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MONTANA RECEIVES FAILING MARKS FOR TEACHER POLICIES IN NEW REPORT-- LABELED 'LAST IN CLASS'

–Today the National Council on Teacher Quality released a 50-state encyclopedia on states' teacher policies, concluding that many Montana's policies are counterproductive to the nation's teacher quality goals

Montana ranks among the VERY bottom of all the states and the District of Columbia.

Washington, DC -- The *State Teacher Policy Yearbook* is the first project of its kind to provide a 360-degree detailed analysis of how states are hurting or helping teacher quality--and what they can do to fix broken and anachronistic policies.

In the six areas of teacher policy assessed—ranging from admissions standards into teaching, licensure to compensation reform—Montana failed to earn a single grade higher than **D**.

“Montana's policies, like all states, are in need of a massive overhaul,” said Kate Walsh, president of NCTQ. “It's time to turn in the gas-guzzling clunker in exchange for the hybrid.”

Among the findings:

- Montana neglects the preparation of special education teachers, failing to ensure that these teachers are prepared to teach students with disabilities.
- State licensing rules poorly accommodate knowledgeable, qualified individuals who may want to switch careers to go into teaching.
- The state needs to tighten its lax oversight of its education schools; Montana does little to monitor the quality of students going in and the quality of teachers coming out of these programs.

Despite the overall bleak findings, there are a few bright spots. For example, Montana meets the industry standard for defining a subject matter major. Many states vary from this definition making it harder to transfer from one state to another without encountering problems.

Despite these bleak findings, there are a few bright spots. Unlike most states, Nevada requires all teachers to be evaluated annually. It also has higher standards than most states for deciding if education schools should receive state approval to operate.

To download copies of the Montana report, which includes national comparisons, or to purchase printed copies of the report, visit the NCTQ website, www.nctq.org. For questions about the report, please contact Lisa Cohen at (310) 395-2544 or lisa@lisacohen.org or Molly Jackman at (202) 393-0020 (ext. 15) or mjackman@nctq.org.

NCTQ -- comprised of reform-minded Democrats, Republicans, and Independents -- advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies and seeks to lend transparency and accountability to the three institutions that have the greatest impact on teacher quality: state governments, colleges of education, and teachers' unions.

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