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Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT



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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the fifth publication in the Innovations in Education series: Alternate Routes to Teacher Certification. This series, published by my Department's Office of Innovation and Improvement, identifies concrete, real-world examples of innovations in five important areas, in addition to this one: public school choice, supplemental educational services, charter schools, magnet schools, and alternate pathways to school leadership.

World War II General Omar Bradley once said, "Teachers are the true soldiers of democracy. Others can defend it, but only teachers can create it." I have a deep respect for the teaching profession. My parents were both educators and taught me that reading and studying hard could help me transcend my small, segregated Mississippi town. I went on to become a teacher and a coach myself, and eventually served as dean of a school of education. In my role as superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, I hired thousands of teachers and came to understand what it took to be successful in the classroom.

For all these reasons I have been proud, in my role as secretary of education, to call for talented individuals across our nation to enter the most noble of professions: teaching.

And yet, in too many of our states and communities, lots of talented people find that they cannot say yes to teaching because of hoops and hurdles that have been placed in their way. If the only option for midcareer professionals interested in teaching is to go back to school for several years, then complete an unpaid student teaching assignment, all before receiving a paycheck, many wonderful candidates with families and mortgages will have no choice but to say no. And that is a great loss for our country.

Fortunately, that is starting to change. Across this land, states, school districts, nonprofit groups, and now even schools of education are creating alternative pathways into the teaching profession. These "alternative route" programs vary tremendously, but the best ones recruit widely, select only the very best candidates, provide intensive training, and support their teachers regularly for several years once they are in the classroom. And they are showing great promise.

As a former dean of a school of education, I respect the important role that traditional teacher preparation programs play. They will always produce a large percentage of our teachers, and while some have struggled in the past, we are seeing promising signs of improvement there, too. (For examples, read my third annual report on teacher quality, available at www.title2.org.) But these programs were designed for undergraduate students who decide early in their lives to become a teacher. Midcareer professionals, recent liberal arts graduates, retired military personnel, and others bring life experiences and, in many cases, a maturity to teaching. Their preparation needs are different than for traditional candidates, and

finally those needs are being met. (And I am glad to see many schools of education responding to the new competition by offering their own streamlined, alternative route programs.)

I have been a strong supporter of alternative routes to teaching that come in many different forms—from the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, which is developing a challenging, competency-based route into the profession, to alternative route programs supported by the federal Transition to Teaching program or developed in partnership with The New Teacher Project, to recruiting initiatives like Troops-to-Teachers and Teach for America. I am also proud to have launched the National Center for Alternative Certification, which connects talented teaching candidates with alternative route programs through its Web site (www.teach-now.org). And, starting this year, the Center will also provide hands-on technical assistance to alternative route programs across the country, in large part based on the lessons in this publication.

Which brings us to the alternative routes featured herein. We scoured the country looking for programs that had stood the test of time and were showing signs of positive results. We pushed and prodded to learn the secrets of their success, in important areas like recruitment, selection, preservice training, and ongoing support and mentoring. And we have put it all together in this publication, in the hope that new alternative route programs, or those trying to get better, will not have to “recreate the wheel.” While these programs should not be seen as “models” and the case study methodology used does not provide the type of information about cause-and-effect that scientifically based research does, we do hope that others can learn from these examples.

Creating alternative routes to certification is not a silver bullet—and it is not the entire solution to our nation’s teacher quality challenge. But it is an important part of the solution, and I have confidence that rigorous alternative route programs like those featured in this book will bring thousands of talented “soldiers of democracy” into our schools, and all of us will be the better for it.

Rod Paige
U.S. Secretary of Education
November 2004



Introduction



With both high retirement and high attrition rates among K–12 teachers and a burgeoning student population nationwide, more teachers are needed. Yet if we are to turn around schools in need of improvement, help all students meet rigorous academic standards, and close the achievement gap, simply getting more teachers into the profession will not suffice. As reflected in the No Child Left Behind requirement that all teachers of the academic subjects be highly qualified, new teachers must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to teach to high standards and to be effective with the increasingly diverse array of students in today's classrooms. Moreover, a good number of these newcomers must commit and be able to teach in hard-to-staff content areas and in our most challenging schools. In short, the challenge to the profession is to prepare and retain greater numbers of high-quality teachers.

Expanding the education workforce at the necessary pace while also ensuring that teachers are effective and motivated to stay on the job requires new ways of recruiting, training, and supporting teacher candidates. We cannot rely exclusively on traditional teacher preparation programs to ratchet up their efforts. We need to develop new routes to teacher certification, giving more candidates more access through high-quality alternative teacher preparation programs designed to meet local needs.

"Alternative" in what ways? Instead of drawing primarily from the traditional pool of teacher preparation candidates that consists mainly of college students and recent graduates, alternative route programs cast a broader net, making efforts to attract older, non-traditional candidates who come to the program already well-versed in the content they want to teach.

This category includes midcareer individuals and middle-aged retirees from other professions. Instead of requiring participants to follow the traditional teacher preparation pattern of academic course work and supervised student teaching before taking over a classroom, alternative programs move candidates into their own classrooms after a short period of training. Candidates continue their studies at night and on weekends and receive structured mentoring and support while they teach.

Because novice educators in these programs can begin teaching—and drawing a salary and benefits—so quickly, the programs are able to attract candidates whose financial obligations might rule out the slower traditional route to teaching. For similar reasons they can appeal to classroom paraprofessionals with degrees who, in addition to needing a salary, may want to

teach in the school where they now work, something alternative programs are more likely to facilitate.¹ In fact, most alternative route teacher preparation programs are location-specific. Unlike traditional university-based programs, alternative programs tend to be created by a local partnership for the express purpose of preparing teachers to meet the needs of the local school district(s).

This guide looks at these new routes to teacher certification as they play out in six programs in different states, examining how these initiatives go about recruiting strong candidates and ensuring that their teachers are well-equipped to serve today's students. (Basic statistics about these sites appear in figure 1.)

The Movement Toward Alternatives

One impetus for alternative preparation programs has been the teacher shortage experienced in many locales. Along with teacher retirements, high attrition among novice educators, and student enrollment growth, other contributing factors include class-size-reduction policies and a salary schedule that does not provide incentives to teach in hard-to-staff subjects or schools. Shortages are especially acute in urban areas, special education, and in certain content areas such as mathematics and science. And among those candidates who do take teaching jobs, many don't stay long. About 9 percent of new teachers (those in their first three years on the job) left teaching at the end of the 2000–01 school year, a percentage that has been increasing over the last decade.²

Given this situation, many school districts have turned to bringing in uncredentialed teachers on emergency permits. Such individuals may have the potential to be

FIGURE 1. Six Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification

Program/Location/ Year Program Initiated	Certification/ Degree	Partners
Alternative Certification Program/Hillsborough County, Florida/1998	Elementary Secondary	School District of Hillsborough County
Educator Certification Program/Region XIII, Austin, Texas/1989	Elementary Secondary Special Education Bilingual Education	Region XIII Education Service Center Region XIII School Districts
Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (Northwest and Metro Regional Educational Service Agencies [RESA])/Georgia/ NW: 2001 Metro: 2003	Middle Grades Secondary Special Education Early Childhood Education (Metro only)	School districts in NW Georgia and metropolitan Atlanta
New York City Teaching Fellows/New York/2000	Elementary plus master's degree Secondary plus master's degree Special Education Bilingual Education	NYC DOE The New Teacher Project Area universities
Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education/Chico, California/1989	Special Education	Cal. State Univ., Chico 57 local ed. agencies Commission on Teacher Credentialing U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Wichita Area Transition to Teaching/Wichita, Kansas/1992	Secondary with master's degree option	Wichita State Univ. Wichita Public Schools

Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics (2004 unless otherwise noted)	Program Faculty	Program Duration	Preservice Program	Inservice Program	Cost per Candidate/ Who Pays
530	Rolling admission; no cohort	59% Female 41% Male 71% White 18% Afr. Am. 8% Hispanic 3% Asian Am. (2003 data)	District teachers	1-2 years	18 course work hours (optional)	108-120 course work hours	\$1,600 District pays \$800 Candidate pays \$800
2,082	236	79% Female 21% Male Majority are White (2003 data)	Region XIII education specialists	17 months	50 online course hours; 180 course work hours; 2-week (60 hours) summer field experience	Approximately 100 course work hours	\$5,200 Candidate pays
NW: 64 Metro: 23	NW: 43 Metro: 40	NW: 66% Female 34% Male 76% White 17% Afr. Am. 3% Hispanic 3% Asian Am. (2003 data)	Master teachers and administrators	2 years	80 course work hours Year 1: 6 seminars Year 2: 4 seminars	Up to 250 course work hours plus 5 days field work in a different school	NW: \$2,250 Metro: \$2,700 Case by case; combination of candidate, school, RESA
5,748*	2,000	66% Female 34% Male 58% White 19% Afr. Am. 13% Hispanic 5% Asian Am. 5% Other	Area universities	2-3 years	7-week program: 80 hours student teaching, plus 6 to 9 graduate credits	Varies by university	\$12,000 licensure plus master's District pays \$8,000 Candidate pays \$4,000
331	60	74% Female 26% Male 88% White 9% Hispanic 2% Native American 2% Asian Am. 15% Individuals with disabilities	Calf. State Univ., Chico special education faculty	2 years	One-day orientation ("survival training")	36-57 units of university course work	\$10,000 average Candidate is responsible but may receive a scholarship of \$5,200-\$10,000
234	26	65% Female 35% Male 85% White 15% Other	Wichita State Univ. College of Education faculty	2 years	9 credit hours (3 courses)	At least 24 credit hours	Program with licensure \$4,800 Plus master's degree \$6,400 Candidate pays

* Number who have started teaching following preservice program.

good teachers, but too often they have been left to “sink or swim,” with support that is insufficient, inconsistent, or nonexistent. And these least-prepared teachers are most likely to be in schools with concentrations of low-performing students—the very students most in need of effective teaching.³

Quality concerns have also driven the alternative route movement. States and schools have been frustrated as they watch talented individuals say yes to teaching in private schools and charter schools because of the high cost and other hurdles they would have to overcome to be certified to teach in a traditional public school.

In between traditional programs and emergency permits lies the diverse and growing world of alternative route programs. In 2004, 43 states plus the District of Columbia reported having some type of alternative route for certifying teachers, while only 8 states said they had such routes in 1983 when the National Center for Education Information began collecting such data. In states like California, New Jersey, and Texas that have been pursuing alternative routes since the mid-1980s, 20 percent or more of new teachers enter the profession through alternative routes; Texas offers 52 separate routes.⁴

The term “alternative route” has been used for everything from unstructured help for individuals on emergency permits to sophisticated, well-designed programs. The National Center for Alternative Certification posts state-by-state listings of alternative route programs and now has a typology of over 10 different kinds.⁵ Fortunately, the Center reports an emerging consensus on required features that closely resembles critical features identified by researchers⁶:

- » The program has been specifically designed to recruit, prepare, and license talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor’s degree.
- » Candidates pass a rigorous screening process.
- » The program is field-based.
- » The program includes course work or equivalent experiences while teaching.
- » Candidates work closely with mentor teachers.
- » Candidates must meet high performance standards for completion of the program.

Alternative routes allow people such as career changers and those who have been out of the job market (e.g., stay-at-home mothers) and who hold at least a college degree to transition into teaching without the hardship of leaving the paid workforce or the expense and possible redundancy of traditional teaching programs. The new programs have the potential to attract a range of talented individuals who previously might not have made the shift, including those who want to be in certain urban or rural settings and those who believe traditional programs lack grounding in actual classroom experience. And they can meet the needs of a specific local setting, training people close to home, where they are likely to stay.

This guide profiles what six established alternative programs look like, whom they attract, and how they put into practice features like those listed above. They model commitment, ingenuity, and a variety of practices from which others may learn.

Case Study Sites and Methodology

The six programs highlighted in this guide are: the Alternative Certification Program, Hillsborough County, Fla.; the Educator Certification Program, Region XIII,

FIGURE 2. Final Study Scope

Program Profile

- » What are the overall goals of the program and its major components?
- » What specific local needs does the program meet?
- » What are the process and requirements for certification?
- » What are the demographics of candidates and faculty in the program?
- » What are the funding sources for the program?

Recruitment and Selection

- » What criteria are used to identify and select candidates?
- » How are the candidates recruited?
- » Does the program control the placement of candidates?
- » What are the elements that make the selection process rigorous?

Teacher Training: Content and Pedagogy

- » What are the program performance standards for teachers and candidates?
- » What content-based and pedagogical course work is required and when?

- » How are content and pedagogy integrated in the program delivery?
- » What specific strategies are taught for working with targeted student populations?
- » In what ways is the program field-based?
- » How is the program designed to meet the individual needs of the candidate?

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

- » By what methods do mentors support candidates?
- » What are the criteria for mentor/supervisor selection?
- » How are mentors/supervisors recruited and trained?

Program Monitoring and Evaluation

- » How is teacher performance assessed?
- » What program outcomes are monitored (e.g., retention rates)?
- » How are program evaluation data and candidate feedback used to improve recruitment and program strategies?

Austin, Tex.; the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, Northwest Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) and Metro RESA, Ga.; the New York City Teaching Fellows program, New York, N.Y.; the North-eastern California Partnership for Special Education, Chico, Calif.; and the Wichita Area Transition to Teaching program, Wichita, Kans. For a narrative summary of each site's context and program, see Part II of this guide.

These programs were selected from a larger pool of possible programs through the benchmarking methodology that underlies this study. Adapted from the four-phase benchmarking process used by the American

Productivity & Quality Center, as well as general case study methodology, the study proceeded through several phases (described more fully in Appendix A).

A study scope or conceptual framework (see figure 2) was developed at the beginning of the project to guide program selection and analysis. Developed from an examination of relevant research literature, the framework was reviewed and refined by a panel of experts.


Programs were sought that met four basic criteria: candidates enter the program with at least a bachelor's degree, candidates are teachers of record during

training, the program has an established track record over three or more years, and it uses promising practices such as tailored, field-based programming and strong mentor support. Sixteen programs were screened using a weighted criteria matrix; the six programs highlighted in this publication had higher scores and represented a range of geographic locations and types of programs.

Data collection took place through one-day on-site visits; interviews with program administrators, faculty, current candidates, and graduates; and review of documentation. This guide is synthesized from a more

comprehensive research report that includes case descriptions and cross-site analysis of key findings.

This descriptive research process suggests promising practices—ways to do things that others have found helpful, or lessons they have learned about what not to do—and practical “how-to” guidance. This is not the kind of experimental research that can yield valid causal claims about what works, so readers should judge the merits of these suggestions according to their understanding of the reasoning behind them and fit them to their local circumstances.



Part I: Elements of Promising Alternative Route Programs

A successful alternative teacher preparation program attracts and selects the right candidates. It offers a carefully thought-out, research-based curriculum that is coherent and flexible. It provides effective support to candidates. And it is committed to its own continuous reflection and improvement. This section explains how.

Recruit Widely, Select Carefully

The rationale driving alternative route programs is that many excellent teacher candidates have made other life or career choices but would be open to becoming teachers if presented with the right offer. Because these preparation programs are created to address the specific teacher shortage(s) experienced in the districts they serve, their challenge is to identify the types of potential candidates who would best meet district needs and, then, make them an offer they can't refuse. But first programs have to get their attention. Thus, the recommendation, gleaned from the successful programs profiled in this guide, is to recruit widely and select carefully.

In light of the great need for specific subject-area teachers (e.g., in science),⁷ the recruitment efforts of most programs target individuals who are already steeped in the relevant content because they have majored in it and have been working in that field. Included in this category are many midcareer professionals and early retirees. This targeted approach reflects the mission statements of many alternative programs. For example,

the program in Hillsborough County, Florida, seeks to "expand the pool of educators to include non-education majors committed to making a positive impact on student achievement and providing quality educational opportunities." New York City's program rests on a similar assumption, that "there is a substantial pool of talented individuals who have chosen other career options and who are capable of and interested in becoming excellent teachers."

