

EXHIBIT D-1

2015 State Teacher Policy Yearbook

The most recent version of the *2015 State Teacher Policy Yearbook* published by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) has been released. The report is a full review of state laws and rules and regulations that govern the teaching profession. It measures state progress against a set of 32 policy goals focused on helping states put in place a comprehensive framework in support of preparing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers.

According to the report, only five states have a higher grade than Arkansas. Our state received an overall grade of B- up from the previous grade of C on the 2011 report and unchanged from the overall grade in 2013.

Below are highlights from the report:

Area 1: Delivering Well-Prepared Teachers

- Arkansas showed progress in:
 - Admission into Teacher Preparation, indicating that Arkansas:
 - Sets a high academic bar for admission, and
 - Ensures that teachers know core content, and
 - Ensures teachers are prepared for the instructional shifts associated with college-and-career readiness standards
 - Student Teaching
 - Ensures student teachers are placed with an effective teacher, as measured by student learning, and
 - Ensures that student teaching is for an appropriate length of time and is full time during that period
 - Teacher Preparation Program Accountability
 - Ensures that the approval process for teacher preparation programs holds programs accountable for the quality of the teachers they produce

- Arkansas received recognition of Best Practice in the areas of:
 - Middle School Teacher Preparation, indicating that Arkansas:
 - Ensures that all middle school teacher candidates are adequately prepared to teach middle school level content, and
 - Ensures that middle school teachers are prepared to meet the instructional requirements of college and career readiness standards for students, and
 - Ensures that candidates know how to incorporate literacy skills as an integral part of every subject and are prepared to intervene and support students who are struggling.
 - Secondary Teacher Preparation, indicating that Arkansas:
 - Ensures that new secondary teachers are sufficiently prepared to teach appropriate grade-level content, and
 - Ensures that teachers are prepared for the ways that college-and-career-readiness standards affect instruction.

Area 2: Expanding the Teacher Pool

- The report commends all states that permit both broad usage and a diversity of providers for their alternate routes. Arkansas was recognized for:
 - Admitting candidates in alternate route programs with strong academic records while also providing flexibility for candidates, and
 - Allowing programs that provide efficient preparation that is relevant to the immediate needs of new teachers, as well as adequate mentoring and support, and
 - Allowing alternate routes that are free from limitations on usage, and also allowing a diversity of providers.

Area 3: Identifying Effective Teachers

- Arkansas made gains in the area of frequency of teacher evaluations. NCTQ reported that evaluations were annual for all teachers. Non-probationary teachers have summative evaluations once every 4 years, but interim appraisals conducted during in-between years include measures of student growth.
- The report commends 13 states, Arkansas included, that give the public access to teacher performance data aggregated to the school level. Arkansas was recognized for:
 - Districts' distribution of teacher talent among schools is publicly reported to identify inequities in schools serving disadvantaged students.

Area 4: New Teacher Induction

- The report denoted Arkansas as worthy of mention for their requirements related to mentor selection. Arkansas requires that all mentors must be rated in one of the top two rating categories on their most recent evaluation.

Specialized Response to Special Education

- At the time of the review, Arkansas had two options for Special Education licensure. One option was a new K-12 first-time Special Education license and the other option was the added endorsement by a program of study or graduate program of study. Based on this structure, Arkansas was listed as not meeting the requirement that special education teachers know the subject matter they are licensed to teach.
- Since the data was reported to NCTQ, Arkansas has added a Special Education Resource endorsement available for K-6 or 7-12 licensure areas which will help address this issue. This new license will only be eligible to already licensed teachers in the following content areas: Elementary education K-6, Middle Level English, Math, or Science 4-8, and Secondary English, Math, or Science 7-12. These already licensed teachers will have demonstrated content knowledge in

the area they are licensed, in addition to the Special Education Resource license they are adding.

- However, Arkansas is still reviewing Best Practice policies for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified, effective special education teachers to meet the needs of Arkansas's students. Combined with the work of the Task Force for Special Education and collaboration with stakeholders, NCTQ's recommendations will provide Arkansas with a framework for future discussions.
- New candidates licensing in Elementary Education K-6 will have passed a multi-subject test demonstrating their knowledge of Elementary Education subject area, such as ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, etc.
- Arkansas was listed as only meeting a small part of the requirement that teachers know the science of reading instruction and understand the instructional shifts associated with college- and career-readiness standards. The Special Education competencies already contain a section on the teaching of reading which addresses
 - Phonological, phonemic awareness
 - Phonics and word recognition
 - Print concepts
 - Comprehension
 - Fluency
 - Vocabulary
 - Integration of literacy instruction into all content areas in order to facilitate disciplinary literacy

Additionally, last summer, Educator Preparation added portions of the Common Core State Standards that address disciplinary literacy to the Special Education competencies.