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NCTQ RELEASES NEWEST TEACHER PREP RATINGS IDENTIFYING TOP PROGRAMS PREPARING HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

LONGWOOD UNIVERSITY HAS HIGHEST RATING IN VIRGINIA, WHILE VIRGINIA WESLEYAN, AVERETT, AND EASTERN MENNONITE RANK AMONG THE WEAKEST IN THE NATION

Washington DC – Today, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) releases its latest ratings for 717 undergraduate programs that prepare high school teachers, including eight in Virginia.

None of the 16 programs on NCTQ's list of the "Nation's Top Tier Secondary Teacher Prep Programs" are in Virginia. The closest "Top Tier" programs are Ohio Wesleyan University (Delaware, OH), Messiah College (Grantham, PA), and Clemson University (Clemson, SC).

"Top Tier" programs have solid admission standards, provide sufficient preparation in each teacher candidate's intended subject area, and show candidates how best to teach that subject. Many also do well in evaluating candidates on how to manage a classroom and providing and ensuring the high quality of practice opportunities.

Teacher Prep Programs in Virginia

No Virginia program ranks in the national top 25 percent. The state's highest ranked program is Longwood University, at the 71st percentile nationally.

The rest of the state's programs fall below the 50th percentile, with Virginia Wesleyan University, Averett University, and Eastern Mennonite University landing near the bottom nationally.

Undergraduate Secondary Program in Virginia	Percentile
Longwood University	71st
Roanoke College	46th
University of Virginia's College at Wise	40th
Bridgewater College	40th

Shenandoah University	37th
Eastern Mennonite University	20th
Averett University	13th
Virginia Wesleyan College	11th

Key National Findings: As for overall performance of the 700+ programs, a common problem that surfaced in the analysis is the weak content preparation provided to science and social studies teacher candidates. That weakness falls in sharp contrast to almost uniformly strong preparation in English and mathematics content in the same institutions. A sizeable portion of programs (43 percent across the country) struggle to prepare teachers who will be qualified to teach the subjects under the umbrella of either science or social studies. For example, even though history is the subject most teachers with general social studies certification will be asked to teach, one out of five programs requires minimal to no history courses of their candidates.

- Through a combination of licensing test and coursework requirements, all programs in Virginia earn an A for content preparation in the sciences.
- 63 percent of programs in Virginia earn an A for content preparation in the social studies, which is comparable to the 65 percent of programs nationally.

To see how programs in each state perform on their coverage of science go [here](#), and for social studies go [here](#).

Only 42 percent of programs succeed at teaching future teachers both the content and teaching methods for their subject. For a list of these programs in each state, go [here](#).

Nationally:

- A quarter of all programs do not require a course in the best ways to teach a specific subject. Seven of the eight secondary programs in Virginia do not require teacher candidates to take a methods course in the subject area they will be certified to teach.
- There are early signs of some programs becoming more selective in their admissions, but it is still the case that 44 percent of programs set the bar too low for who enters their programs. Virginia does much worse than the national average, with 75 percent of programs failing to be sufficiently selective. For a list of programs by selectivity, go [here](#).
- Among sufficiently selective programs nationwide, half also meet diversity goals. No programs in Virginia meet this bar. For a list of selective and diverse programs in each state, go [here](#).
- Only 6 percent of programs pay sufficient attention to the quality of student teaching by establishing an expectation that only skilled teachers should be allowed to mentor a future teacher and requiring student teachers to be regularly observed by program staff. Unfortunately, no program in Virginia does well in this area because none sufficiently monitors the quality of mentor teachers. For a list of programs with strong student teaching in each state go [here](#).
- Fewer than half of all programs (44 percent) evaluate teacher candidates on their use of the most effective strategies for managing classrooms while student teaching. In Virginia, only a third of programs ensure that future teachers have this experience. For a list of programs that

score well on classroom management in each state, go [here](#).

Recommendations: Based on this research, NCTQ recommends that states make sure that high school teachers have a deep understanding of the content they will teach students, a goal that can be met by better licensing tests. Most states, including Virginia, are overdue for revamping their licensing tests, as most allow a high score in one subject to compensate for a low score in another. For instance, Virginia could strengthen teacher content knowledge by requiring that the licensing test for the History and Social Studies certification adequately assesses teachers in all of the subjects they will be certified to teach. Currently, only Arizona, Minnesota, and Missouri have strong tests in all core subject areas.

NCTQ also calls on programs to raise subject content requirements to require a solid education in *all* the subjects the future teacher will be licensed to teach, even in the broad categories of science and social studies. For more on what programs do to successfully ensure the preparation of all candidates in science, go [here](#), and for social studies, go [here](#).

This edition of the *Teacher Prep Review* analyzes undergraduate programs preparing secondary school teachers. The next set of ratings from NCTQ will appear in the Fall 2017 and will cover graduate and alternative (or nontraditional) programs preparing elementary teachers. The ratings for graduate and nontraditional secondary programs will follow in Spring 2018, followed by undergraduate and graduate special education programs in Fall 2018.

To read the *Landscape* report, click [here](#). To schedule an interview with NCTQ President Kate Walsh, please contact Stephen Buckley at (202) 393-0020 ext. 129.

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About the National Council on Teacher Quality:

The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is a nonpartisan research and policy group, committed to modernizing the teaching profession and based on the belief that all children deserve effective teachers. NCTQ is the nation's expert on the quality of teacher preparation programs and evaluates national teacher education against evidence-based criteria. More information about NCTQ can be found on our website, www.nctq.org