

## Colleges of Education in America: Mediocre At Best In Mississippi? Guess

Education is broken, especially K-12, and colleges and universities are not far behind. Everyone can observe that for themselves, whether they are parents, professors, or even politicians. And we certainly don't need a study to confirm our observations. But we have another study just the same: "[Teacher Prep Review](#)." It summarizes Colleges of Education aptly as "An Industry in Mediocrity."

What about Mississippi? How does it fare? If the rest of the country has a cold, does Mississippi, as usual, have pneumonia?

Big "take-aways" about teacher preparation in Mississippi:

- **Highly rated programs** -- Across the country, NCTQ identified 21 elementary programs (4 percent of those rated) and 84 secondary programs (14 percent) for the *Teacher Prep Review* Honor Roll, meaning that a program earns at least three out of four possible stars. **No Mississippi programs are on the Honor Roll.**
- **Selectivity in admissions** -- The *Review* found that **only 7 percent of elementary and secondary programs in Mississippi restrict admissions to the top half of the college-going population**, compared to 28 percent nationwide. Countries where students consistently outperform the U.S. typically set an even higher bar, with teacher prep programs recruiting candidates from the top third of the college-going population. New legislation recently passed in Mississippi raises admissions requirements for programs.

Some worry that increasing admissions requirements will have a negative effect on the diversity of teacher candidates. By increasing the rigor and therefore the prestige of teacher preparation the profession will attract more talent, including talented minorities. This is not an impossible dream: 83 programs across the country earn a Strong Design designation on this standard because they are both selective and diverse, although no such programs were found in Mississippi...

What about USM in particular?

University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi



Undergraduate Elementary

Undergraduate Secondary



Pitiful.

And what is the background of USM's new president? Dr. Rodney Bennett is a graduate of the College of Education from Tennessee State University with a degree in Education Administration.

Maybe a graduate from a below mediocre college and fourth tier university can improve higher education at USM. Never can tell though, maybe he'll help drive higher education at USM to the same depths as he and his colleagues have driven K-12.