While trying to recruit widely, programs must also be selective in the candidates they admit, ensuring that those who enter an alternative route program have the necessary knowledge, skills, and personality to quickly become effective teachers. So how does a program target its recruitment efforts to ensure a strong applicant pool from which to select tomorrow's best teachers? Successful programs have found a variety of ways.

RECRUITMENT APPROACHES

The six programs represented here report that word of mouth is by far their most effective recruitment tool,

particularly because it typically yields candidates who are similar to previously successful candidates. Moreover, satisfied candidates and school systems are likely to spread the word without any special effort on the part of their program. Other, less personal advertising approaches, such as radio and television spots and local newspaper advertisements, have also proven fruitful, especially for newer programs. New York uses a print advertising campaign to inspire dissatisfied professionals to become teachers. Subway posters send provocative messages to burned-out or disillusioned professionals. "Tired of diminishing returns? Invest in NYC kids" was just one of many Madison Avenue-inspired invitations. News coverage has also proven to be a boon to alternative programs. When the *New York Times*, for example, ran a story about the district's alternative route program, 2,100 applications flooded in over the next six weeks.

Some programs target specific groups in their recruitment efforts. The Chico program, designed to increase the number of special education teachers in northeast California, deliberately targets groups that are under-represented nationally among special education teachers (especially people with disabilities and men).

Information sessions and recruitment fairs are another way programs inform interested people about their alternative route processes. Such information sessions help potential applicants self-select, recognizing early whether the high demands of the alternative approach fit their skill and energy levels. The Hillsborough program hosts two large recruitment fairs each summer. Approximately 900 people attend these sessions. In New York, several information sessions prior to the application deadline provide those considering the program with the opportunity to speak with current candidates, a program recruiter, and other individuals involved in the alternative program. The

sessions include a program overview, testimonials from current participants, and a question-and-answer period mediated by candidates and recruiters.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Once a highly motivated group of people has shown interest in becoming teachers, programs must decide how to manage the application and selection process to ensure that they get the best candidates in their programs. The first level of screening involves setting application requirements. All of the programs highlighted in this guide require applicants to have completed a bachelor's degree. Grade-point average (GPA) can also be used to set minimum standards; this requirement is typically set by university rather than other program partners. As the leaders of the New York program point out, GPA is not necessarily an indication of an applicant's ability to become an effective teacher. In general, traditional admissions criteria such as GPA and letters of recommendation are of little help when applicants are career changers or have been out of school for many years. (See figure 3 for program-by-program recruitment and selection criteria and steps.)

What may be most telling for alternative route program applicants are solid content knowledge and the ability, by virtue of life and work experience, to relate content to the real world. The rigorous nature and fast pace of these programs require that applicants have a high level of maturity and tenacity and a learning style that is a good fit with a "practice-to-theory" approach.

SELECTION PROCESSES

Successful programs have selection processes and tools to help them identify applicants who have what it takes to succeed in classrooms as well as in the program.

FIGURE 3. Candidate Recruitment and Selection

Application Requirements	Selection Process
<p>Alternative Certification Program/ Hillsborough County, Florida</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold or be eligible for a temporary teaching certificate from the Florida Department of Education (requires a BA in the desired certification area) • Paid instructional employee of Hillsborough County School Board or Board-approved charter school
<p>Educator Certification Program/Region XIII, Austin, Texas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be identified by district as a qualified HCPS employee 2. Submit the program application with hiring principal's signature
<p>Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (Northwest and Metro Regional Educational Service Agencies)/Georgia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA with a 2.5 GPA • Major in desired certification area • Employed by a public school system • Criminal background clearance • Pass or exempt from Praxis I • No teacher education program completed • No teaching certificate
<p>New York City Teaching Fellows/ New York</p>	<p>NW: Candidates are hired and screened by the school system Metro:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paper screening process (includes review of application, resume, 2 reference letters, transcripts, and "passing" a personality test) 2. Interview 3. Pass the Essentials of Effective Teaching course 4. Secure a teaching position
<p>Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education/ Chico, California</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA with a 3.0 GPA • U.S. citizen or permanent resident • Speak English fluently • No teacher education program completed • No teaching certificate
<p>Wichita Area Transition to Teaching/Wichita, Kansas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BA with a 2.67 GPA • Demonstration of subject mater competency • Pass CBEST
<p>Wichita Area Transition to Teaching/Wichita, Kansas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submit transcripts, resume, and personal statement 2. Attend the interview-interaction 3. File review process 4. Receive regional placement and university assignment 5. Pass two state-required exams
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet application requirements 2. Haberman Star Teacher Selection Interview 3. Satisfactory score on the interview rubric
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transcript analysis 2. Interview with program director 3. Pass Pre-Professional Skills Tests in reading, writing, and mathematics 4. Secure a teaching position

Communication with hiring districts and applicant interviews are key elements in making these determinations.

Each of the six alternative route programs in this guide has a different approach to placing candidates in the classroom. Some programs require that applicants have a job with one of their partner districts or a job offer contingent on their program participation. Other programs accept candidates whom they judge to be highly likely to find a placement on their own. Still other programs work directly with districts in making their selection decisions, with the goal being to fill chronic vacancies. No matter what approach is used, the program must have an excellent relationship with the school district(s) it serves. Program administrators must consistently place highly successful candidates; otherwise they cannot build the trust necessary to sustain the program. Successful placements are also key to building the kind of reputation that fuels highly desirable word-of-mouth recruitment.

The New York program's screening criteria narrow an annual pool of approximately 17,000 applicants down to around 1,900 candidates. Applicants who meet a first set of basic requirements are invited to sign up for a four-hour interview-interaction with trained selectors. During the interaction, applicants teach a five-minute sample lesson, produce a 20-minute writing sample, and participate in a 20-minute, one-on-one interview. The writing sample, a parent letter for example, is intended to reveal a candidate's critical-thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as communication skills. The one-on-one interview is an opportunity for a selector to follow up on any aspect of the lesson or writing sample and to ask additional questions so that the selector can make a well-informed

recommendation. Selectors write a summary and rate each candidate they interview. Of the applicants who reach the interaction screening, approximately 45 percent are recommended by the selectors. The final step in the application process involves additional review of files by program staff and experienced selectors. About 10 percent of the applicants who make it to this stage are eliminated in the file review process.

A multistage selection process is also used by the program in Texas Region XIII. An applicant who meets the baseline requirements for this program participates in a highly structured interview, the Gallup TeacherInsight™, completed online during the application process. A program leader in the candidate's credential specialization develops an overall score for a candidate, incorporating the Gallup interview results, overall GPA, course work GPA, information from the applicant's references, and other comments and observations. The final score, combined with input from Region XIII, determines which applicants are selected for each cohort of candidates.

The interview is perhaps the single most important aspect of the selection process for the special education program in Chico. Every candidate who has met state-required prescreening criteria goes through a structured interview conducted by a program team. The interview instrument is inspired by the Star Teacher Selection Interview developed by the Haberman Educational Foundation—a scenario-based instrument to predict how teacher candidates would deal with challenging and even stressful situations. The interview helps to gauge such qualities as whether a person is persistent, is a problem solver, is protective of learners and learning, can translate theory into practice, and can use

successful approaches with students who have characteristics that put them at risk for school failure. For the Chico program, the interview is tailored to rural special education teaching. It seeks to evaluate, for example, a candidate's reasons for becoming a teacher and working with exceptional children, prior commitment to exceptional children, and skills in communication and collaboration. This interview process also requires applicants to produce an essay. Program team members use a rubric to score the applicants, and only those above a high cutoff point are admitted to the program. As a program adviser notes, "The interview process makes it clear to candidates that this is a rigorous program. Before we used it, candidates would get into the program and then say, 'I had no idea this would be so hard!'"

Interviews are also part of the application process in the smaller programs that recruit and screen to meet specific local needs. The Wichita program uses a structured interview (see figure 4) and scoring rubric and the regional program in Texas conducts an interview with each applicant.

Design a Coherent, Flexible Program

The key to developing and maintaining an effective program is having knowledgeable, committed leadership—people who are clear about a community's teaching needs and visionary about how to address them. These leaders also know what learning experiences make for coherent preparation as well as how to meet their candidates' individual needs. And since most programs are partnerships, leaders must be able to create a structure for shared and responsive decision-making.

Of the programs in this guide, only Hillsborough operates without partners. The other programs involve

multiple school jurisdictions and often include universities or other entities in their leadership structure. For example, the programs in Texas and Georgia have regional service centers at their hubs. New York, Chico, and Wichita all have strong university partnerships. In each partnership program, policy is set jointly and each partner contributes to the program in specific ways. In Chico, for instance, the university provides televised or Web-based courses, regional supervision, and separate course sections for candidates. Participating local schools guarantee candidates 10 paid release days each year to attend classes. The state's Commission on Teacher Credentialing and the federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services help underwrite candidates' tuition, the services of mentors and candidate adviser, and program coordination and evaluation. Chico program leaders routinely collect and analyze data and make recommendations for program fine-tuning to the broadly representative advisory board.

Such data collection and adaptability are seen by all the programs as crucial to their continuing effectiveness. Not only do these programs respond to changing local needs, but each program considers itself a work in progress, continuously reviewing how best to serve its candidates' and districts' needs. Alternative route program administrators aim to devise an artful combination of course work and support, a program that is coherent and flexible.

TRADITIONAL STANDARDS

Like traditional preparation programs, alternative programs must be accredited and must ensure that candidates gain the competencies they need to teach their students and to meet state credentialing requirements. The design of the programs studied—from candidate

FIGURE 4. Wichita Structured Interview Form

Questions asked of all candidates	
1	Why are you considering a career change to become a teacher?
2	What experiences have you had working with middle school or high school age students and diverse cultural groups?
3	What are the greatest challenges you expect to encounter as a new teacher?
4	Based on your past work experiences, what do you think past employers and co-workers would tell us about you as an employee?
5	If you were to teach for five years and leave teaching at that time, what is the <u>single</u> most important thing you would want your students to remember about you as their teacher?
6	Classroom discipline can be challenging to any teacher. What would you do in each of the following situations? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students failing to turn in assignments • A student talking back • A student caught cheating on an assignment or test • A student constantly talking and not paying attention in class
7	If you were limited to three adjectives to describe yourself as a teacher what three would you choose and why?
8	If a student complained to you about another teacher not being fair, how would you handle this situation?
9	How important is it for a teacher to have a sense of humor? Explain your answer.
10	Have you ever had difficulty learning any subject material? If so what method did you use to overcome this difficulty? How would you help a student experiencing a similar difficulty in your class?
11	How will you go about making your subject relevant to your students?
12	I have asked you several questions about teaching and your desire to become a teacher. What questions would you like to ask me about the transition to teaching program?

advising through preservice, curriculum, and on-the-job practice—is driven by state requirements, including those for the credential itself, standards for the teaching profession, and standards that drive the academic content encountered by K-12 students. Region XIII in

Texas took an especially thorough approach to building a program around standards. Early on, the program experienced considerable variability across different cohort groups and instructors in what was being covered. Not wanting to lose the supportive cohort structure,

program staff created a more fully specified curriculum. Using the “backward-design” principles and tools of Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, they completed an extensive redevelopment process. They started by determining what the candidates would need to know and be able to do based on the state standards. They then determined what evidence candidates would have to produce to demonstrate having met the standards. Finally, they developed the learning activities intended to enable candidates to generate that evidence. Figure 5 illustrates one piece of the backward-mapping process, which has guided the program’s unit development and assessment. In using this process, says the program director, program staff have gained a much stronger understanding of the state standards themselves and, as a result, have been more effective in working with candidates.

Program leaders in Chico describe standards as the common language spoken by everyone in the program. Each candidate’s individualized plan specifies which standards are being met through which courses or activities. Similarly, candidates’ lesson plans have to meet teaching standards and student standards. And their portfolios and reflective logs are organized around which standards are being addressed or illustrated. In each supervisor visit to a candidate’s site, the conversation focuses on which teaching standards are observed in that day’s lesson and which still need to be addressed.

In Hillsborough, the components of candidates’ eight required courses are designed to help them gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully demonstrate competency in Florida’s 12 Accomplished Practices for teaching.

UNTRADITIONAL STRUCTURES

While programs are traditional in their alignment with state standards, how their candidates meet those standards can vary widely. Programs studied range in length from one to three years. Each begins with a few days to several weeks of preservice training, after which candidates take on regular teaching positions. Candidates are bolstered by structured support and continue to take courses at night and on weekends. The goal at the end of each program is certification. In New York, candidates also earn a master’s degree. Wichita candidates have an option to earn a master’s degree.

Each program’s preservice segment, regardless of duration, focuses on similar essentials. Typical is Georgia’s 80-hour intensive course, which orients candidates to best practices in lesson planning, instruction, assessment, and classroom management, and provides them with field experiences and observations. Candidates also learn about teacher roles and responsibilities and the teaching code of ethics, as well as basics of parent communication and special education.

New York’s seven-week summer preservice training involves both course work and student teaching to launch a master’s degree program at any of the 11 partnering universities. During their preservice experience, candidates complete 90 hours of course work while simultaneously logging 80 hours of student teaching. At the end of each day, participants come together in groups of approximately 30 to meet with their fellow adviser; these meetings add up to about 75 hours of group support throughout the summer. In addition to being good teachers, fellow advisers are selected for their familiarity with alternative routes to certification and their skill in working with adults. These preservice

FIGURE 5. Region XIII Unit Planning Guide

<p>WORKSHEET 3.2 Corresponds to Figs. 3.1, 3.6</p>	<p>IDENTIFY</p> <p>DESIRED</p> <p>RESULTS</p>	<p>BACKWARD DESIGN PROCESS</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Stage 1: Identify Desired Results A ▶ Enduring Understandings B ▶ Essential Questions C ▶ Knowledge and Skills</td> <td>Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence D ▶ Performance Tasks E ▶ Performance Task Resources (2) F ▶ Quizzes, Tests, Prompts G ▶ Unprompted Evidence G ▶ Self-Assessment</td> <td>Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction H ▶ Sequence of Learning Experiences and Instruction</td> </tr> </table>	Stage 1: Identify Desired Results A ▶ Enduring Understandings B ▶ Essential Questions C ▶ Knowledge and Skills	Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence D ▶ Performance Tasks E ▶ Performance Task Resources (2) F ▶ Quizzes, Tests, Prompts G ▶ Unprompted Evidence G ▶ Self-Assessment	Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction H ▶ Sequence of Learning Experiences and Instruction
Stage 1: Identify Desired Results A ▶ Enduring Understandings B ▶ Essential Questions C ▶ Knowledge and Skills	Stage 2: Determine Acceptable Evidence D ▶ Performance Tasks E ▶ Performance Task Resources (2) F ▶ Quizzes, Tests, Prompts G ▶ Unprompted Evidence G ▶ Self-Assessment	Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Instruction H ▶ Sequence of Learning Experiences and Instruction			
<p>STAGE</p>					
<p>What enduring understandings are desired?</p> <p>Teaching is a responsibility, not just a job.</p>					
<p>What essential questions will guide this unit and focus your teaching and intern learning?</p> <p>Why teach? What does it mean to be a teacher? What are your responsibilities as a teacher? As an educator, what are your ethical and legal boundaries? As an educator, why reflect? What does it mean to be a professional educator?</p>					
<p>What key knowledge and skills will the interns acquire as a result of this unit?</p>					
<p>Interns will know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the importance of developing a personal educational philosophy - the value of the teaching profession - the importance of families involvement in their children's education -appropriate ways for working and communicating effectively with families in varied contexts -the importance of participating in professional development activities to enhance content knowledge and pedagogical skill -the values in participating in school activities -the legal requirements and ethic guidelines for educators -policies and procedures in compliance with Code of Standards of Practice for TX Educators -the importance of using reflection and ongoing self assessment to enhance teaching effectiveness -the roles and responsibilities of specialists and other professionals at the building, district and regional level -available educator support systems -various ways in which teachers may contribute to their school and district -characteristics, goals and procedures associated with teacher appraisal -the value in maintaining an expanded view of the teaching profession 	<p>Interns will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -develop an educational philosophy -align professional practices to stated philosophy -apply procedures for conducting effective parent-teacher conferences -communicate with families on a regular basis to share information about students' progress and respond appropriately to families concerns -engage families in their children's education and in various aspects of the instructional program -maintain supportive and cooperative relationships with colleagues -assume professional responsibilities and duties outside the classroom, as appropriate -use knowledge of legal and ethical guidelines to guide behavior in education-related situations -engage in collaborative decision making, problem solving and reflection to support students' learning and well-being -work productively with supervisors and mentors to address issues and enhance professional skills -participate in sharing ideas and expertise with other professionals -use evidence to self-assess to identify strengths, challenges and potential problems and improve teaching performance -articulate the difference between serving as a teacher and a professional educator 				

Adapted from Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, *Understanding by Design Handbook*. Worksheet 3.2, p. 62. Copyright 1999 ASCD. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

advisers impart information and facilitate discussions intended to help program participants make sense of and mesh what they are learning in their course work and in their classroom teaching. To inform these sessions, the fellow advisers also observe candidates during their student teaching. Since the program's inception, participants have routinely identified these advisers as particularly helpful.

