

# **OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 2013 NCTQ TEACHER PREPARATION REVIEW FOR LOUISIANA**

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Louisiana is unique for it possesses input and output data to examine the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. Based upon these data, inconsistencies have been identified in the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) report that has been disseminated about teacher preparation programs in Louisiana. This document identifies those inconsistencies.

All teacher preparation programs in Louisiana underwent redesign from 2001-2010 to address more rigorous certification requirements adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and to address State inputs (e.g., candidate recruitment/selection, course descriptions, course syllabi, field-based experiences, program evaluation, etc.) associated with best practices that were identified by a team of national experts and state leaders. All teacher preparation programs formed redesign teams composed of College of Education, College of Arts/Sciences/Humanities, and school personnel who met to develop comprehensive redesign proposals. National experts used the State inputs to review the written proposals and interviewed university/district team members who were responsible for the development of the written proposals. Programs were recommended for approval, approval with stipulations, or not approved. Programs approved with stipulations had to address all stipulations before being recommended for implementation. All pre-redesign programs were terminated and all redesigned programs that met all expectations were recommended to the Board of Regents and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval. This was a collaborative process involving the Board of Regents, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Louisiana Department of Education, universities, and districts.

As a result of this rigorous process, Louisiana has more documentation than most states regarding the contents of their teacher preparation programs. Louisiana has now moved beyond inputs and is using outcomes to examine the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs. A recent report prepared by the Louisiana Board of Regents provides output data (e.g., teacher licensure passage rates, national accreditation, and growth in achievement of students taught by university program completers) that indicates that the redesign is producing more new teachers in effective ranges than expected. The responses below are based upon the extensive data that currently exist at the State level in Louisiana about the teacher preparation programs.

## **Inconsistencies in NCTQ Findings:**

Louisiana teacher preparation programs performed better than other teacher preparation programs nationally in the following five areas. However, documentation collected by the Board

of Regents, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and Louisiana Department of Education during the redesign process indicates that these percentages should have been higher.

- **NCTQ Outcome Data:** 89% of elementary and secondary programs in Louisiana earned four stars for collecting data on their graduates as compared to 26% nationally.

*BoR Comment: NCTQ's findings are not consistent with State data. BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned elementary and secondary programs are provided outcome data from the State and/or collect outcome data to be nationally accredited. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

- **NCTQ Classroom Management:** 67% of elementary and secondary programs in Louisiana earned three or four stars for providing feedback to teacher candidates on concrete classroom management strategies to improve classroom behavior as compared to 23% nationally.

*BoR Comment: NCTQ's findings are not consistent with State data. BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned elementary and secondary programs addressed classroom management within their curriculum when their programs were evaluated by national experts during the redesign process. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

- **NCTQ Early Reading Instruction:** 64% of evaluated elementary programs in Louisiana are preparing teacher candidates in effective, scientifically based reading instruction, a significantly better finding than the small minority of programs (29%) providing such training nationally.

*BoR Comment: NCTQ's findings are not consistent with State data. BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned elementary programs are using scientifically based reading instruction. BESE/LDOE required all redesigned teacher preparation programs to undergo an additional review by national experts hired by the LDOE to demonstrate that they were addressing Reading and Language Competencies adopted by BESE. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

- **NCTQ Content Preparation (Elementary):** 56% of Louisiana's elementary programs earned three or four stars for providing teacher candidates adequate content preparation as compared to 11% nationally.

*BoR Comment: NCTQ's findings are not consistent with State data. BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned elementary programs require candidates to complete 12 credit hours of English, 12 credit hours of mathematics, 15 credit hours of science, 12 credit hours of social studies, and 3 credit hours of The arts. Also, they must take 12 credit hours of reading/language arts and 9 credit hours of math methodology and/or additional math content courses. Programs were not approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or the Board of Regents unless they offered all of the*

above content courses. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.

- **NCTQ Elementary Math:** 42% of evaluated elementary programs in Louisiana provide strong preparation to teach elementary mathematics, as compared to 19% nationwide.

*BoR Comment: NCTQ's findings are not consistent with State data. NCTQ awarded universities from zero to four stars for this standard. BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned elementary programs are requiring 12 credit hours of mathematics that provide content in number structure, algebra, geometry, and statistics/probability. In addition, all elementary programs offer the additional 9 credit hours of mathematics courses that address mathematics methodology and/or additional math content. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

### **Additional Inconsistencies**

- **NCTQ Secondary Methods:** Programs received from zero to four stars for this standard.

*BoR Comment: BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned secondary programs require teacher candidates to take 6 credit hours of methodology courses. All of the methodology courses include specific instructional strategies for the content area and include field work in schools. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

- **NCTQ Lesson Planning and Assessment/Data:** NCTQ lists “NR” or “Not Rated” for the majority of the teacher preparation programs for these two areas.

*BoR Comment: BESE/LDOE/BoR data show that 100% of the redesigned programs teach courses in assessment/data or clearly integrate assessment/data into the courses in their curriculum. In addition, documentation exists to show that all teacher preparation programs address lesson planning in their methodology or other education courses. All teacher preparation programs should have received four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

### **Need for Changes in State Law or Policies to Address NCTQ Expectations:**

NCTQ has identified indicators within each standard that must be addressed for teacher preparation program to receive stars for the NCTQ rating system. At the present time, the following BESE policies and State laws are not consistent with the following NCTQ standards and indicators. Thus, it will be difficult for universities to obtain the maximum number of stars in some areas since they must adhere to State law and BESE policies to offer teacher preparation programs in Louisiana.

