



# ARE "CERTIFIED" TEACHERS REALLY BETTER TEACHERS?

**FACT: THERE IS NO SUBSTANTIAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER "CERTIFICATION" AND PERFORMANCE IN THE CLASSROOM**

Quality teachers are extremely important for student achievement, but "certified" does not mean "quality."

There are three factors about teacher effectiveness that education research has been able to measure and evaluate scientifically: professional credentials, teaching experience, and academic ability. Only one of these factors – academic ability – makes a measurable positive difference. Teacher "certification" and teaching experience (though a bit better than certification) are statistically insignificant in the success of a child.

Most private schools in the nation do not require "certification" for their teachers; it is not an effective standard of performance. Again, the best methodological research shows that true ability is the key to a teacher's effectiveness, not an "official stamp of approval."

Stanford University professor Eric Hanushek examined the research on the effects of credentials as a predictor of teacher job performance. After combing 171 studies, he found that 157 of the studies showed no significant relationship between a teaching certificate and job performance, nine studies showed a positive relationship, and five actually showed a negative relationship.

His findings have been confirmed time and again. And, if it's any consolation to beleaguered teachers, Hanushek also finds that advanced degrees (like the re-

quirements for master's degrees under No Child Left Behind) are equally insignificant in K-12 job performance and student achievement.

Teaching is both an art and a science, and teacher "certification" is what it is – a certificate that says a person went through and passed a series of classes. Certification has no statistically-significant relationship to actual teaching ability, job performance, and student achievement.

**ENDNOTES**

Eric A. Hanushek, "School Resources and Student Performance," and Larry V. Hedges and Rob Greenwald, "Have Times Changed? The Relation Between School Resources and Student Performance," in *Does Money Matter? The Effect of School Resources on Student Achievement and Adult Success*, Gary Burtless, ed., Brookings Institution, 1996.

Julian R. Betts, Kim S. Rueben, and Anne Danenberg, *Equal Resources, Equal Outcomes? The Distribution of School Resources and Student Achievement in California*, Public Policy Institute of California, 2000.

**Quality Teachers: What Matters Most?**