Greater variation occurs in how and where candidates continue their course work once on the job, although nights and weekends are the norm. While Chico mixes in some release time, programs have run into the expense of hiring substitute teachers as well as candidates' objections to losing time with their students. In New York, inservice schedules are created by each partnering university and courses typically are held in the evening or during the summer. In Hillsborough, district teachers teach courses in the evenings—an arrangement that fosters empathy since instructors and candidates alike have been teaching all day and experiencing common challenges. Hillsborough sets no order for taking the prescribed classes, which are offered at multiple evening and weekend times in multiple locations. In Texas, candidates receive 100 hours of inservice training while they are on the job. The instruction is designed and delivered by the program's seven "education specialists," some of it via the Internet.

Online course delivery is a hallmark of Chico's two-year, special education-focused program, which serves an expansive rural area. Special education faculty, many of whom are classroom teachers, teach weekly evening courses, using real-time streaming video on the university's interactive distance education system. Despite drives as long as five hours, Chico candidates also

come to the university and meet with their cohort for a full-day class each month using a release day. This face-to-face interaction on campus continues during the required summer school.

INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH

While all alternative route programs delineate course requirements and align their program with state standards, they also recognize the extra demands placed on their candidates. Unlike traditional teacher candidates, candidates are almost immediately on the job—with full responsibility for groups of students. Their course work sequence and the timing of support cannot be carved in stone. "They need everything at once," said one program coordinator, who—like leaders in all the programs studied—must balance that awareness against the reality that too much too soon is overwhelming.

Since most programs require that candidates demonstrate knowledge of subject matter to qualify for admission, the focus is typically not content knowledge but pedagogy—lessons and practice in how best to teach specific kinds of content to diverse groups of students. (Exceptions are New York's math immersion component, targeting non-math majors who will teach math, and the component of the Texas Region XIII program that helps candidates pass the state-required content knowledge examination.)

Each program offers candidates initial basic knowledge—say, in reading instruction or classroom management—and then follows up with more complex information and instruction at the moment the candidate needs it. The director of the alternative route program at Pace University—one of the partners in New York City—explains that alternative programs ground candidates' course work

in their teaching and explore theory in practical terms. Similarly, an evaluator of the Chico program points out its pragmatic stance: "This approach is the reverse of traditional theory to practice," she says. "It's turned teaching upside down in university classrooms."

In Chico, the individualized approach begins with each candidate's Individualized Induction Program (IIP). Developed with a program supervisor, each IIP is a personal road map that documents a candidate's goals and tracks an action plan for achieving those goals. Candidates also sign a course contract that is forwarded to the university's credential analyst. To be sure candidates get the courses they need, and recognizing the stresses they are under, the program adviser monitors the candidates to make sure they sign up for the right classes—and to call them if they have not. "They get a lot of hand holding because they become so overwhelmed with teaching and taking course work," explains a Chico program adviser. Ongoing individual advisement addresses other university deadlines that Chico candidates have to meet, phone numbers they need, and general troubleshooting. "Tons of email," notes one program adviser, is the key to the ongoing personal support candidates receive from their instructors and advisers.

Other programs where candidates follow individualized programs include those in Hillsborough and Georgia. As in Chico, candidates' programs are tailored to their particular background and experience—and adjusted over time to address specific, individual needs.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Identification of individual needs in these alternative programs is made possible by the amount of ongoing assessment each candidate receives. This assessment

approach models the kind of assessment candidates are learning to conduct with their own students. Generally, it includes formal and informal observations by program support providers and principals as well as the portfolios candidates develop over the course of the program. In Georgia, Hillsborough, and Chico, portfolios document candidates' growth in competencies aligned with state standards (see figure 6). Portfolios are also used as instruments for self-reflection and are tied to student learning. In Chico, for example, candidates' portfolios include samples of students' individualized lesson plans, plans that are driven by candidates' analyses of ongoing student assessment data and are then critiqued by supervisors, mentors, and the school that employs them. In Georgia, video clips document the candidate's classroom environment and instruction. Hillsborough has a particularly detailed structure for integrating assessment with support, as explained in the next section. Across the programs, a final sign-off on competencies generally involves support providers, the employer, and appropriate course instructors.

Michael McKibbin, consultant with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, who is in charge of California's alternative programs, points to a critical difference between the evaluation in traditional and alternative teacher preparation. In traditional programs, he notes, by the time a student teacher realizes he or she cannot perform a skill or task, it's too late. The benefit of alternative programs, he says, is that "performance assessment can be done over a long period of time, so that remediation and improvement can be applied and monitored."

Provide Extensive Support

The heart and soul of these high-quality alternative programs is the on-the-job supervision and

FIGURE 6. Georgia (RESA) Candidate Portfolio Contents

Domain and Areas Addressed*	Examples of Documentation
<p>Domain I (Planning and Preparation) Competencies 1-7, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy, • Demonstrating knowledge of students, • Selecting instructional goals, • Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources, • Designing Coherent Instruction, • Assessing Student Learning 	<p>Lesson plans with acquisition lessons and the components, extending and refining lessons, examples of differentiated strategies, graphic organizers, and authentic tasks and assessments</p>
<p>Domain II (Classroom Environment) (Competencies 8-12)</p>	<p>Include video clips documenting the candidate's classroom environment and culture of learning, a classroom floor plan and rationale, student rules, Glasser's Choice Theory Implementation, and a discipline plan</p>
<p>Domain III (Managing Student Behavior) (Competencies 13-18)</p>	<p>Include video clips documenting instruction, observation records documenting mentor and RESA observations, examples of student work from various levels of achievement, copies of candidate's written feedback to students, and examples of lesson modification</p>
<p>Domain IV (Professional Responsibilities) (Competencies 19-24)</p>	<p>Include copies of administrator's evaluations, documentation of participation in school and community activities</p>

* Framework based on Charlotte Danielson's *Framework for Teaching* (ASCD, 1996)

support candidates receive as they face the daunting challenges of being a new teacher in what is often a very difficult classroom setting. In the programs studied, support is structured at three levels: (1) program-provided supervisors; (2) site-based mentors; and (3) peer cohort support. All six programs had some variation of these three, which interweave to form a new-teacher safety net. Rather than strand candidates to sink or swim, support structures ensure that candidates will fulfill their promise or, as McKibbin puts it, that “they will obtain the skills to succeed and the commitment to stay.”

ON-SITE SUPERVISION

All of these programs include direct and indirect support. Direct support comes in the form of classroom observations, done by the program (or university) supervisor, the mentor (who is often an experienced teacher at the candidate's site), or a school administrator, such as the principal, who has partnered with the program to provide such support.

In Georgia, mentors observe frequently, give candidates feedback, and act as role models by coaching and demonstrating lessons. They also arrange for candidates to visit and observe in other classrooms.

In Hillsborough, the coaching cycle is key to the program. Because candidates can enter at different times during the year, the program is organized into a series of observation-and-coaching “loops” within three cycles or phases, as depicted in figure 7. Within weeks 1–2, for example, the support provider—the candidate's program administrator—conducts a preobservation conference to schedule observation times and introduce the candidate to the Florida Performance Measurement System

instrument. Observations will be based on Florida's Accomplished Practices for Educators, and the administrator will use this instrument in evaluating the candidate on those practices. The candidate will self-assess on the same competencies. After the initial observation has taken place, the administrator and the candidate, together with a trained peer teacher, write an action plan to determine methods and time lines for addressing competencies that have not been successfully demonstrated. This plan guides subsequent observations and conferences and is updated at the end of each cycle.

Chico supervisors are also course instructors, ensuring that there is no disconnect between course work and classroom practice. As one Chico supervisor explains, “I know what's being taught in reading courses, and if I go out and see that it's not happening, I say, ‘You just finished the course—where is it?’” On-site support is planned but also highly individualized—tailored according to Chico candidates' individualized plans and expressed needs. And the support team—supervisors, mentors, and school administrators—zeroes in on potential crises. “Need someone there next Tuesday?” queries another Chico supervisor. “We'll make that happen. We do visits on top of visits.”

In all of the programs, support is carefully coordinated. In Georgia, supervisors facilitate regular reporting and communication. In Hillsborough, principals take that role. In Chico, it's the university supervisors, each regionally assigned and working with 10 to 15 mentors and roughly the same number of candidates. As they follow their candidates and link with mentors throughout the four semesters, Chico supervisors also communicate and develop rapport with school principals and other district or county education administrators.

FIGURE 7. Hillsborough Three-Cycle Observation Schedule

Cycle I– 18 weeks		Cycle II– 9 weeks		Cycle III– 9 weeks	
Weeks 1-2	Identify ACP support staff	Weeks 19-28	Conduct 3 observations	Week 29	Write Cycle III Action Plan
	Pre-observation conference		Review Cycle II Alternative Certification Professional Development Plan (ACPDP)	Weeks 30-37	Conduct 2 observations
	Complete screening instruments		[Redacted]		Final Summative Assessment
	Write Cycle I Action Plan				[Redacted]
Weeks 3-4	Conduct 2 observations				
	Review Cycle I Alternative Certification Professional Development Plan (ACPDP)				
Weeks 5-17	Conduct 2 observations				
	Review Cycle I Alternative Certification Professional Development Plan (ACPDP)				
Week 18	Hold Cycle I Final Conference				
	Develop Cycle II Alternative Certification Professional Development Plan (ACPDP)				

All program leaders agree that the success of a support structure rests, fundamentally, on an environment of trust. Interns must continually give honest answers to the support providers' core question: "How are you doing?" Since candidates are simultaneously dealing with course work, teaching, supervision, and mentoring, everyone knows they are having a struggle. "In a traditional program, people expect your competencies to be there," says a graduate of Chico's program. "Here, supervisors know you will be floundering. I invited my supervisor to 'Come see my worst part of the day.' I was at four schools. She came to each one. She saw the diverse environments and knew my challenges. She understood. Then later, I said, 'Come again and see how much better I am doing.' There is no intimidation."

That sense of trust and bolstered confidence was echoed by a Georgia candidate: "From the beginning of the program, I felt I was set up to succeed."

ON-SITE MENTORING

While supervisors keep classroom practice grounded in course work, on-site mentors—"treasured advice givers," as one candidate called them—are critical to day-to-day survival. The programs pay strong attention to the selection and training of mentors, pay mentors a stipend, and are very clear about what is expected of them. (As an example, figure 8 is New York's mentor position description.) In Texas, mentors are selected by principals who receive guidance from Region XIII on what qualities to look for in a mentor. Mentors attend 15 hours of professional development provided by Region XIII. The mentor and each candidate must complete six observations during the school year—Region XIII suggests three times with the candidate

observing the mentor and three with the mentor observing the candidate. In addition, the two also hold a minimum of four discussion meetings.

Georgia mentors—who are themselves classroom teachers—receive training on coaching and communication. They spend a minimum of 100 hours working with each candidate the first year and 50 hours the second year. One mentor responsibility is to support the candidate throughout all phases of the program by providing feedback based on the Danielson framework (see figure 6 on page 17).

Mentors in Hillsborough are former administrators. Not only do these individuals bring a wealth of expertise, but they have a vested interest in the district and can speak to principals and veteran teachers with the authority needed to make the candidates' lives easier. For example, candidates might be tempted to take on extra or peripheral responsibilities as good school citizens. Mentors would counsel principals to restrict such duties, to make candidates' experiences less taxing.

PEER SUPPORT

Besides this very direct support, successful alternative programs offer a more distanced yet crucial kind of support, in the form of seminars. Such seminars create a bridge—between theory and practice and also between the program's course work and its system of support. These sessions offer candidates the opportunity to share frustrations and engage in problem solving, not only with program faculty but with fellow candidates, whose insights come from being in the same boat. These kinds of discussions allow candidates to travel an arc: They take theory learned in course work, try it out with students, return to the group to analyze

FIGURE 8. New York City Mentor Position Description

VACANCY NOTICE New York Teaching Fellows Mentoring Program

POSITION: Teacher to serve as a Full Time Mentor Teacher—Elementary, IS/JHS/HS and Special Education for Teaching Fellows and other first year teachers with Transitional B Certification.

The New York City Teaching Fellows Full Time Mentor Model is designed to support and guide new teachers by having experienced colleagues serve as their mentors. The supportive, productive rapport between mentor and intern is intended to increase the new teacher's effectiveness and job satisfaction. At the same time, the mentor/teacher's role will enhance his/her professionalism by providing an opportunity to share successful practices.

LOCATION: Various locations throughout the City.

ELIGIBILITY: NYC licensed, tenured classroom teacher.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

- Minimum of five (5) years satisfactory teaching experience in the New York City Public Schools.
- Mastery of pedagogical and subject matter skills.
- Extensive knowledge of the new NYS and NYC performance standards and new assessments.
- Fluency in DOE regulations, policies and practices relative to content area.
- Demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing standards-based instruction.
- Exemplary knowledge about content, materials and methods that support high standards in various curriculum areas.
- Demonstrated capacity to serve as a catalyst for implementing instructional change in the classroom.
- Demonstrated understanding and experience in addressing the complexities of classroom life.
- Knowledge of staff development practices and in-service education.
- Record of engaging in cooperative and collaborative projects with staff/adults/administration.
- Evidence of excellent interpersonal relationship qualities.
- Demonstrated skill in team building and group dynamics.
- Experience in relating to adult learners.
- Evidence of excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Willingness to undergo additional training during the summer and throughout the year, as well as to travel among field locations.
- In certain collaborations, willingness to serve as adjunct faculty for collaborating college/university which may also require that candidates hold a Master's degree.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Establish and maintain a trustful, confidential and non-evaluative relationship with intern.
- Serve as a Peer "Coach," providing opportunities for intervisitation, demonstrating /modeling and conferring with the intern.
- Develop and conduct a daily in-school program that is tailored to the beginning teacher's professional interest and concerns.
- Assist teachers in using collected data to work on the design and implementation of a comprehensive educational plan that focuses on high standards and achievement for all students including those who are LEP and/or receive special education services.
- Model appropriate and innovative teaching methodologies through techniques such as team teaching, demonstrations, simulations and consultations.
- Act as a liaison between the intern, entire school staff and the administration to promote the positive aspects of mentoring.
- Meet periodically with university faculty representatives.
- Promote collegiality through fostering an atmosphere of cooperation and communication among school personnel.
- Maintain and submit required documentation (mentoring plan, monthly log of mentoring activities, etc.).

what succeeded or failed, get advice, and then go back and try again—each time growing in terms of teaching, reflection, and self-analysis.

Georgia offers an example of how such peer support operates. The RESA program makes available a series of professional, problem-based seminars. The seminars are facilitated by teachers with successful classroom experience, positive experience teaching adults, and expertise in particular specialty areas. Candidates are required to attend six seminars in the first year and four in the second year. If the support team determines that a candidate needs help with, say, behavior management, it recommends a classroom management seminar. The support comes in a form that is easy to digest, as well as relevant.

