

Fast Facts

The Status of Male Teachers in Public Education Today

What —

The CEEP policy brief “The Status of Male Teachers in Public Education Today” by Shaun P. Johnson discusses the lack of male teachers in public schools, particularly at the elementary level. This brief provides current statistics on men in education, adequate historical context to the issue, and suggests why many men continue not to choose teaching as a career.

Why —

The proportion of male teachers in public schools is at its lowest in several decades, hovering around 25 percent nationwide and 30 percent in Indiana. The number of male teachers plummets to roughly 10 percent in the elementary grades. Why do many men not consider teaching a viable career, especially when it comes to working with younger students? This brief explores such issues in-depth, arguing that teaching is perceived as ‘women’s work’ and thus off-limits to those who do not wish to challenge the stereotypical roles established for men and women.

How —

Representations in popular media have been calling for more male teachers for some time, arguing primarily that public schools need strong male role models and that men in education can inspire young boys who are apparently the new educationally disadvantaged. Empirical evidence does not support such claims. This brief will instead suggest that the lack of male teachers is a problem, yet more so in terms of being a poor example of the values public schools are expected to promote. Gender equality, social justice, and other values in a democracy cannot be encouraged in a social institution that lacks diversity in its workforce.

Recommendations for recruiting male teachers —

- Establish a collaborative relationship between local school districts and teacher preparation programs to confront the male teacher dilemma and work together to explore ways to recruit more men into the profession.
- Encourage local school districts to do their part to promote gender equality and social justice in their communities, ushering new and veteran teachers alike into a set of values that, among other things, emphasize caring for young children is an appropriate and necessary role for men.
- Implement a comprehensive and well-informed research agenda that continues to investigate the lack of male teachers and other diverse populations in the education profession, in addition to evaluating or monitoring programs already in place to promote diversity in the teacher workforce.

To read this Education Policy Brief, go to:
<http://ceep.indiana.edu/>