

Providing The Best Environment For Teachers

(NAPSA)—Schools are only as good as the people who teach there, so a recent study looked at differences in the attitudes of private and public school teachers.

The study, released by the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice, concluded that public schools do not provide the best working environment for teachers. Private school teachers are much more satisfied with their jobs, have more control over their classrooms and much more influence over important school policies.

They enjoy more support from administrators and peers, suffer less burnout and are safer than their public school counterparts.

“The data show that public school teachers work in a system that doesn’t provide the best environment for teaching,” said Greg Forster, one of the study’s authors. “They are less satisfied than private school teachers on a wide variety of measurements. They have less autonomy, less support, less power and less physical safety. Just about the only thing they have more of is burnout.”

Among the findings:

- Private school teachers are more likely to say they will continue teaching as long as they are able (62 percent vs. 44 percent), while public school teachers are more likely to say they’ll leave teaching as soon as they are eligible for retirement (33 percent vs. 12 percent) and that they would immediately leave teaching if a higher-paying job were available (20 percent vs. 12 percent).

- Private school teachers are more likely to have a great deal of control over selection of textbooks and instructional materials (53 percent vs. 32 percent) and con-



Private school teachers are happier with their working environment than public school teachers, says a recent survey.

tent, topics and skills to be taught (60 percent vs. 36 percent).

- Private school teachers are more likely to have a great deal of influence on performance standards for students (40 percent vs. 18 percent), curriculum (47 percent vs. 22 percent) and discipline policy (25 percent vs. 13 percent).

- Public school teachers are more likely to report that student misbehavior (37 percent vs. 21 percent) or tardiness and class cutting (33 percent vs. 17 percent) disrupt their classes, and are four times more likely to say student violence is a problem (48 percent vs. 12 percent).

“Documenting existing teacher working conditions is a first step in helping the nation’s educational system—both private and public schools—improve working conditions and the overall profession,” said Robert Enlow, president and CEO of the Friedman Foundation.