Engage in Continuous Reflection and Improvement

All six of these programs are deeply attuned to outcomes. They take responsibility for preparing candidates to succeed in the classroom and to meet state certification or licensing requirements. They work with candidates, through training and support, to ensure that each candidate masters required skills and can demonstrate those skills on the job and in formal assessments. Moreover, the programs continually seek to improve outcomes, with a focus on how well they meet the needs of candidates and partner districts.

ASSESSING CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Alternative route programs focus squarely on candidates' on-the-job performance. "Traditional programs emphasize knowledge," says the coordinator of Hillsborough's program. "Our program is skill-based. During the whole year of the internship, we are seeing if the knowledge from course work is translating into a skill."

This difference is evident across all six sites. Because candidates are classroom teachers fully in charge of groups of students, performance can be monitored over time, instruction is responsive to candidates' needs, and candidates have the opportunity to re-try strategies and re-teach material. As noted earlier, this kind of supportive assessment keeps candidates improving even as it keeps them afloat.

Programs vary in how they organize candidate assessment. Texas and Wichita incorporate performance tasks and work samples. New York's assessment mechanisms vary according to the university program in which candidates are placed. Virtually every program uses classroom observation to evaluate candidate performance. And three sites—Georgia, Hillsborough, and Chico—make extensive use of portfolios.

Ongoing formal observation in each program is accompanied by conferences with candidates and, often, written feedback as well. Programs like that in Texas' Region XIII deliberately emphasize formative observation, that is, classroom visits that are not used for evaluation. Most programs, however, include formal observation as part of the summative assessment required for teacher certification.

In Wichita, for example, mentor and administrator observations are required for certification. Mentors use an observation form adapted from the Professional Practice Scale published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hillsborough's three-cycle observation and coaching system, described earlier, includes 10 observations, three of which are formal (see figure 7, page 19). For each cycle, the candidate and school-based mentor

teacher develop a candidate action plan to address areas of nonmastery, and observations during that cycle focus on those targeted areas. For example, in specified weeks of the first cycle, the school-based mentor needs to conduct at least 2 observations that address competencies the candidate has not yet successfully demonstrated, while also noting whether the candidate continues to improve in areas of proficiency.

Another key assessment strategy is the use of portfolios, which are used for both formative assessment, as noted earlier, and summative assessment. For Georgia's portfolio, candidates amass evidence that demonstrates proficiency in 24 competencies (see figure 6, page 17). To show capability in planning and preparation, for example, they include lesson plans and graphic organizers. Showing skill in creating an appropriate classroom environment calls for video clips and classroom floor plans. Candidates gather three to four samples for each competency.

Given the level of time and effort that goes into creating the portfolios, the Georgia programs take great care in evaluating them. The program employs a part-time supervisor for just that job. Using a rubric to rate each competency, the evaluator provides candidates with feedback and submits documentation to the program coordinator. When all members of the candidate support team agree that a candidate is proficient in all 24 competencies, they each sign a competency completion form and submit it along with a recommendation for clear, renewable certification.

In Hillsborough, site principals oversee portfolios. Staff from the district's Office of Training and Staff Development orient each principal to the portfolio creation process, including a checklist of required items. Annual

portfolio auditing is handled by educators hired as consultants and trained by project staff.

EVALUATING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Assessment of candidate performance is only one anchor point in continuous program improvement. Programs also must routinely monitor whether they are meeting critical needs—those of the candidates themselves as well as those of partner districts and multiple stakeholders.

To evaluate overall effectiveness, programs systematically gather and analyze data using a variety of tools, including questionnaires for candidate needs assessment; surveys and interviews of principals; course effectiveness ratings by candidates; support provider ratings of candidates; and follow-up surveys after graduation of former candidates and their employers.

RESPONDING TO CANDIDATE NEEDS

To identify candidate needs, for example, survey information from candidates often is gathered as early as the beginning of their preservice experience. In New York, for instance, candidates complete a "temperature gauge," an online survey asking them to evaluate their first three weeks of preservice training, including course content and advisory time. The results allow staff to follow up with candidates as needed and to make adjustments that might improve their experiences for the remainder of preservice. A follow-up survey gauges how successful the adjustments have been.

Chico candidates fill out a pre-entry questionnaire to help staff accommodate their experience and characteristics. Instructors then conduct a candidate needs analysis at the beginning of each course to help them

tailor instruction. At the end of each course, candidates let instructors know how well the course met their needs in terms of increased proficiency.

Region XIII in Texas, like several other programs, surveys its candidates at the end of the program on a wide range of issues. Questions cover the program's overall performance, the quality of the training, the caliber of support from mentors and supervisors, and candidates' expectations for the future. Texas and Chico survey candidates and their employers after graduation.

Data collected on the needs of candidates and local districts are used to continually improve every aspect of the programs. When candidates in Wichita, for example, reported strongly valuing the feedback on their teaching provided by their support providers and said they wanted more, the program increased the number of support-provider visits to classrooms. Most candidates now receive at least 10 visits in the school year and get written feedback from each. The program also accommodated candidates' logistical problems by purchasing new technology that allows candidates at remote sites to participate in classes via the Internet by streaming video rather than drive hundreds of miles.

One measure of success is the rate of program completion. Chico, for one, has seen its candidate retention rate rise from 86 percent of the cumulative pool of those who had completed the program in 1999–2000 to 91 percent in 2003–04. Program leaders credit their focus on gathering data and responding to them. It's important to note that the data are not just quantitative, says Chico's evaluator. "We try to collect candidates' voices. The survey at the end of each class is not just their rating but their words and

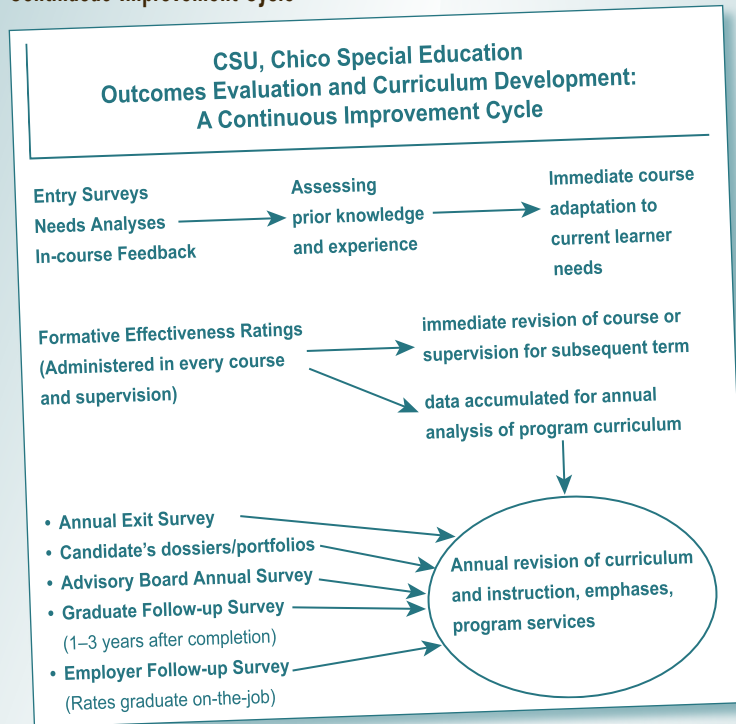
their emotions connected to this course experience. Honesty is important. We break down the objectives of the courses and ask what students are not feeling satisfied with." Instructors see the exact words of the students at multiple points in the curriculum and use that feedback for tailoring. Coordinators, too, look at all the feedback and routinely revisit the question of curriculum sequence.

RESPONDING TO REGIONAL NEEDS

Meanwhile, to stay on top of the changing needs of partner school districts and other local stakeholders, each program does yet another level of needs assessment. Chico, for example, regularly draws on information from a wide range of informants (see figure 9 for Chico's map of its multiple evaluation strands). One group is its advisory board, whose members—including local school officials, parents, and representatives from local special education support agencies—keep a finger on the region's pulse. Further information comes from supervisors. Because they are constantly in contact with school and county office administrators, their meetings frequently raise triggers for program change. Moreover, a number of part-time university faculty are also teachers in the public schools, affording yet another level of feedback. And because program leaders are almost constantly writing grants, formal surveys and interviews of local participants—including all 385 principals—provide further, up-to-date data.

Chico's regional needs assessment has led over time to shifts in the program's emphasis. For example, more attention has been paid to autism in recent years as that disability has become more prevalent. The program has shifted from an early focus on elementary, multiple-subject teaching to middle and high school teaching as the

FIGURE 9. Chico Continuous Improvement Cycle



need for special education teachers at those levels has expanded. And the search for more candidates interested in serving students with moderate to severe disabilities remains a priority, in response to greater need.

Program leaders in Georgia see responsiveness to district needs as a way to model for candidates how good teachers assess and respond to student needs. They believe that one reason their program has enjoyed so much success is that the people involved, from the top down, truly value an open exchange of ideas. Program leaders know local school needs because they ask—and then they listen and

act. For example, this process has led to adding strands in early childhood and special education.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME

It's clear that continuous program improvement depends on committed, collaborative leadership and inclusive decision-making. In Texas's Region XIII program, analysis of all data collected is done at an annual retreat. Staff members get together for two days each year to analyze what is working well and what they want to improve. They pride themselves on being able to "turn on a dime" to make changes.

In New York, an advisory board consisting of program participants from each partner university works closely with the program directors and the chancellor. For the first couple of years, the focus was on the quality of what the university offered the candidates. Today the emphasis has shifted to encompass broader issues of the teaching experience in New York classrooms to continually address ways to support quality teaching.

Chico, at this point, is reaping the rewards of its years of careful development. It has enjoyed sustained leadership with its current director and other key leaders in place for more than a dozen years. During that time, the program has developed a deep base of expertise that constitutes its support network. Many of today's supervisors were once candidates themselves. Many returned to enroll in the university's master's program—for which 15 of their candidate credits applied. Often long-time residents, support providers understand the rural context and the needs of local schools.

A point of pride for all involved is that the Chico program has begun to have an effect beyond special education. "I see other teachers coming by when I come to a school," says one supervisor. "Staff in three or four other classes begin taking on the traits of the special education teacher who is doing a wonderful job—because of the supportive model." Seeing that the program's candidates bring cutting-edge skills to their sites, a number of administrators tap them to do consultations and modeling with other teachers, for example, or to present at board meetings.

The first part of this guide has presented some cross-cutting design elements of a strong alternative teacher preparation program. The next part more fully describes each program, giving readers six variations of how these elements mesh to support the development of successful teachers.



Part II: Program Profiles

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Alternative Certification Program, Hillsborough County, Florida

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/Who Pays
Elementary Secondary	School District of Hillsborough County	1998	530	Rolling admission; no cohort	59% Female 41% Male 71% White 18% Afr. Am. 8% Hispanic 3% Asian Am. (2003 data)	1-2 years	\$1,600 District pays \$800 Candidate pays \$800

To address growing shortages of qualified teachers, while providing the best education opportunities for all students, the School District of Hillsborough County (SDHC) created its Alternative Certification Program (ACP) offering teaching and training opportunities to non-education majors. In the 1980s, Florida's State Department of Education had put alternative programs in the state universities, but over time it became clear that the alternatives were no longer alternative. According to SDHC's director of training and staff development, these alternatives had "folded right into the university as a straight graduate program." In 1997, the legislature decided to give districts the option of creating their own alternative programs. Hillsborough's program was created in 1998–1999.

SDHC's general hiring practice for a long time was to first seek experienced teachers from other districts, then experienced teachers from other states, followed by student teachers, and, finally, alternative route teachers. The director of training and staff development says this was a hold-over from the 1980s when alternative certification was seen as a place for "leftover hippies." In ACP's early stages, she says, school administrators were poorly disposed to its graduate teachers, many of whom got the "cold shoulder." But as administrators saw classrooms that would be teacherless at the start of the school year, they accepted ACP teachers. Enough ACP teachers have since joined SDHC schools and been successful that administrators no longer shun alternative certification candidates.

ACP initially focused on math and science, and served "in-field" candidates, which meant that if a candidate's degree

major was in chemistry, then that is what he or she taught. Candidates went through the ACP to gain pedagogical knowledge and relied upon their university experience for the content in the subject they would be teaching. Three years later, however, the program was expanded to serve charter school teachers and "out-of-field" candidates—those who wanted to teach a specific subject, such as math, but did not have the college course work to support that choice. Ultimately, out-of-field participants are responsible for gaining content-area knowledge for the field in which they want to teach by taking university courses, and the ACP is responsible for the pedagogy and teaching methods portion of the certification.

ACP candidates have two years to complete the program, but most need only one year. Those who take two years do so on the recommendation of their mentor or building principal, who feels that the added time with ACP support and supervision will benefit the candidate. To gain Florida certification, the candidates must complete the SDHC ACP, pass a state General Knowledge Exam, the Florida Educator Examination, and the Florida Subject Area Exam, and meet the requirements of state law.

Recruitment and Selection

The district runs 6 to 10 ACP evening informational meetings each year, and in the summer it hosts two large ACP recruitment fairs. Approximately 900 people attend these sessions. On occasion, the program will get news coverage, which frequently results in several calls to the office of Training and Staff Development the next day.

Since its inception in 1989, 1,327 candidates have been accepted into the SDHC ACP, and the program has grown over 300 percent in the past five years. Of the 530 teachers certified since 1998, 87 percent remain in the district. One ACP staff member says the program's biggest appeal is its accessible nature and low cost. ACP candidates can enter the program at any time during the year, once they have been hired. This makes midyear candidates eligible for support and instruction once they enter the classroom, as opposed to waiting until the fall.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

The ACP recommends a 180-day completion timeline for the program's two components, course work and field work (the internship year), each completed in conjunction with the other. Eight required courses are based upon the 12 Accomplished Practices established by the Florida Department of Education:

1. Teacher Induction/Classroom Management (18 hours)—based on Harry Wong's *The First Days of School*.
2. Professionalism Through Integrity: Code of Ethics (3 hours)—training component based on the Florida Department of Education's Code of Ethics and Principles of Professional Conduct.
3. Transition Into Teaching (24-30 hours)—examines the developmental needs of K-12 students and strategies to meet those needs.
4. Effective Teaching Strategies (18-24 hours)—focuses on the six domains of the Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS).
5. Instructional Strategies Through Cooperative Learning (24 hours)—based upon the work of Johnson and Johnson and Spencer Kagan, and presents knowledge, skills, and strategies to implement cooperative learning.
6. Integrating Technology in Education (15 hours)—emphasizes ways to use technology in the classroom.

7. Crisis Intervention for Educators (3 hours)—video-based course designed to help educators recognize the signs of emotional distress, behavior indicators of physical and emotional abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, and neglect.
8. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Independent Reading Course (3 hours)—provides ESOL awareness for educators.

These courses help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to successfully demonstrate each of the components in the 12 Accomplished Practices. Course work is aimed at all levels and is non-subject-specific, with the exception of the ESOL course that addresses the needs of English language learners in the district.

Course work is completed in three places concurrently with field work. Teacher Induction and Professionalism Through Integrity are offered through the district's New Teacher Orientation. Crisis Intervention for Educators and ESOL courses are offered through independent study on the participant's campus. The remaining courses are completed through district-sponsored classes. There is no specific order in which classes must be completed, but there are obvious benefits to taking specific classes (e.g., Teacher Induction) early in the process.

Teachers employed by the district, trained in professional development, teach the ACP courses during evenings or on weekends. One trainer comments that being in the classroom all day helps her to bond with the ACP candidates because they are in the same boat as her students—"tired and exhausted from the day, but excited to be learning new things!"

Within the field work component of the program, a three-cycle observation process takes place over 36 weeks focusing on the instructional performance of the candidate (see figure 7). This includes a minimum of seven data collection observations, three "formal" observations, and work with a mentor to ensure the candidate is making progress. The observation cycle, which includes specific tasks that must be completed, is conducted by the ACP mentor in addition to the internal support staff observations.

