

# National Academy of Education Releases White Paper on Teacher Quality

The National Academy of Education (NAEd) has released a new white paper on teacher quality calling for improvements in teacher recruitment, preparation, and ongoing professional development.

“It’s clear that good teaching matters and that poor teaching harms students academically,” states Susan Fuhrman, current President of NAEd, and member of the project Steering Committee. “We must,” she adds, “take steps to improve the quality of teaching in the United States by providing teachers with the preparation and professional development that they need to succeed. It’s critical that we recruit the most talented people to the profession and figure out the best ways to retain them.”

Based on current research evidence, the paper outlines several recommendations for improving teacher quality. According to the paper, the quality of teaching is not simply determined by an individual’s knowledge or ability, but also by the preparation teachers receive and the environments in which teachers work. Improving teacher quality thus entails policies concerning recruitment, early preparation, and retention (including attention to working conditions), as well as professional development.

The paper calls for school districts, states, and the federal government to continue to experiment with various approaches to teacher recruitment, while collecting data that can be used to improve approaches that are promising and end those that are not. Tools should be developed that can reliably establish that new recruits to teaching have the skills they need to be successful from the start.

States, school districts, and the federal government should also support research on a variety of approaches to teacher preparation. Investments should be made in research and development on the core practices and skills that early career teachers require, and preparation programs should then focus on these skills.

The paper states that although teacher recruitment is important, retention is of even greater concern. Thus, states and the federal government should encourage and fund experimentation with a wide range of teacher retention strategies. This should include strategies that target individual teachers, such as financial incentives, as well as strategies that target schools and districts through initiatives to improve school leadership, mentoring, and the provision of high-quality opportunities for professional growth. The federal government should also support the development of robust and valid measures of teacher quality that can be used in identifying which teachers are effective and should be retained.

Finally, the paper recommends that districts, states, and the federal government take steps to improve teachers’ access to high-quality professional development that is appropriate to the grades, subjects, and students they are teaching. In particular, the federal government should invest in research and development to strengthen professional development strategies.

Additional detail about the recommendations is included in the white paper (available on the NAEd website at [www.naeducation.org](http://www.naeducation.org)).

The paper is one of a series of white papers produced by working groups of the nation’s top education scholars assembled by NAEd to connect policymakers in the Administration and Congress with the best available evidence on selected education policy issues. The Teacher Quality white paper reflects the

careful deliberations of the expert members of the working group, and has been subjected to outside peer review.

The Teacher Quality working group was chaired by Suzanne Wilson, College of Education, Michigan State University. Also serving on the working group were: Deborah Loewenberg Ball, School of Education, University of Michigan; Anthony Bryk, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; David Figlio, Department of Economics, University of Florida; Pamela Grossman, School of Education, Stanford University; Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, Division of Educational Studies, Emory University; Judith Warren Little, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley; Susanna Loeb, School of Education, Stanford University; and Andrew Porter, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.

The National Academy of Education advances the highest quality education research and its use in policy formation and practice. Founded in 1965, the NAEed consists of U.S. members and foreign associates who are elected on the basis of outstanding scholarship or contributions to education. Since its establishment, the academy has undertaken numerous commissions and study panels, which typically include both NAEed members and other scholars with expertise in a particular area of inquiry.

The Manhattan Institute's Center for Civic Innovation released a report by Marcus A. Winters about charter schools' impact on the academic achievement of public school students. "Everyone Wins: How Charter Schools Benefit All New York City Public School Students" is the first report to focus on the effect that charter competition has had on the math and reading proficiency of students who remain in a New York City public school. The findings show that even those students who remain in New York City's public schools benefit from charter schools' expansion.

## **IN THE PRESS**

- An Interview with Marcus Winters: The Current Status of Charter Schools, EdNews.org, 10-29-09
- Data proves charter schools work, Washington Examiner, 10-28-09
- How Charters Help Kids 'Left Behind', New York Post, 10-28-09
- Good for Some, Good for All: Anti-Charter School Diehards are Stripped of their Last Argument, New York Daily News, 10-28-09
- Charters' + Effect, New York Post, 10-28-2009 Study: Charter Schools Don't Hurt Other School Scores, WNYC News, 10-28-09

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