

Press Release

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NO CORRELATION BETWEEN TEACHER CREDENTIALS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

“Measuring Teacher Effectiveness: Credentials Unrelated to Student Achievement,” a new Manhattan Institute Issue Brief by Marcus Winters released today, September 7th, finds that little to no relationship exists between teacher credentials and the gains that students make on standardized math and reading exams.

Currently, teacher effectiveness is measured based on a few external credentials: certification, advanced degrees, and years of experience in the classroom – which also drive salary, promotion, and tenure decisions. Under the current system, salaries are determined by the number of advanced degrees that teachers hold and years of experience in the classroom. This single-salary schedule has been touted by the teachers unions who are fighting performance pay proposals in many states.

The issue brief which analyzes data from all test-taking public elementary school students in Florida over a four year period, found no relationship between a teacher’s master’s degree, certification, or years of experience and that teacher’s classroom performance as measured by the students’ test scores.

Given the challenges facing American public education today, identifying effective teachers is a more vital task than ever before and the large body of research on teacher quality suggests that a new method of identifying the best teachers is needed.

Public schools should implement comprehensive evaluation systems that utilize quantitative (test scores) as well as qualitative (classroom observation) measures of teacher effectiveness. This study’s findings and existing research point toward a fundamental transformation of teacher evaluation in our schools.

The study can be accessed online at http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/ib_10.htm. If you would like to schedule an interview with the author, please contact Kasia Zabawa at (646) 839-3342 or by email at kzabawa@manhattan-institute.org.

About the author:

Marcus A. Winters is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an assistant professor in the College of Education at the University of Colorado in Colorado Springs. He conducts research and writes extensively on education policy, including topics such as school choice, high school graduation rates, accountability, and special education. Winters has performed several studies on a variety of education policy issues including high-stakes testing, performance-pay for teachers, and the effects of vouchers on the public school system. His research has been published in journals such as *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *Education Finance and Policy*, and *Teachers College Record*.