Candidates are also required to develop a portfolio. The school administrator is in charge of the portfolio process and works closely with the candidate teacher and the ACP staff. The school administrator also works with the candidate teacher's mentor to gather evidence, becomes knowledgeable about the guidelines and methods of documentation of accomplished practices, and distributes and collects the ESOL and CRISIS Intervention test. It is up to each administrator to work with each candidate individually to support the cycle of the program he or she is in. One principal commented, "It is a lot of work to plan it out for each teacher; it's tough, but the benefits make it worth it."

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

The mentoring component was added to the ACP in 2000 based on the Steve Barkley coaching and mentoring model. ACP mentors are intended to be friends, coaches, and support people who are nonjudgmental, understanding, and nonthreatening. These external mentors are experienced administrators formerly employed by SDHC. As former administrators, they come with training and experience in teacher support and evaluation. On occasion, university personnel have acted as ACP mentors, but with limited success. One ACP staff member hypothesizes that previous administrators possess a "commitment to the organization" that people outside the district may not have, and she screens for these characteristics in choosing mentors. Another bonus of using past administrators is that they have the respect and authority to speak to another principal "administrator to administrator" as they observe and advocate for the candidate teacher.

Mentors typically work with 12 to 15 candidate teachers at a time and are generally assigned to the same campuses or those close to each other to minimize travel in such a large county district. Their role is to act as a liaison between the teacher, the campus support team, and the Office of Training and Staff Development. They also fill in the information gaps for any course work that the candidate has yet to complete. Visits typically last an hour and mentors are paid \$60 per visit and their travel costs. Mentors work approximately three days a week, meeting with four to five candidates a day.

Observations are based on the Florida Performance Measurement System, a screening and observation instrument tied to the 12 Accomplished Practices. Using the information gained from this instrument, mentors can recommend additional professional development, set up a model lesson, organize departmental support, and offer praise to candidate teachers. Mentors also review lesson plans, grade-book protocol, classroom management skills, and other district-based processes the candidate might be struggling with.

Mentors advocate for their candidate teachers in many ways. They review the candidates' schedule to ensure that it is conducive to the needs of a new teacher, they keep an eye out for too many duties beyond the classroom, and they make sure that teachers are not "coerced" into accepting sponsorship positions such as cheerleading or other school clubs. Mentors frequently will go to the administrator and lobby to have changes made if they feel the candidate teacher is overloaded with a difficult schedule or too many duties.

Funding

The ACP program is funded mostly with State Categorical Teacher Training funds and a few grants. Title I funds can also be used. SDHC receives \$2.5 million each year from the state to run the program. The program cost per candidate is \$1,600, which includes materials. SDHC and the candidate each pay \$800. An ACP manager estimates that while tuition will rise, the program will remain extremely competitive with university programs that charge about \$3,000 for certification.

Success Indicators

Between July 1998 and June 2004, 530 teachers have completed the ACP, with 87 percent remaining in the district. The overall completion rate of candidates is 98 percent and the retention rate is 85 percent.

Key Success Factors

SDHC ACP offers a flexible, low-cost method for non-education majors to enter the teaching field quickly. Based on lessons learned, program officers stress the following:

- » Have "buy-in" from administrators, human resources, and district staff development teams before starting up. Building principals who will host the candidates need to believe in the program; the human resources department, which hires the teachers, needs to be kept in the loop, especially if it deals with certification issues; and district staff development teams need to know the weaknesses of the candidates and be prepared to offer assistance or additional professional development.
- » Be willing to make courses accessible and change them yearly to meet the needs of candidates. Host courses all over the district and at schools that are hosting other evening programs so that you can "cost share" to have a location open at night.
- » An assessment process is important. Rely upon portfolios, mentor feedback, and course work results to guide the program.
- » Have the "behind-the-scenes" data system set up before you begin. You cannot do things manually; work closely with your technology department so that the technology can work for you.
- » Reevaluate the program continuously. Provide obvious steps for completion and "next steps" to the participants. Rely upon administrator and teacher surveys for feedback. This ensures that you will continue to meet the needs of your teachers, principals, and district as times changes.

Educator Certification Program, Region XIII, Austin, Texas

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/Who Pays
Elementary Secondary Special Education Bilingual Education	Region XIII Education Service Center Region XIII School Districts	1989	2,082	236	79% Female 21% Male Majority are White (2003 data)	17 months	\$5,200 Candidate pays

Like so many other alternative route programs, the initial driver for creating the Educator Certification Program (ECP) was a shortage of teachers with qualifications in certain certification areas. In 1989, the most critical shortages for the 59 school districts in and around Austin, Texas, were in special education. To help remedy this situation, the Region XIII Education Service Center (ESC) created an opportunity for professionals from many different fields to become special education teachers. This ESC, which serves the 16-county Austin area, is one of 20 such agencies created by the Texas legislature to function as intermediaries between the Texas Education Agency and local school districts.

The program underwent a major redesign in 1991. One of the most important changes was a switch from holding classes during the day to meeting in the evenings and on weekends. Daytime classes had forced districts to hire substitutes to fill in for the candidates while they attended classes. Night and weekend classes allow candidates to be with their own students as much as possible. The program also expanded the types of credentials offered to include bilingual and secondary education. The changes resulted in a huge increase in the number of program participants, or "interns." In 1990 the program trained 17 special education teachers; in 1991 98 teachers with various specialties exited the program. In 1995 the program again increased its offerings and added regular elementary credentials. Region XIII ECP is currently approved to provide certification in Early Childhood–4th grade (Generalist); Early Childhood–4th grade (Bilingual Generalist); Early Childhood–12th grade (Special Education); All secondary level content areas; and Seven Career and Technology Education (CATE) areas.

As the program has matured and adapted to serve increasing numbers of candidates, the ECP has also refined its program goals. Its current mission is "to be sure there is a teacher in every classroom who cares that every student, every day, learns and grows and feels like a real human being." Staff have identified as underlying program principles: 1) Accountability—The high-stakes environment that students are required to excel in makes training teachers a high-stakes endeavor and 2) Practice what you preach—Be prepared to teach through modeling and alignment of standards if you expect your teachers to do the same.

The ECP is a rigorous 17-month, field-based program that integrates theory with practice. It provides training and certification for selected candidates who hold a bachelor's degree and wish to become teachers. The cohort-based program prepares candidates to be "classroom ready" in six months through a combination of online and face-to-face preservice training. The training includes preparation and individual tutoring for the required state teacher assessment, as well as a two-week field experience. Following this six-month getting-ready process, candidates continue training while employed by one of the Austin-area districts as the teacher of record in their own classroom. During this first year of teaching, the program provides the candidates with both mentoring and field support.

The Region XIII ESC employs 15 full-time staff to support the ECP mission. The program's director also oversees other Region XIII initiatives. Under the director, there is a program coordinator who oversees day-to-day program administration. Eight education specialists serve as cohort leaders, designing and delivering instruction for their particular area of certification.

One recent addition is the position of mentor and field support specialist, who ensures that individuals who support the candidates in the field know how to reinforce what is being taught in program classes. The technology support and on-line education position is another recent addition, created to support the required online course work and to support the technology-related learning competencies. There are also four support staff at the ECP: one registrar, one office manager, and two program secretaries.

Recruitment and Selection

Program enrollment fluctuates because the program accepts only enough candidates to fill the staffing needs in the districts it serves. The ECP program coordinator meets regularly with the regional affiliate of the Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators to stay aware of their hiring needs.

Typically the program has 800–900 applicants of which it accepts 25–30 percent. Applicants must hold at least a bachelor's degree with an overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.5, provide evidence of required competency in reading, writing, and mathematics, and have daily access to a personal computer, printer, and a private Internet connection. While the program prepares candidates in their content area for special education, bilingual, and elementary certificates, applicants seeking middle- and secondary-level certification must already have the required course work and semester hours for the desired certificate area. Applicants must also submit three letters of reference and complete the TeacherInsight™ assessment developed and administered by the Gallup Organization. While the program originally used its own interview process, it has found Gallup's 40-minute online tool to be efficient and helpful.

Upon completion of the application process, the cohort leader, in the credential specialization for which the applicant is applying, scores the applicant on a matrix, which includes the applicant's TeacherInsight™ score, the applicant's overall GPA and course work GPA, information from references, and other comments and observations. The matrix, which yields an overall applicant score, is used for the final selection of candidates.

The program averages 275 participants each year. Candidates represent a range of professional backgrounds, including computer technology, sports, journalism, social work, the military, and retail.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

Program curriculum is based on state standards established by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and is aligned with the state board exams, the state Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) Framework, and Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), the state curriculum established for Texas public schools.

Preservice training for the elementary, special education, and bilingual candidates begins in January each year with online course work to address the "highly qualified" component of *No Child Left Behind* legislation (*NCLB*). These candidates are required to take the content portion of the Texas Examination of Educator Standards before they are hired, and most candidates remain in their current employment while they accomplish this. Candidates for middle- and secondary-level certification already meet the *NCLB* requirements for "highly qualified" through their college course work and are not required to take a content exam.

The online course work was created by Region XIII and master teachers throughout the region. Program staff reviewed it to ensure that it aligns with the state standards and provides training necessary for candidates to pass the state exam in March. In March or April of the following year, all candidates then take the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) exam. In the past, 98–99 percent of program candidates have passed this state exam.

In mid-March of the first year, all candidates begin face-to-face instruction. Required courses include Learning Foundations (human growth, development, and learning theory); Lesson Design (lesson cycle and how to incorporate standards into lessons); Classroom Environment (how to establish a positive environment); The "Learner" (instructional and questioning strategies); and Beyond the "Learner" (designed to help the candidate develop a strong philosophy regarding being an educator.)

A two-week summer field experience takes place in June, during which candidates are assigned to a summer school classroom that matches their intended level of certification. The ECP requires a two-week field experience because that is the amount of time most candidates are able to take off from their current job.

After completing the online and face-to-face preservice training and the field experience, candidates are eligible to be employed by a district for the internship year. To remain in the program at this point, candidates must obtain a position as a teacher of record at the teaching level for which they are seeking certification. Generally, over 95 percent of ECP candidates obtain positions and remain through the intern year. When they are hired, the ECP program recommends the candidate for a probationary certificate from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). As teachers of record, candidates receive full pay and benefits for the internship year.

Candidates also receive an additional 12–18 hours of training from the ECP each month during the internship year. Some of this training is delivered over the Internet.

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

Each ECP candidate has an on-site mentor and field supporter available during both the summer field experience and the internship year. Each mentor is selected by the campus administrator, who receives guidance from Region XIII on mentor selection guidelines. Mentors attend 15 hours of professional development provided by the ECP. The on-campus mentor and candidate are required to complete six observations during the school year. The program recommends that the mentor observe the candidate three times and the candidate observe the mentor three times. The mentor and candidate must also get together for four discussion meetings during the year.

A field supporter observes each candidate two times during the two-week summer field experience and makes four half-day visits, minimally, during the internship year. Field supporters are contracted through Region XIII and are usually educators who have a proven record in the classroom.

Before becoming field supporters, these educators attend two to four days of training developed by Region XIII. Some candidates consider the support they get from mentors and field supporters to be one of the program's greatest strengths. "I can honestly say that I don't think I would have made it through the year without my field supporter," says one candidate.

Upon successful completion of the ECP (including the internship year) and the state licensing requirements, participants typically earn a teaching certificate specific to their area of study. To receive the certificate, candidates must satisfactorily complete all ECP course work and assessments, receive at least a satisfactory rating on their teaching evaluation, pass all state board exams, receive a recommendation from their campus administrator, and be recommended by the ECP program.

Funding

The ECP is financially self-supporting. Candidates make scheduled payments that total approximately \$5,200 over the 17-month program. Of this amount, \$3,700 is the "internship fee," which is deducted from each candidate's paycheck on a prorated basis during the internship year. There is no cost to districts for any portion of the program, as part of the candidate's tuition pays for his or her school-based mentor.

Success Indicators

ECP's program completion rate was 89 percent during 1999–2001. According to ECP's deputy director, one of the most important benefits of becoming certified through this program is the outstanding reputation that ECP candidates enjoy in the region. Other staff members report that principals sometimes claim to prefer ECP candidates over other new teachers. When asked why, the principals reportedly cite the field support candidates receive during the induction year.

Key Success Factors

ECP leaders identify the selection process as a key factor in the program's success. They are selective and do not accept all applicants. They have a tool to identify strengths and

weaknesses of potential candidates and they use it. Selectivity pays off in part because program staff can focus on supporting the candidates as they move through content, rather than on candidates who are struggling with issues outside of the content.

Program leaders also note the value of aligning the program to meet the needs of local districts and others who will be hiring their program graduates. Build a relationship with the districts you serve, they say: Take advantage of the natural relationships that are provided by proximity to schools and districts.

Alignment of the curriculum to state academic and performance standards is also key. ECP staff suggest staying in tune with the statewide education initiatives and local district initiatives. Doing so can help ensure that programs produce teachers who will be on the cutting edge and will be armed with the latest knowledge.

A candidate's relationship with his or her cohort leader is crucial. The cohort leader does most of the instruction throughout the program, and it is with this individual that a candidate can find a "safe haven" if a question or problem arises and the candidate wants to avoid taking it to someone at the school site. Program staff also point to the invaluable support provided by the field support team and mentors, without whom there would be quite a bit of anxiety among teachers and principals. Not only do the teachers have access to an extraordinary form of support, but the principals know that when they hire an ECP graduate, that teacher will have a level of support from ESC XIII that a teacher from a university education program will not generally have. This reduces the burden on the principal to be responsible for all the support needed by most first-year teachers.

Finally, ESC XIII has a passionate, dedicated staff focused on making the program ever better.

Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program, Northwest and Metro Regional Educational Service Agencies, Georgia

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/Who Pays
Middle Grades Secondary Special Education Early Childhood Education (Metro only)	School districts in NW Georgia and metropolitan Atlanta	NW: 2001 Metro: 2003	NW: 64 Metro: 23	NW: 43 Metro: 40	NW: 66% Female 34% Male 76% White 17% Afr. Am. 3% Hispanic 3% Asian Am. (2003 data)	2 years	NW: \$2,250 Metro: \$2,700 Case by case; combination of candidate, school, RESA

In the late 1990s when some northwest Georgia school districts were experiencing student population growth as rapid as any in the nation, attracting adequate numbers of certified classroom teachers was a struggle. With higher education programs graduating fewer and fewer teachers, in 1999 almost 50 percent of new hires came from out of state. To address this critical teacher shortage, the region's superintendents raised the call for an alternative route to certification. The Northwest Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)—one of 16 such agencies providing services and support to the state's school systems by region—responded to the superintendents' call by developing an alternative teacher preparation program. The program was approved by the Professional Standards Commission as meeting its standards, which are, themselves, based on the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards.

The following year the Professional Standards Commission facilitated the development of a statewide program modeled on that created by the Northwest RESA. Later named the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GA TAPP), the two-year, research-based program offers a low-cost method for bringing fully certified high-quality teachers into Georgia schools. Today, there are 9 RESA-operated GA TAPP programs, including the original NW RESA program, which serves 16 school districts across 11 mostly rural counties, and a closely linked sister program developed by the Metro RESA, which serves 11 school districts in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Today, the two RESAs coordinate and collaborate, learning from each other to continuously improve their respective

programs while always keeping an eye on how best to serve their own particular constituent districts.

Although some of the specifics vary between the two programs, like all GA TAPPS, they both use a two-phase approach. Phase 1 begins in the summer with candidates taking an intensive "Essentials" course that introduces them to best practices and gives them information about professional roles and responsibilities of educators, code of ethics, parent communication, and special education issues. (For teachers hired after the start of the school year, the class is taught in the evenings and on Saturdays or the candidate may be required to take a "Five-Day Survival Course" before entering the classroom until the Essentials course is available again.) Phase 2 has candidates teaching in the classroom supported by intensive mentoring and supervision and monthly seminars.

