

Mary Vixie Sandy, Ed.D, Executive Director
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Statement on the National Council on Teacher Quality
Teacher Prep Review

California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing sets high standards, among the nation's highest, for teacher preparation. In addition, teacher preparation programs are monitored, evaluated and held accountable for meeting those standards.

Public and private institutions that prepare teachers in California undergo a comprehensive accreditation process that assesses program design and quality, investigates employer and candidate satisfaction, and includes candidate outcomes on rigorous tests including a teaching performance assessment that evaluates a teacher's skills and abilities in real K-12 classrooms with real students. Only teachers who meet a rigorous standard of knowledge and performance in the classroom may earn a teaching credential. As a result, we have a high level of confidence in the overall quality of educator preparation in California.

Schools are dynamic and ever-evolving. California's strong preparation standards help ensure that we have programs that produce the well-trained teachers students need. A report released this week by a privately funded organization called the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), based in Washington, D.C., questions practices in California's colleges and universities. Fortunately, our credentialing practices in California are transparent, rigorous and frequently assessed. Should any concerns raised by the NCTQ report prove valid, they will be taken under consideration.

Dr. Linda Darling Hammond, Chair
California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
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This week, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) issued a report titled: *Teacher Prep Review*. While the report appropriately focuses on the importance of teacher education, it does not, unfortunately, accurately reflect the work of teacher education programs in California or nationally.

NCTQ's methodology is a paper review of published course requirements and course syllabi against a check list that does not consider the actual quality of instruction that the programs offer, evidence of what their students learn, or whether graduates can actually teach. Concerns about the organization's methods led most schools of education nationally and in California to decline to participate in the data collection. The ratings published in this report are, thus, based on partial and often inaccurate data, and fail to evaluate teacher education quality.

NCTQ's methods are especially out of synch with California's approach to teacher education in two ways:

- First, while the NCTQ checklist is based largely on the design of undergraduate programs (tallying subject matter courses required during the program), California moved long ago to strengthen teacher education by requiring *graduate level* programs, which require subject matter competency BEFORE entering preparation. The means by which the state ascertains

teachers' competency -- through college majors, approved subject matter programs, and rigorous state-developed tests -- are ignored in the NCTQ ratings.

- Second, while NCTQ focuses on paper requirements for *inputs*, California has moved toward accountability based on stronger evidence of *outcomes*, including rigorous tests of basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy. These include California's Teacher Performance Assessments, required a decade ago under SB 2042, that made the state the first in the nation to judge teachers' skills and abilities in real K-12 classrooms with real students. These outcomes are also absent from the NCTQ framework.

We in California are focusing our attention on program outcomes and evidence of program quality. We are redesigning licensing and accreditation with these goals in mind. The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is committed to comprehensive accountability and increased transparency in data about the outcomes of our programs and the opportunities to learn they provide.