

Research shows private school principals report strong influence

21 June 2016, by Heidi S. Stambuck

New research from doctoral students at the University of Arkansas suggests that principals of private schools report having more influence over their schools than principals of public schools do.

M. Danish Shakeel is a Doctoral Academy Fellow and Corey A. DeAngelis is a Distinguished Doctoral Fellow. Both are pursuing doctorates in educational policy in the College of Education and Health Professions.

Their paper was published today on the websites of the [Social Science Research Network](#) and the [School Choice Demonstration Project](#).

Shakeel and DeAngelis used 2011-2012 data from the School and Staffing Survey developed by the National Center for Education Statistics. They compared answers from principals of public schools with answers from principals of [private schools](#) about how much influence they perceived they had on seven school-level activities. Principals of private schools were more likely than principals of public schools to report having a major influence on six out of seven of the activities.

Much research has been conducted on student achievement outcomes related to school choice, the students said, but little has been done to determine what mechanisms may produce such outcomes.

"We conclude that private schooling may have a systematic advantage over public schooling since private school leadership exhibits more autonomy in influencing relevant decisions," they wrote.

On three school activities in the survey – setting student performance standards, establishing curriculum at the school and determining teacher professional development program content – principals of private schools reported having major influence. On three other measures - hiring new teachers, setting discipline policy and determining

how the budget will be spent – the results were positive for the principals of private schools. All of the effects were statistically significant after controlling for principal characteristics. On evaluation of teachers, principals of private schools were less likely to report having major influence than principals of [public schools](#).

More information: Shakeel, M. Danish and DeAngelis, Corey A., Who is More Free? A Comparison of the Decision-Making of Private and Public School Principals (June 21, 2016). EDRE Working Paper No. 2016-09. Available at SSRN: ssrn.com/abstract=2795138

Provided by University of Arkansas

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