D+	D+
Iowa	D	D	D	D
Nebraska	D	D-	D-	D-
New Hampshire	D	D	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D	D	D-
Oregon	D	D	D-	D-
Wisconsin	D	D+	D	D
Wyoming	D	D	D	D-
Alaska	D-	D	D	D
South Dakota	D-	D-	D	D
Vermont	D-	D-	D-	F
Montana	F	F	F	F