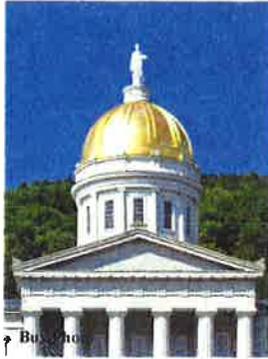


# VT leads in teacher misconduct checks

JOHN KELLY 7:07 a.m. EST February 14, 2016



(Photo: Free Press file)

In a comprehensive review of how each state backgrounds potential teachers and shares misconduct information, Vermont finished tops in the nation.

The USA TODAY NETWORK is releasing today an investigation showing how troubled teachers are able to move from state to state, or even district to district within states, because of an inconsistent patchwork of state systems that are not communicating well with one another. The review by USA TODAY NETWORK journalists working together across the country revealed examples of teachers with documented misconduct in one state securing licenses, and jobs, in other states.

As part of the investigation, USA TODAY surveyed each state about its practices and then audited what the state said it aspires to do in teacher backgrounding against reality. For Vermont, the review of documents and data about its system and its disciplined teachers resulted in a score of 93 out of 100 possible points.

Vermont received perfect marks for conducting comprehensive background checks at the state level as part of its licensing process, checking teachers' work histories against a nationwide database of disciplined teachers and having in place mandatory reporting laws designed to make sure misconduct is reported by teachers, schools and districts up the chain to state regulators or law enforcement.

Vermont did lose some points in the USA TODAY grading system because, despite disclosing that it reports every case of documented misconduct to the nationwide discipline database, investigative reporters were able to determine that at least some teachers with documented cases of misconduct in Vermont do not appear to be in the nationwide database. Doing so is important because teachers showing up in that national database helps education officials in other states know that a teacher lost his or her license in Vermont, and may prompt them to investigate further before licensing the teacher and allowing the person into a classroom with children.

In most cases, however, Vermont met the standards used by USA TODAY, which were based upon best practices outlined by experts, parent and safety advocates and respected government investigators such as the Government Accountability Office. You can read more about the investigation on Page 1B of Sunday's USA Today B section and you can see a more detailed look at how Vermont stacks up against its neighbors at [BurlingtonFreePress.com](http://BurlingtonFreePress.com).