Recruitment and Selection

Because its candidates are hired as regular teachers and receive a teaching salary as they move through the program, GA TAPP has been able to attract a wide variety of applicants, including males and ethnic minorities. One GA TAPP candidate who had worked as a long-term, albeit uncertified, substitute teacher, reports having looked into a teacher preparation program at a nearby university only to lose enthusiasm upon learning that it could take up to four years to become a teacher. Through the GA TAPP program, she has been hired at a school where she used to substitute and she is now receiving slightly less than a full teacher's salary (with benefits) until she earns a Clear Renewable Certificate.

Another candidate, a former industrial engineer, took early retirement and entered the program because he “wanted to give something back.” One man, a former veterinarian with two small children, looked into other options, but says he was drawn to the practical, hands-on aspect of the GA TAPP program. A candidate who is expecting his first child says an alternative route to certification was the only option for him because he could not afford a lapse in salary and benefits at this time in his life. In general, the application process starts with a local school system hiring a prospective candidate according to its normal hiring practices. State-mandated minimum requirements include a bachelor’s degree in the field of certification or related field, a 2.5 GPA, a passing score on the PRAXIS I (unless exempted based on qualifying SAT, ACT, or GRE scores), and clearance on the Georgia criminal background check. Once the applicant has been hired, GA TAPP staff review the applicant’s transcripts to ensure that he or she has the appropriate content background. Because the GA TAPP is not the only avenue to gain clear renewable certification, the local school system and the RESA determine the option that best fits the circumstances of each candidate, and some candidates are referred to other programs.

Although basic acceptance criteria are state-mandated, each RESA has its own variation on the selection process. In the NW RESA program, each district screens applicants on its own, although RESA staff might recommend a prospective candidate to a specific campus because, through their longstanding relationships with member districts, staff understand the needs and hiring criteria of each school system. In contrast, at the request of its member district, the Metro RESA pre-screens all applicants. This process includes a paper screening, a personality test, an interview with a panel of representatives of the Metro districts, and a question-and-answer session with a panel of first-year GA TAPP teachers.

Once applicants are accepted into a GA TAPP program, they apply to the state for Intern Certification and the program assigns them a Candidate Support Team (CST) made up of school and system-level staff who provide support for the duration of their internship.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

The Essentials of Effective Teaching is a required course for all GA TAPP candidates and most take it during the summer before they start teaching. This 80-hour class, based on Danielson’s framework, introduces candidates to best practices in Instructional Content and Practice, Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment, Instruction, and Professional and Ethical Practices. Each area has corresponding competencies in which candidates must demonstrate proficiency in order to pass the class. Through this course, GA TAPP teachers learn research-based exemplary practices in instructional pedagogy.

Additionally, to meet state requirements, candidates must take Introduction to Educating Exceptional Children and Youth and be able to demonstrate technology competencies, such as creating online activities and performance-based assessments, and aligning their curriculum with Georgia Technology standards. Also, candidates choosing to teach middle school have to take the Nature and Needs of the Middle School Learner course and the appropriate teaching reading and writing course.

The program also uses seminars, which are professional learning workshops designed to meet the candidates’ individual needs. For example, if a candidate’s mentor or supervisor notices that he or she is having difficulty managing pupils, a “Classroom Management” seminar could be recommended. These seminars are problem-based and aligned with Danielson’s framework. Candidates are required to attend a minimum of six seminars the first year and four the second year. Seminars also serve as a way to incorporate the latest research-based strategies and education trends.

All candidates participate in a practicum in a school that is culturally and socioeconomically different from the candidate’s home school. Candidates receive release time from their classroom. In addition to observing instructional strategies and programs, the candidate may observe procedures related to discipline, parental involvement, community support, classroom space, or other areas of interest. A conference follows each practicum to discuss and reflect on what was observed.

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

At both RESAs, the core members of the Candidate Support Team (CST) are a school-based mentor (a classroom teacher), school administrator (principal, vice principal), the system coordinator (a school system employee such as a human resources employee), and the RESA coordinator. Together, they ensure that the candidate receives daily support and supervision during the two-year internship. A support team may additionally include content experts, course instructors, and anyone else deemed helpful to support the candidate or advance his or her knowledge and skills.

The CST meets initially to review expectations with the candidate and then meets at regularly scheduled times and as many additional times as needed during the two-year training. Ongoing support is provided through a school-based mentor who observes frequently, provides specific feedback, and generally serves as a professional role model. Additionally, each candidate has a program supervisor assigned to him or her. The supervisor observes and meets frequently with the candidate, the school-based mentor, and the school administrator to discuss the candidate's progress and any additional support that may be needed. The school administrator and the system coordinator observe the candidate both formally and informally.

School-based mentoring by a classroom teacher is an essential part of the program, with candidates receiving a minimum of 100 hours the first year and 50 the second. The mentor, who receives a \$1,000 stipend for the first year and \$500 for the second, supports the candidate in a variety of ways, including in collecting evidence that the candidate has met the competencies required by the program and in organizing the program portfolio that will be part of the candidate's final assessment. On a regular basis, the mentor also observes the candidate in the classroom, coaches and demonstrates lessons, and facilitates reflective teaching opportunities. The mentor also arranges for the candidate to visit other teachers' classrooms and maintains and submits all records and forms required by GA TAPP.

The RESA coordinator and the rest of the CST are committed to the success of the candidate. Although there are many

"evaluations," both formal and informal, the basic purpose of the CST is to support the candidate by providing the feedback, resources, and strategies necessary for successful program completion. One candidate reports that "everyone in the program is available to help at anytime—and that includes my mentor, my RESA supervisor, even the coordinator of the program." Most of the candidates say they could not imagine being a new teacher without the kind of support they received through GA TAPP. One high school teacher—a GA TAPP grad—says that from the beginning of the program she felt that she was "set up to succeed."

Funding

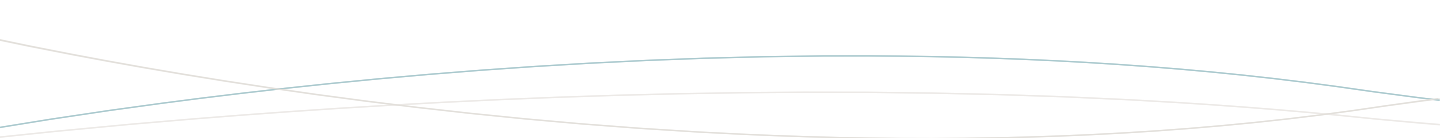
Helping to pay for the program is one way in which a hiring system can support its GA TAPP candidates. For example, a system may pay for the program in its entirety or may require the candidate to pay and arrange a payment plan. In some instances, a system and candidate each pay a portion of the cost. One system recently adopted a policy requiring candidates to pay back a portion of the fees if they do not fulfill their contract. At the Metro RESA, even though the member school system may pay, ultimately the candidate is responsible for the program fees.

Success Indicators

One of the best advertisements for GA TAPP is the successful teachers that graduate from the program. Superintendents, principals, and other related school personnel claim that GA TAPP teachers are as prepared as, if not better prepared than, traditionally trained teachers. In fact, two of the three new teachers voted "Teacher of the Year" in one school district were GA TAPP candidates. One alumnus now in his third year of teaching has been approached by fellow teachers and his principal to model some of his strategies for the other faculty on his campus.

Key Success Factors

The leaders of the GA TAPP program at both the NW and the Metro RESA do not just ask the candidates to master the four domains of planning and preparation, classroom environment,



instruction, and professional responsibilities—they model it. One reason this program has enjoyed so much success is that the people who are involved in the program, from the top down, truly value an open exchange of ideas. They know what their local school systems need because they ask, and then they listen. This ability to not just listen to major stakeholders, but to seek them out, probe and question, and really flush out the needs of the local school systems is a major success factor.

Another factor is the commitment to constantly evaluate and refine the program based on evidence of success. The RESAs have created forms, checklists, criteria, and rubrics for

all aspects of the program, providing them with a constant stream of feedback. This information is disseminated to relevant stakeholders (by email, through written correspondence, or meetings). After everyone has been consulted, decisions are proposed. This shared decision-making and responsibility model fosters tremendous buy-in at all levels.

There is a real passion and commitment to the program. One assistant superintendent notes that while the program itself might not be hard to replicate, "The heart, soul, and commitment at the highest levels might be harder to come by."

New York City Teaching Fellows, New York

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/ Who Pays
Elementary plus master's degree Secondary plus master's degree Special Education Bilingual Education	NYC DOE The New Teacher Project Area universities	2000	5,748 Number who have started teaching following preservice program	2,000	66% Female 34% Male 58% White 19% Afr. Am. 13% Hispanic 5% Asian Am. 5% Other	2-3 years	\$12,000 licensure plus master's District pays \$8,000 Candidate pays \$4,000

In 1999-2000, 15 percent of New York City's public school teachers and 60 percent of all new hires lacked teacher certification. The New York City Teaching Fellows (NYCTF) program was created in 2000 to recruit, select, and train talented professionals from outside the field of education to teach in City schools that were struggling to find highly qualified teachers.

After investigating alternative route models in other states, the New York City Department of Education decided to partner with The New Teacher Project, a national nonprofit organization that works with local education organizations to increase the number and maximize the effectiveness of public school teachers. The New Teacher Project runs the daily operations of the Teaching Fellows program, and the NYC Department of Education staff—director and four program managers—are responsible for policy direction and working with the schools and universities.

The Teaching Fellows program is grounded in two core assumptions: First, there is a substantial pool of talented individuals who have chosen other career options but who are capable of and interested in becoming excellent teachers. This pool can be tapped by offering a clear, expedited, and structured path into the teaching profession. Second, the alternative route to certification can and will meet high standards for teacher preparation and certification. It provides a distinct and innovative path for candidates to achieve the same high standards as are expected of those who go through traditional teacher education programs.

The program begins in the summer, with seven to nine weeks of preservice training for fellows. During this period, they participate in a combination of university-based course work and student teaching. They are then hired by the NYC Department of Education to serve as teacher of record at schools needing their content expertise. In addition to receiving district-funded mentoring during the first year, fellows take classes and receive additional support from one of the program's partner universities, of which there are currently 11. Classes and support are tailored to fellows' needs and schedule, and fellows earn a master's degree in the process.

Recruitment and Selection

Word-of-mouth has been the most effective means of recruitment, but one of the program's most distinctive recruitment efforts has taken place in the City's subways. Dissatisfied professionals riding to unfulfilling jobs see ads proclaiming that "your most important clients will carry backpacks, not briefcases" and "no one ever goes back 10 years later to thank a middle manager." In their personal statements about why they seek a career change, many program applicants say something about not feeling they are making a difference in "corporate America." The program also uses the Internet to market itself, but most applicants are local. New York has decreased its use of print media (e.g., newspaper ads) because it determined that this approach was not cost effective.

The program's minimum selection requirements align with the state's requirements and with entrance requirements for partner universities, in which fellows will need to enroll

as part of the program. Prospective fellows must have a bachelor's degree with a minimum overall GPA of 3.00, be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident with a green card, and speak English fluently. Applicants may not have completed an undergraduate- or graduate-level teacher education program or hold a current or expired New York State teaching certificate. The GPA requirement is not written in stone. Applicants with a lower GPA *can* be accepted into the program under certain circumstances; the deciding factor is that applicants have to be acceptable to the partner university at which they will take classes.

The program also works closely with the NYC Department of Education to identify areas of need, which change over time. The program sets quotas and matches candidates to the needs.

The entire application process is coordinated online, and applicants are notified within three weeks whether they can continue to the next stage of the selection process, a four-hour multistage "interview." At this stage, applicants must teach a five-minute sample lesson, produce a prompt-driven writing sample (e.g., a letter to parents) that is intended to reveal their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and to demonstrate how they use language, and, finally, participate in a one-on-one interview. Successful applicants are given their subject assignments and asked to enroll in the Fellows program. A computer system assigns them to a region, taking into consideration their subject area, schools' needs, and fellows' preferences. The New York City school system has 10 regions, and each college and university participating in the Teaching Fellows program serves fellows from a specific region. Thus, a fellow's teaching assignment dictates the institution of higher education at which he or she will enroll during the program. Once the fellows receive regional assignments they begin looking for a teaching position in that region, a process consisting of placement fairs, independent searches, and individual interviews facilitated by the Fellows program.

Prior to receiving the temporary state teaching license that allows them to be the teacher of record in a classroom, fellows must pass two state-required exams—the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test and Content Specialty Tests. The program

encourages candidates to take the exams as early as possible so that if they do not pass, they will have time to re-take the tests before the fall. Those fellows who don't pass until too late to start teaching in the fall may start to teach midyear if they subsequently pass the exams, although the program has not yet developed what it considers to be a satisfactory method for preparing midyear candidates.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

Preservice. Fellows start their 200-hour preservice training with two weeks of full-time study at their assigned university. Because fellows are expected to have content expertise before applying to the program, preservice program course work is pedagogically oriented. (The only exception are applicants who were not math majors, but who majored or have extensive professional experience in a related field and who are willing to teach math, which has been an exceptionally hard-to-staff content area for NYC schools. These fellows complete two additional weeks of preservice preparation and additional content requirements over the two years of course work that follows preservice. NYCTF currently admits 300-350 fellows annually to the math-immersion program.)

After two weeks of full-time classes, fellows shift to a combination of course work and field work. Each weekday morning they work as a student teacher at a NYC school where they are overseen by a "cooperating" teacher. Each afternoon they continue taking classes. And for two hours at the end of the day, groups of approximately 30 fellows come together for advisory time facilitated by a fellow adviser. In addition to imparting information and leading discussions about such essential topics as instructional design and delivery and classroom management, they help fellows reflect on their student teaching experiences, what they are learning in the course work, and how everything connects. To inform this process, the advisers also observe fellows during their morning field work. Employed by The New Teacher Project, advisers receive a \$6,200 stipend for their work between May and September.

University course work. Once fellows complete their preservice session and become the teacher of record in a

classroom, staff from The New Teacher Project and the NYC Department of Education step back and fellows' assigned university becomes their main point of information and support for the duration. Although specific course requirements can vary from one university to another, the general content provided across all of them is guided in part by the state's requirements for certification and in part by what the professors learn about the needs of fellows. *How* classes are taught is informed by the immediacy of the fellows' teaching responsibilities. A professor who knows that a fellow might need to apply what he or she learns in a Tuesday night university course to a high school chemistry class the next morning is likely to work harder to tie theory to practice in classroom discussions.

The number of fellows served by each university is determined by the number of teaching vacancies in the region it serves and by how many of the vacancies will be filled by a fellow as opposed to a standard hire. Thus, participating universities must remain flexible and be able to adjust to a fluctuating number of fellows from year to year. Each university employs one or more coordinators to manage its role in the Teaching Fellows program. This individual shepherds fellows through the next two years, plans the course work (e.g., decides if it's necessary to increase the sections of an assessment class in order to serve the higher number of fellows in a given year), and manages the university's field consultants. These consultants tend to be retired teachers or administrators, and per state requirements for an alternative route program, they must visit each fellow in his or her classroom at least once a month. In addition to offering feedback and guidance to the fellow, the consultants communicate with the university professors and the coordinator about what's going on in the classrooms they observe.

Most partner universities operate both traditional and alternative route teacher education programs, with alternative route programs especially prominent in high-need areas like mathematics and special education. Pace University, for example, has about as many students in traditional and alternative programs overall, but at its New York City campus almost 90 percent of candidates are in alternative programs.

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

In addition to the preservice support they receive from fellow advisers and the inservice support they receive from a university's field consultants, fellows can count on two additional sources of assistance.

Program Support. Experienced fellows provide continued support to candidates through e-mail and phone calls. Lead fellows identified at each school site provide orientation and some on-site assistance. The program also provides communication and support through a newsletter and periodic seminars and social events.

