

Advice to College Students Considering K-12 Teaching as a Career  
by Patrick F. Bassett, President of NAIS

Nothing prepares one better for teaching than teaching. I'd recommend your volunteering to teach in local public and private schools I'm imagining you could do so part time during the school year but also how about full-time during Winter Study? As you investigate Masters Degree Programs, you might want to look into the Klingenstein Center program at Columbia University: it's exceptional in all ways, including the caliber of participants in the program. Likewise, the MAT program at UPENN or Dartmouth. I'd also recommend M.A.T programs rather the advanced ED degrees, since the former extend your expertise in the subject area in which you'd like to teach (English, math, science, foreign language, the arts, history, religion, etc.), while at the same time developing expertise in pedagogy; contrariwise, the latter (ED programs) concentrate almost exclusively on pedagogy and on bureaucratic matters regarding state regs for public school teachers. The exception to this recommendation is elementary education: If that's where your interest lies, then that preference would recommend an ED degree in early childhood and/or elementary school education where subjects like reading, phonics, spelling, grammar, child psychology, etc. are emphasized necessarily. If it's early childhood, the best program in the world is at University of Colorado - Boulder, which partners with a Reggio Emilia school (Boulder Journey School): In one year, you receive a Master's degree in Education; state certification that is transferable to most if not all other states, and a year of full-time experience as the assistant to a master teacher. Full disclosure: My daughter Alison Maher is the educational leader of that school. Better yet, while you work for no pay, since the work is a very large part of your graduate pay, you receive all of that for a tuition of \$8000 (probably for in-state residents, but if you move there go to grad school, you would be in-state.) And as a bonus, you receive a digital video camera to film your students as they problem-solve and learn (part of the "constructivist" thinking in education), and also join an annual trip to Reggio, Italy, to see the source of this dynamic philosophy.)

Lastly, wherever you land in the education profession, know these four things:

1. Seek out a mentor - he or she will be invaluable as you learn the trade and navigate the undercurrents of the education world.
2. Know that, right up there with social work, work in the medical profession, and in the religious domain is education for engagement in meaningful work that has daily, long-term, and direct impact on the lives you influence, educate, and guide. You'd be surprised to find how many former lawyers and financiers turn to teaching as the last stop in their careers.
3. While the pay is less than jobs that require comparable education, you can still "do well by doing good" if you follow this simple plan: In your very first job, and in every year and every job thereafter, have the maximum allowed deducted from your paycheck to go into a tax-deferred IRA account: You'll never miss it, because you'll learn to live on the net of your first paycheck, and every subsequent year's paycheck will be larger (and your IRA deduction larger in absolute dollars): I promise you you will be a millionaire+ at the end of your career.
4. Practical tip: Post your resume during your grad school year at the Career Center of the National Association of Independent Schools. There are 3300+ jobs listed there, this morning. If you are willing to consider private schools, no better choice than the independent school world: far more autonomy for teachers; far less bureaucracy; lots more support from parents; lots more networking with alumni; lots of (and growing) diversity, including socio-economic and racial/ethnic diversity; etc. <https://careers.nais.org/jobs>

**Best wishes as you pursue the wonderful world of education, wherever you end up.**