

EDUCATION NEWS & NOTES

New Report Reveals Gaps in Private School Teachers' Training

(NAPS)—There are more than 34,000 private schools educating more than 4.9 million K–12 students in America, according to the most recent federal data. And as school choice programs that help families afford to send their children to private schools continue to expand across the U.S., those numbers will only continue to grow.

But are our future teachers and school leaders well-prepared to work in both public and private schools?

New research released last month answers that question. The Private School Teacher Skills Gap, a report by EdChoice's National Director of Research Dr. Michael McShane, reveals that teacher training programs have room to improve.

Private and Public School Teachers Share Skills

The study found that the list of skills public and private school teachers and leaders need to be successful is much longer than the list of skills they don't share. Characteristics both need include being innovative, communication, critical thinking, organization, planning, understanding research, flexibility, acting as a role model and being a team player.

Private School Teachers May Need More

In many cases, however, private school teachers need to know and be even more. For example, because private schools are often faith based, those teachers and leaders need to act as faith leaders and models of faith. Private school educators may also need more preparation in legal compliance, accounting and finance than do their public school peers.

Teacher Prep Programs Can Prepare Private School Educators Better

With a few simple changes, educa-



Private school teachers often need even more skills than other educators do.

tor preparation programs could provide pathways for preservice teachers and school leaders to get the training they need to be successful in private schools. They could cross-list courses from other departments—such as finance, law and even theology—and give students credit for taking them.

In states with large private school populations or large private school choice programs, the demand for well-trained private school teachers might be high enough for colleges of education to consider offering prep programs specifically geared to the private sector. Creating new, stand-alone, private school-focused programs might also make sense for religious colleges aligned to elementary and secondary schools that share their faith tradition.

Learn More

For further information about this report or school choice policies in America, go to www.edchoice.org.