- **NCTQ Selectivity in Admissions:** 7% of elementary and secondary programs in Louisiana restrict admissions to the top half of the college-going population.

*BoR Comments: Discrepancies exist between BESE policy and NCTQ's expectations resulting in universities not being able to fully address NCTQ standards. All teacher preparation programs should have received the same number of stars for this item since all follow the same BESE policy; however, NCTQ awarded from one to four stars to different institutions for this one standard.*

*BESE sets policy regarding the assessments and cut-off scores to be used for entry into teacher preparation programs. Universities must abide by BESE policy and cannot use a different assessment to address the NCTQ's indicator regarding a "standardized test of academic proficiency that allows comparison of applicants to the general college-going population and selection of applicants in the top half of that population."*

*Teacher preparation programs must also address BESE policy which requires a GPA of 2.5 or higher for admission to an undergraduate teacher preparation programs. BESE policy also accepts an ACT composite score of 22 in place of Praxis Pre-Professional assessments for candidates to be admitted to teacher preparation programs. In contrast, NCTQ's requirement is a GPA of 3.0 and an ACT score of 24 for the Selection Criteria. Thus, adherence to BESE policy is considered to be a weakness in the NCTQ ratings.*

- **NCTQ Student Teaching:** Of the evaluated elementary and secondary programs in Louisiana, 26% fail to ensure a high quality student teaching experience in which candidates are assigned only to highly skilled teachers and receive frequent concrete feedback, compared to the much higher national failure rate of 71%.

*BoR Comments: Twenty-six percentage of Louisiana teacher preparation programs (6 out of 23) not meeting the standard is better than the 71% failure rate nationally; however, the NCTQ findings are not consistent with State data. BoR/BESE/LDOE data show that all teacher preparation programs in Louisiana provided national experts with written documentation during the design process to indicate that quality teachers were being identified by the school districts to serve as cooperating teachers for student teachers and that observations and written feedback was being provided to candidates at regular intervals during the semesters.*

*The one input that NCTQ requires for the Student Teaching rating that was not addressed during the redesign process was that the cooperating teachers be "effective instructors (as measured by student performance)." State law in Louisiana does not allow school districts to reveal teacher evaluation scores to university personnel. Thus, State law will need to be changed for teacher preparation programs to know the teacher evaluation ratings when selecting cooperating teachers in order to obtain four stars for this NCTQ standard.*

- **NCTQ Content Preparation (Secondary):** 23% of Louisiana's secondary programs earned four stars for content preparation compared to 35% nationwide.

*BoR Comments: All secondary teacher preparation programs in Louisiana should have received the same number of stars; however, the programs received from zero to four stars. The BoR/BESE/LDOE possesses documentation to show that all secondary programs*

*require 31 or more credit hours in a content area if offering a secondary program. NCTQ specifies that at least 30 credit hours should be required. In addition, all campuses require candidates to take the same Praxis content assessments that have been adopted by BESE.*

*NCTQ does have two expectations that are not consistent with BESE policy and BESE policy would have to be changed for teacher preparation programs to address the NCTQ requirements. The first inconsistency pertains to social studies certification. When the social studies certification was initially developed for approval by BESE, the United States Department of Education (USDE) informed Louisiana that it would have to develop a social studies curriculum that addressed all of the following areas to fully address requirements for No Child Left Behind: history, government, geography, and economics. Louisiana was told by the USDE. that it could not have candidates major in one content area (e.g., history) and become certified to teach social studies. As a result, the decision was made to create a certification in social studies that addressed all four areas and require candidates to take one Praxis assessment that assessed all four areas. NCTQ expects universities with social studies certification to offer a major in history, or coursework preparation that consists of at least 15 credit hours in history, and in at least one other teachable social science (government/political science, economics, or psychology). Universities cannot do what NCTQ is expecting unless BESE changes their policies.*

*Second, NCTQ expects high school teacher candidates seeking general science certification to have coursework that consists of at least 15 credit hours in at least two teachable science disciplines (biology, chemistry, or physics). This is not consistent with current BESE policy and universities must address BESE policy to receive approval to operate their programs.*

*NCTQ also expects rigorous stand-alone tests for each subject area being taught or licensing tests of multiple subject areas to provide cut-scores for each separate subject specific test section. This has been an issue when NCTQ has previously evaluated State policies in Louisiana for teacher preparation. BESE currently requires social studies teachers to pass a Praxis social studies assessment that examines multiple subject areas but does not provide separate scores for each subject area. If teacher candidates are required to take a separate Praxis content assessment for history, geography, government, and economics to teach social studies, they will need to possess a deeper content knowledge in each area to pass the assessment and will need to pay for a total of 9 Praxis examinations as compared to the 5 Praxis assessments taken by most candidates. Similar problems also exist for General Science. Unless BESE changes Praxis assessments to address NCTQ expectations, it will be difficult for all teacher preparation programs to obtain four stars for this standard.*