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FUTURE TEACHERS ARE ALL OFFERED JOBS

MAT PROGRAM GETS HIGH MARKS FROM NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | November 22, 2021

Above: NNPS offered teaching contracts and signing bonuses to 44 graduating MAT students.

Read time: about 1 min

Christopher Newport's [teacher preparation program](#) is launching students on careers in the classroom and they're ready for the challenges that await them.

Two recent developments underscore the continuing excellence of the program:

- Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) offered teaching contracts and signing bonuses to 44 graduating master of arts in teaching (MAT) students.
- The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) rated Christopher Newport one of nine standout universities in Virginia and published test results that indicate MAT students are among the best prepared future teachers in the state.

The NNPS teaching contract offers were a surprise. Students were invited to attend an academic workshop, with no knowledge that NNPS would be offering them employment contracts. Once there, they were greeted by top NNPS human resource officials who met with them in small groups to describe the opportunities. So far, five MAT students have signed NNPS contracts and received the signing bonus.

The MAT program has a long relationship with NNPS. Many MAT students serve as tutors in Newport News classrooms or are paid as substitute teachers.

While the MAT program prepares students for all grade levels, the NCTQ ratings focus on elementary education. For the first time, the organization is sharing new data, never before published, on what it calls “a pivotal point in the pipeline for elementary teachers: when aspiring teachers take licensure tests, one of the final steps before earning a teaching license. Pass rates, or the rate at which teacher candidates pass their licensing tests, serve as a compass, pointing toward strengths and opportunities in preparing teacher candidates.”

One data point especially underlines the effectiveness of the MAT program: the pass rate for students taking the elementary licensure exam for the first time. That rate is an indication of whether new teachers are prepared to meet Virginia’s expectations. With 76% of its students passing on their first attempt, Christopher Newport had the best results of any Virginia public university.

NCTQ also published exam results categorized by the color and socio-economic status of the test takers. Because Christopher Newport’s students of color performed exceptionally well, the university was rated one of nine “Standout Institutions” in Virginia. The 78% first-attempt pass rate for test takers of color at Christopher Newport was substantially higher than the state average of 57%.

NCTQ says the licensure test results matter because “teachers cannot teach what they do not know. Elementary teachers should demonstrate that they know core content before they start teaching.”

The results at Christopher Newport and the strong desire by school districts such as NNPS to hire MAT graduates suggest children who end up with a Captain in front of their classroom are fortunate, indeed.