Mentors. In the program's start-up years, fellows received school-based mentoring, but the quality and amount was very inconsistent. Some teachers, while excellent in the classroom, are not necessarily good at working with other adults. Future program participants will profit from the Department of Education's decision to institute a mentoring system for all new teachers that follows the model of the New Teacher Center at the University of California, Santa Cruz. This model involves a formative assessment for which mentors receive specific training and which then guides individualized support. Full-time mentors each work with 17 new teachers as the model is being implemented in NYC for the 2004–05 school year. A challenge is to provide the amount of support required for so many new teachers across the system (650 in one region alone, including 235 fellows), and to match mentors within particular license areas (e.g., science).

Funding

The NYCTF program operates with a \$35 million budget from the New York Department of Education. The state has received two federal grants to subsidize the program at certain partner universities enabling them to expand their capacity to fill subject area shortages. Until September 2003, the program covered the entire cost for a fellow to participate. Now, each fellow, through a payroll deduction, pays \$4,000, one-third of the program cost. NYCTF understands the financial burden of changing careers and pays a nontaxable \$2,500 stipend for each fellow's participation in the preservice training. The

fellows become full-time teachers after the seven weeks (nine for people needing the extra math content) and receive full salary and benefits as employees of the NYC Department of Education.

Success Indicators

The program is filling a significant need in NYC, accounting for 30 percent of new hires in math. The popularity of the program is evident in the huge number of applications—around 17,000 a year. Its effectiveness is tracked through retention rates. About 90 percent of candidates complete their first full year as teacher of record and return for the second year. The program is working with partner universities to track longer-term completion and retention rates.

Key Success Factors

Program staff identify the following as having significantly contributed to program success thus far:

- » engaging The New Teacher Project;
- » targeting recruitment to a wide market with the message of “do something meaningful in your career”;
- » taking great care with selection;
- » building a big enough pool of applicants to allow selectivity in accepting candidates;
- » constantly reassessing the program and the school-system needs;
- » putting technical data systems in place ;
- » engaging the universities in the process early and often; and
- » working collaboratively with unions and regional representatives.

Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education, Chico, California

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/ Who Pays
Special Education	Cal. State Univ., Chico 57 Local Ed. Agencies Commission on Teacher Credentialing U.S. Dept. of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	1989	331	60	74% Female 26% Male 88% White 9% Hispanic 2% Native American 2% Asian Am. 15% Individuals with disabilities	2 years	\$10,000 average Candidate is responsible but may receive a scholarship of \$5,200-\$10,000

In 1987 the special education picture in California's 14 most-northern rural counties could be summed up in a single word: desperate. The sparsely populated region, spanning 43,000 square miles—an area slightly larger than Austria—had at least 60 special education teachers on emergency credentials and a much larger group of substitutes with no credentials at all. Individual county offices of education organized some courses locally in conjunction with California State University, Chico (CSUC), the sole higher education institution in the region providing special education preparation. But the curricular offerings lacked structure, frequency, sequence, and coherence. Professors made local visits only sporadically, and candidates had only rare opportunities to be on campus. Given these obstacles, it took roughly seven years to get the credential. Not surprisingly, few candidates stayed that long.

In response to this crisis, CSUC developed the Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education in 1989. It offers an alternative route program in the form of an education specialist internship. Its mission is “to improve the quality of rural special education services to pupils and their families.”

The partnership comprises CSUC, 57 local education agencies (including school districts, individual schools, and counties), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC), and the federal government. The Partnership Advisory Board provides program oversight and policy leadership. The Board consists of representatives of the partner groups, including a cross-section of professional roles, community and parent representatives, and university faculty. Regular communication ensures that

the university and each of the local education agencies share equally in decisions governing each local candidate's recruitment, selection, support, and competency verification.

The program begins with a preservice orientation on the CSUC campus. Program participants, or “interns,” then begin teaching full time while working toward a full credential by way of a highly structured, organized, sequential learning experience.

It typically takes two years to complete the program, including summer school on campus. During the school year, classes are offered on campus on the candidate's monthly release days and on one Saturday each semester, as well as online after the candidate's school day via real-time streaming video on the Web.

Recruitment and Selection

The program has an emphasis on attracting homegrown talent. In its recruitment efforts, the program deliberately targets groups that are underrepresented nationally as special education teachers (especially people with disabilities and men). And as the diversity of the region's students continues to increase, the program also actively recruits ethnically diverse candidates. Due to regional increases in rural drug abuse and poverty, the program has made it a priority to search for candidates with credentials to serve students with moderate-to-severe needs.

Many candidates in this program are career changers—notably from the military and the dot-com industry—or people re-entering the workforce. The average age is 40. Some candidates are drawn to the program because they have children of their own in special education. Others say they had always

wanted to teach but got sidetracked by better-paying jobs. A common denominator seems to be a certain level of maturity.

Candidates must meet a set of basic state requirements, including having a bachelor's degree with a GPA of at least 2.67, demonstration of subject-matter competency, and passing the California Basic Education Skills Test. Every candidate who meets the prescreening criteria goes through an extensive and intensive structured interview conducted by a team. Since the program is continual, interviews take place every two weeks. The interview protocol is inspired by the "Star" Teacher Selection Interview developed by the Haberman Educational Foundation—an instrument with a 95 percent predictive rate over its 35-year history. It helps to gauge such qualities as whether a person is persistent, is a problem solver, is protective of learners and learning, can translate theory into practice, and can use successful approaches with students considered at risk of failure. An essay portion of the interview assesses writing ability. And the process also includes role-playing situations.

The selection interview is specifically tailored to rural special education teaching. It seeks to evaluate, for example, a candidate's reasons for becoming a teacher and working with exceptional children and prior commitment to exceptional children. It determines a candidate's skills in communication and collaboration through such questions as: What role does collaboration play in special education? How would you create a climate of fairness and equity in a diverse classroom? "The interview process makes it clear to candidates that this is a rigorous program," says a program adviser. "Before we used it, candidates would get into the program and then say, 'I had no idea this would be so hard!'"

Team members score interview results using a rubric and candidates who score below a cutoff point are not accepted. Candidates who do not make the initial cut are assigned to a second team for another interview. "We don't want their whole career dependent on one interview," says the adviser.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

Each candidate's goals and his or her action plan for achieving those goals—including course work, individual

assistance, and professional development opportunities—are documented and tracked in a personal roadmap called the Individualized Induction Program (IIP). The entire program is anchored in standards: the California standards for the teaching profession, the education specialist standards for earning the credential, and the California academic content standards for students. Each IIP is designed to ensure that by the end of the program, the candidate meets all the standards. The candidate's course work must follow a prescribed scope and sequence of courses, but substitutions are allowed, based on a candidate's background and experience. The candidate's portfolios and reflective logs are organized around the standards.

The program begins with a one-day orientation, dubbed survival training, in which candidates become acquainted with the instructors, the university supervisors, and—if possible—the local support providers (i.e., mentors). During the orientation, candidates also begin to get to know each other.

Throughout the program, discussions are tailored to suit the issues candidates confront in their daily teaching. The traditional time gap between course work and the chance to put what's being learned into practice is virtually nonexistent in this program, with candidates continually traveling an arc from academic theory to trying it out with their pupils, and then, back in the university classroom, reflecting with instructors and peers on what worked, what didn't, and why.

The curriculum is geared to pupil outcomes. Under the program's Pupil Assessment Project, for example, candidates focus on four or five of their most challenging pupils and how to move them forward. The emphasis is on using assessment to support pupil growth.

Overall, more emphasis is placed on teaching strategies than on content. "We are a fifth-year program, meaning that candidates come in with subject-matter content, so the focus is on pedagogy," says the program director. "However, it's very content-rich. And the fact is, both content and pedagogy are special-education specific."

The cluster of courses and field experiences required for California's Level 1 credential covers a range of critical how-tos, such as how to manage the physical structure and content of learning environments to meet pupils' behavioral and academic needs; how to work collaboratively to construct a pupil's Individualized Education Program; and how to approach relationships with paraprofessionals. The cluster also covers assessment and evaluation, methods for teaching math, technology in specialized instruction, and laws and regulations in special education.

Level 2 requirements include instructional strategies for behaviorally and emotionally disturbed students and advanced curriculum content for teaching pupils with both mild-moderate and moderate-severe disabilities.

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

The individualized web of candidate support provided collaboratively by district and university staff is the soul of this partnership program.* Not only do these relationships provide a safety net for the candidate during the high wire act of simultaneously learning and teaching, but they enable high caliber learning experiences for pupils by bringing layers of expertise to bear in meeting pupil needs, even in remote locations.

The candidate's support team consists of CSUC-based program coordinators and supervisors and local mentors and administrators. Supervisors are university instructors who facilitate the support network in their assigned region. Each supervisor works with 10-15 mentors and roughly the same number of candidates, whom they follow throughout the four semesters. They visit candidates onsite at least five times a semester to observe, coach, model, and mentor. Between visits, they maintain phone and email contact. Besides linking with mentors, supervisors communicate and develop rapport with school principals and other district or county education administrators. Many of today's supervisors were once candidates themselves. Mentors, or local support providers, are

*For the theoretical underpinnings of the support structure, program leaders refer to Tharp and Gallimore's Triadic Model of Assisted Performance (1988), which is based on the Kamehameha Elementary Education Program, a 15-year continuous research and development program.

local teachers or district staff members with at least three years of successful teaching experience. They are nominated by county or district administrators and usually work one-on-one with a candidate—matched by credential and expertise. Mentors attend training at the university, meet weekly with the candidate for the first two semesters, and work with a university supervisor. The mentor gets release time and a stipend to function as the candidate's coach, consultant, and critical friend to help reduce stress, build skills, and meet the needs of the moment.

Principals and other local administrators are also integral members of the candidate's support team. At the end of the program, the supervisor and principal must both sign off on required competencies for the candidate to receive a credential.

The program's evaluation of a candidate's readiness for the credential models the kinds of assessment the candidate is learning to conduct with his or her own pupils. The evaluation incorporates the following measures:

- » a GPA of at least 3.0 must be maintained in all courses;
- » artifacts from course work, including, in the candidate's portfolio, a detailed reflective journal tied to standards, as well as individualized lesson plans driven by analyses of ongoing pupil assessment data and critiqued by supervisors, mentors, and the employer;
- » formative observation feedback, using a research-based format, that documents growth and skills in teaching;
- » results from individual progress conferences between candidate and faculty that are held at least twice a year;
- » results from conferences among supervisor, mentor, employer, and candidate that occur at critical junctures during internship placements; and
- » a final evaluation of competencies made by the supervisor, employer, and related program faculty.

Finally, each candidate presents his or her portfolio in an oral presentation for a peer-review session. Faculty then provide written feedback and make a recommendation regarding state certification.

Funding

Each partner contributes to the program. The university provides televised or Web-based courses, regional supervision, and separate course sections for candidates. Public schools guarantee candidates 10 paid release days each year to attend classes. Grants from the CCTC and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services support partial tuition stipends, the services of support providers (mentors and candidate adviser), and program coordination and evaluation.

Success Indicators

This program can boast an unprecedented feat: It has eliminated special education emergency credentials in its sprawling service area. Since 1990, the program has had 331 graduates, and 91 percent of them now teach in the region's schools. That rate of local retention has held steady despite the intensifying seriousness of pupil needs over time and despite the mobility afforded by a credential that qualifies one to teach at any K-12 level and across special education settings. So far, some 206,875 special education pupils have gained credentialed teachers.

The program has also had a ripple effect throughout individual schools, as veteran general education teachers—often struggling to keep up with changed standards—tap into the cutting-edge knowledge and skills brought to their sites by way of the CSU Chico-linked special education program. "I see other teachers coming by when I come to a school," says one university instructor. Administrators see this, too, and build on it to keep their sites more current. They ask candidates to do consultations and modeling with other teachers, for example, or to present at board meetings.

Key Success Factors

The partnership leaders credit five guiding principles for driving the program's success over time:

Attract candidates by raising, not lowering, standards. From the outset, the partners asserted the need to draw a different clientele—people more suited to meeting kids' needs—by raising standards for admission, university curriculum, and

candidate supervision and performance. They set, and have not wavered from, twin goals of high quality and ready access.

Ensure collaborative decisions. The public schools and the university make mutual decisions. A critical step in making the program a success was gaining the support of the regional school districts for a structured, centralized program. By allocating funds for monthly teacher release days, districts agreed to give up the courses they were offering locally. But it was not a tough sell, since administrators saw hope in the new program for ending the emergency credential crisis.

Evaluate for continuous improvement. In the face of continual challenges, the program remains flexible, using evaluative data (including feedback from students and others throughout the region) to identify and solve problems. The use of data to tailor the program so that it meets candidate needs has resulted in a rising retention rate over time. One administrator emphasizes that information collected is not just quantitative. "We try to collect candidates' voices. The survey at the end of each class is not just their rating but their words and their emotions connected to this course experience. Honesty is important. We break down the objectives of the courses and ask what students are not feeling satisfied with."

Pursue high quality personnel. Program directors, instructors, supervisors, and advisers have extensive public school experience and excellent academic backgrounds. They understand highly effective teaching and the demands of a rural internship and are committed to offering stability through their roles. All involved credit the "grow-your-own" approach the program has used. In effect, it's a case of program administration modeling the kind of culture it strives to nurture in the program itself. "We have all been mentored," says one program staff member. "This program has done a remarkable job of recognizing talent in our own backyard and encouraging and supporting people to be innovative."

Pursue external funding. Annual grant writing has secured state and federal funds that have underwritten management, advisement, coordination, regional travel, program materials, support provider stipends and training, candidate stipends, and program evaluation.

Wichita Area Transition to Teaching, Wichita, Kansas

Certification/Degree	Partners	Program Initiated	Total Program Graduates	2004 Candidate Cohort	Candidate Demographics	Program Duration	Cost per Candidate/ Who Pays
Secondary with master's degree option	Wichita State Univ. Wichita Public Schools	1992	234	26	65% Female 35% Male 85% White 15% Other	2 years	Program with licensure \$4,800 Plus master's degree \$6,400 Candidate pays

During the late 1980s Wichita State University (WSU) was reporting that fewer people were entering the teaching profession at the secondary level through traditional teacher preparation programs. At the same time, high-need urban districts like the Wichita Public Schools were experiencing teacher shortages generally, and most specifically in content areas such as science, mathematics, and foreign languages. In response, WSU, in partnership with the Peace Corps, implemented in 1992 an experimental alternative route to teacher certification. The program provided returning Peace Corps volunteers with an alternative path toward becoming a certified teacher and provided the community with teachers who had lived in a foreign culture and were able to bring those experiences to the learning environment.

Based, in part, on the success of the WSU-Peace Corps partnership, the Kansas State Department of Education granted approval for WSU to expand the experimental program to include non-Peace Corps candidates beginning in the summer of 1997. At that time, WSU and Wichita Public Schools (WPS) received a three-year Title II grant to develop a program for an alternative route to teacher certification and to increase the number of alternative route candidates in high-need teaching areas. In this effort lay the foundation for the Wichita Area Transition to Teaching (WATT) program, which began in 2001. That same year, in response to aerospace industry layoffs in Wichita, the city of Wichita and the Raytheon Aircraft Industry provided a grant to enhance the program.

WATT now serves some 40 Wichita-area school districts, enabling them to hire qualifying noncertified program participants to teach in content or specialty areas for which

a district has had difficulty finding qualified applicants. Program candidates participate in a two-year course of study leading to full certification for teaching at the middle and high school level in the state of Kansas. The program begins with a summer preservice session and provides instruction and support to candidates while they serve as a teacher of record during the subsequent two school years. A three-year program, which results in a master's degree in curriculum and instruction, is also available.

The WATT program is managed by the Transition to Teaching Office in the College of Education at Wichita State University in collaboration with several other departments and agencies. The program, which employs a director, an assistant, and three part-time peer consultants, maintains a collaborative relationship with the school districts it serves. As one district human resources representative explains, her district needs WATT in order to fill its openings and WATT needs the district in order to place its candidates. WATT also maintains open communication channels and cooperates with the Kansas State Department of Education because licensing standards and regulations impact the requirements for the alternative certification route candidates.

