

Opinion | LETTER

Charter School Teachers

NOV. 12, 2017

To the Editor:

Re “Charter Schools Deserve Leeway on Hiring” (editorial, Nov. 4):

The teaching profession rests on a longstanding, rapidly growing body of research from multiple disciplines, including educational pedagogy, social science, economics, cognitive and developmental psychology, and neuroscience.

Like medicine, nursing and law, teaching depends on a foundation of knowledge and skills that need to be learned and practiced under expert guidance. You apparently believe otherwise.

Under new rules that permit charter schools to certify their own teachers, would-be teachers will receive insufficient hours of instruction and minimal supervised practice. That doesn’t exactly raise the bar for quality teachers to serve families and children in charter schools effectively.

Worse, the thinking behind the new rules — that leading a class requires only surface knowledge, for example, on how children learn — communicates the view that teaching is an entry-level, nonprofessional job. Perhaps this perception contributes to the teaching shortage used to justify fast-track approaches to preparation.

If we want to attract the best teachers into all of our public schools, we shouldn't lower professional standards. Rather, we should pursue better approaches to preparation, including high-quality teacher residency programs, and equip teachers with the knowledge, skills and experience they need to flourish.

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