Candidates come to WATT from a variety of fields. Recently, the largest number of candidates have come from business-related fields. Many substitute teachers have also entered the program.

Recruitment and Selection

A key WATT objective is to recruit and place midcareer professionals and recent college graduates in high-need

teaching positions. To find the best-qualified candidates, WATT has developed a rigorous selection process that begins with a transcript analysis. Applicants must have a degree in the field in which they want to teach, but an analysis of their transcript yields information about their relative *mastery* of the relevant content. Analysis results are used to create a "plan of study" for the candidate that lists any deficiencies in the major content area, which candidates must make up within the two-year program period. Applicants are then interviewed by the program director who determines if an applicant is qualified to be a candidate. In order to participate in the program, qualified candidates must pass the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST) in reading, writing, and mathematics. (Once in the program, candidates must pass the Praxis subject content test[s] at the end of their first year of teacher, and before program completion, they must pass the Principles of Learning and Teaching [PLT] test.) Finally, prior to being accepted, applicants must be admitted to Wichita State University Graduate School and have a job offer from an accredited school district.

This latter requirement is tied to the program's intent to place candidates in high-need teaching positions. WATT conducts several activities designed to help qualified candidates meet this requirement: It hosts a job fair where candidates are introduced to potential employers. The program director works to match candidates with districts that have vacancies in high-need areas. Staff have also produced a booklet on interviewing skills and they host a seminar to assist candidates with interviewing procedures. After securing a teaching position in his or her field of licensure and appropriate grade level, the applicant officially becomes a part of the WATT program.

Candidate Training: Content and Pedagogy

Each candidate must successfully complete three summer courses (Creating Effective Classrooms, Introduction to the Exceptional Child, and Growth and Development) before WSU can recommend him or her to the state for the provisional certification required for the candidate to become a teacher of record and begin his or her clinical practice for the school year.

While serving as teachers of record, candidates participate in an internship course each semester. The course is a biweekly new-teacher seminar that caters to the needs of the candidates as they become immersed in the classroom. In addition to their four internship classes, during their two years of teaching, candidates take seven professional education courses: Creating Effective Classrooms, Introduction to the Exceptional Child, Theories of Growth and Development, Learning and Reading Strategies, Multicultural Education, Foundations of Education, and Curriculum Models and Processes. They are also expected to engage in university course work according to their individual plan of study, and to attend district-sponsored professional development activities as prescribed by the program and their employer district.

The Kansas State Department of Education has established 13 performance standards for all Kansas teachers, and the WATT aligns its own candidate performance standards with these state standards. The required courses within the alternative route to teacher certification program are also aligned to the state standards.

Mentoring, Supervision, and Support

The third and fourth WATT program objectives relate to ensuring that candidates receive adequate support during their two-year classroom experience. Once a candidate is hired by a school district, the program requests that the principal at the candidate's school assign a mentor. Written suggestions on how to select appropriate mentors are provided to the district and the principal of the school. In addition to having a school-based mentor, each candidate is paired with a peer consultant. WATT certification candidates receive a minimum of 10 observations with written feedback during their first year and another 10 the second year.

As noted earlier, WSU employs three part-time peer consultants to assist the WATT Director, who also serves as a peer consultant. Wichita Public Schools also employs its own peer consultants to assist with *all* new teachers in the district, and one of these consultants works with WATT teachers as well. It can sometimes be difficult for the WATT peer consultants to make the required number of visits to candidates who work

across the broad geographical area served by the program. Therefore, district superintendents, principals, and mentors help with classroom observations.

WSU faculty members also support candidates through the weekly internship classes. Additionally, the program makes use of videoconferences for face-to-face communication throughout the week for candidates in remote areas of the state.

The fourth and fifth program objectives relate to ensuring that a high percentage of WATT candidates will be successful during their first- and second-year teaching experiences. In cooperation with WSU's Office of Student Support Services, the program monitors the successful completion of clinical practice for all alternative route candidates. The hiring district, the university or district mentor, and the WATT director monitor candidates and provide evaluation-based support throughout the program. Candidates applying for exit from the program must complete an application and submit supporting documentation at the end of the second year of teaching. By this time, candidates will have been evaluated using the Teacher Work Sample (TWS), Administrator Performance Evaluation, Mentor Observation Assessment, the district contract renewal process, faculty assessment, and self-reflections. The WATT director reviews the applications and a certification clerk within WSU's College of Education completes a certification audit. Candidates must also pass the Principles of Learning and Teaching test at the conclusion of the program before final licensure.

Funding

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The tuition cost for the two-year WATT program is \$4,800, plus books and test fees. (The PPST test costs about \$130. Praxis content area tests are about \$80 each, and the Principals of Teaching and Learning test costs about \$100).

A master's degree, which includes licensure, requires 10 additional hours. Therefore the three-year program will cost approximately \$6,400, plus tests and books.

Success Indicators

Since 1992, 259 candidates have completed the WATT program (including the 41 Peace Corps fellows who participated in its first incarnation). Over the years, the program has had a 90 percent completion rate, and 85 percent of the candidates who have completed the program since 1992 have remained in education. The WATT director also reports that over 95 percent of WATT teachers are placed in high-need teaching positions based on requests from participating districts.

Both anecdotal and quantitative data point to WATT's success in meeting its objective of developing "competent, caring teachers." On the anecdotal side, school administrators who work with WATT teachers describe them as assets, praising their maturity and overall involvement in school and community activities. WATT has also received reports that its teachers share new ideas and teaching tips with veteran teachers. Districts that employ a teacher prepared in this program tend to ask for additional WATT teachers when vacancies occur.

Some empirical data also indicate program success. A majority of all WATT teachers received "proficient" or "distinguished" final ratings from their peer consultants on each of the components included on the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development's Professional Practices scale used to assess levels of performance in planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities.

Key Success Factors

Alternative route candidates cite as a significant program strength the opportunity to spend most of the two-year program in the classroom teaching. They also acknowledge that the salary and benefits attached to being a teacher of record is an important factor.

Program staff believe the job fair also contributes to candidate success. In 2002, the WATT produced its fair for 36 school

districts and placed 53 new teachers in accredited schools for the 2002-2003 fall and midterm, exceeding the program goal of recruiting 50 new teachers.

Overall, the success of the WATT program lies in using the cohort model, its choice of class offerings, the availability of evening and weekend classes (e.g., the internship courses are offered every other Saturday during the two years), and the level of personal attention and support provided to its teacher candidates.

While the WATT program has already achieved success, program staff point to trends that may further strengthen the program over time. A recently designed statewide Transition

to Teaching Program has brought the state face-to-face with the challenges of implementing an alternative route to licensure. As more students enter the state program and as more institutions participate in the preparation of alternative candidates, it will likely bring about some changes in state regulations that guide this delivery model. Strong communication between participating institutions and school districts, collection of data, and continued statewide assessment of alternative route candidate performance will provide a foundation for the state of Kansas to effectively align and evaluate education performance standards with alternative route programs.

Acknowledgments

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An external advisory panel provided feedback to refine the study scope and prioritize issues to investigate. Members included Vicki Bernstein, New York City Teaching Fellows; Emily Feistritzer, National Center for Alternative Certification; Meryl Kettler, Regional XIII, Texas; Joan Baratz-Snowden, American Federation of Teachers; Cyndy Stephens, Georgia Professional Standards Commission; and Ken Zeichner, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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This guide was written, designed, and based on a report by WestEd.

WestEd is a nonprofit research, development, and service agency committed to improving learning at all stages of life, both in school and out. WestEd has offices across the United States and also serves as one of the nation's ten regional educational laboratories.

WestEd's partner in developing this series of research reports and innovation guides is Edvance. Created by the American Productivity and Quality Center, Edvance is a resource for process and performance improvement with a focus on benchmarking, knowledge management, performance measurement, and quality improvement initiatives in education.

The six programs cooperating in the development of this guide and the report from which it is drawn were generous with both their time and attention to the project. We would like to thank the district superintendents and the many district staff members who were instrumental in coordinating and participating in the site visits that inform the report and this guide.

Alternative Certification Program

School District of
Hillsborough County
901 East Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33602
<http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/>
Cathy Jones
Program Director

Region XIII Educator Certification Program

5701 Springdale Rd.
Austin, TX 78723
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Becky Washington
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Metro RESA Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program

1870 Teasley Drive
Smyrna, GA 30080
<http://www.mresa.org/>
Phyllis S. Payne
Coordinator of Alternative Programs

Northwest RESA Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program

3167 Cedartown Highway SE
Rome, GA 30161
<http://www.nwmaresa.com/>
Betsy Dellenback
Linda Segars
Coordinators

New York City Teaching Fellows Program

New York City Department
of Education
65 Court Street, Room 322
Brooklyn, NY 11201
<http://www.nycteachingfellows.org/>
Vicki Bernstein
Director of Alternative Certification

Northeastern California Partnership for Special Education

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Appendix A: Research Methodology

The project methodology is an adaptation of the four-phase benchmarking process used by the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC), including case descriptions of individual alternative route teacher preparation programs and a cross-site analysis of key findings. While classic benchmarking looks for best or promising practices, using quantitative measures and comparisons among organizations, alternative route programs are too new to fully support this methodology. A brief description of this project's adapted methodology follows.*

Plan

First, a conceptual framework was developed from an analysis of research on teacher preparation, including alternative route programs. Experts in teacher preparation and alternative route programs were recruited to serve on an external advisory panel, which provided feedback to refine the framework and prioritize issues to investigate. The resulting study scope guided all aspects of the study (see figure 2 on page 5).

Site selection was a multistep process to ensure that the guide would feature an array of practices covering the elements of the framework and would represent a variety of geographic locations and contexts with which district administrators could identify. A list of possible sites was compiled through primary and secondary research conducted by Edvance, the education

nonprofit created by APQC, and by WestEd and the expert advisory panel. All had some promising practices in place, required that candidates enter the program with at least a bachelor's degree, and had candidates work as the teacher of record as part of the program.

To narrow the selection, a screening template was developed to systematically analyze the weighted criteria for site selection identified by the advisers. The factors considered were whether the program had an operational track record beyond three years, was designed to meet local needs, gave credit to applicants with previous experience and skills, was field-based, appointed mentors to support candidates, tracked program retention and completion, and monitored student and teacher demographics. Multiple points were possible on each of these factors.

The template was completed for sixteen programs for which data were available based on public documents,

* American Productivity and Quality Center. (2001). *Benchmarking in education: Pure and simple*. Houston, Tex.: Author.

such as program marketing materials, reports, and program Web sites, supplemented with targeted phone interviews with program staff. The six programs that were selected had relatively high ratings on the template. In addition, selection balanced different types of programs (e.g. district-based, regional, university partnerships), and geographic locations.

Collect Data

Collecting detailed descriptive information from program staff, partners, and participants was key to understanding the program's practices, the outcomes or impact achieved, and lessons learned from which others could benefit. The major steps to this phase were finalizing the site visit interview guide based on the study scope, and arranging and conducting program visits to the programs.

Each of the six sites hosted a two-day site visit that included interviews with administrators, program participants, and partners as well as observation of events if scheduling permitted. During the site visits, these key personnel were asked questions from the site visit discussion guide tailored to their role group. In addition, artifacts from the sites, such as applications, planning tools, and interview protocols, were collected to provide concrete examples of program practices. The study

team collated the information collected during the site visits and developed a case study for each site.

Analyze and Report

The project team analyzed all collected data to understand the promising practices uncovered throughout the benchmarking project, both within and across programs. Four key findings discussed in the final report emerged from the cross-site analysis.

Two products resulted from this research: a report of the findings and this practitioner's guide. The report provides an analysis of key findings across sites, a detailed description of each site, a collection of artifacts, and key project documents. The practitioner's guide is a summary of the report intended for broad distribution.

Adapt

Ultimately, readers of this guide will need to select, adapt, and implement practices that meet their individual needs and contexts. The guide will be broadly distributed nationwide through presentations at national and regional conferences, as well as through national associations and networks. The guide and report are also accessible online at <http://www.ed.gov/admins/tchrqual/recruit/altroutes/index.html>.



Appendix B: Resources

The Gallup Organization includes human resources development in education as a focus area. It offers tools and assistance for recruitment, selection, and development of teachers and principals. Its TeacherInsight Interview™ tool is used in candidate selection in some sites in this guide.

<http://education.gallup.com/>

The Haberman Educational Foundation, Inc. promotes research-based models for identifying teachers and principals, particularly those suited to serve students at risk and in poverty. "The Star Teacher Interview" is designed to identify teacher candidates who are more likely to succeed.

<http://www.habermanfoundation.org/>

The National Center for Alternative Certification, established in 2003, serves as a "one-stop" clearinghouse of alternative-route information for policymakers, researchers, program administrators, and prospective teachers. The Web site provides easy access to detailed information about policies and about individual alternative route programs in each state. A searchable database is tailored for individuals seeking to become teachers. The National Center provides technical assistance and outreach to states, localities, and other entities wanting to create high-quality alternative certification programs or to upgrade existing programs, to Transition-to-Teaching grant recipients, and to policymakers developing plans for alternative certification initiatives. A call center

answers questions about alternative certification; the toll-free telephone number is 1-866-778-2784.

<http://www.teach-now.org/>

The National Council on Teacher Quality advocates for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state, and local levels, including raising the standards for entry into the profession while eliminating obstacles that keep many talented individuals from considering a career in teaching. The Council compiles a resources feature on alternative certification, including recent developments and "places to watch."

<http://www.nctq.org/>

The New Teacher Center (NTC) at the University of California, Santa Cruz, addresses the pressing national need for new teacher and administrator induction programs, as well as quality professional development for educators at all stages of their careers. The NTC has developed a formative assessment system for new teachers, and it provides training and resource materials—print, video, and online. The NTC also conducts research on induction and facilitates a network of researchers.

<http://www.newteachercenter.org/>

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national nonprofit organization that partners with education entities to increase the number of outstanding individuals who become public school teachers and create environments for all educators that maximize their impact

on student achievement. Since 1997, TNTP staff have worked with school districts, colleges of education, and state departments of education to design and deliver alternative route programs that meet local needs.

<http://www.tntp.org/>

The Teaching Commission is a diverse, bipartisan group comprising 19 leaders in government, business, philanthropy, and education. Established and chaired

by Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., the former chair of IBM, the commission works to improve student performance and close America's achievement gap by transforming the way in which America's public school teachers are prepared, recruited, retained, and rewarded. The Commission's report with four broad recommendations provides the framework within which it encourages innovation and reports progress around the country.

<http://www.theteachingcommission.org/>



Notes



¹ Alternative teacher preparation programs like those described in this guide are aimed at candidates who enter the program with at least a bachelor's degree. Other types of preparation programs serve classroom paraprofessionals who do not yet have a bachelor's degree and would like to become a teacher.

² Luekens, M. T., Lyter, D. M. and Fox, E. E. (2004). *Teacher attrition and mobility; Results from the teacher follow-up survey, 2000–01* (NCES 2004–301). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

³ Esch, C. E. and Shields, P. M. (2002). *Who is teaching California children?* Santa Cruz, CA: The Center for Teaching and Learning; Shields, P. M., Esch, C. E., Humphrey, D. C., Wechsler, M. E., Chang-Ross, C. M., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Tiffany-Morales, J. D., and Woodworth, K. R. (2003). *The status of the teaching profession 2003*. Santa Cruz, Calif.: The Center for Teaching and Learning.

⁴ Teacher certification is a state responsibility. Each state authorizes routes in addition to establishing standards and criteria for certification. Background information and state-by-state listings can be found on the National Center for Alternative Certification Web site: <http://www.teach-now.org/overview.cfm/>.

⁵ The National Center for Education Information developed a classification for categorizing the alternative routes to teacher certification as program variations increased and as program reporting required more consistency. In 2004, the classifications ranged from Class A to Class K. Class A is the designation for programs designed to attract talented individuals with a bachelor's degree to a formal program

of instruction and mentor-supervision with no requirement as to subject area need or shortage of teachers. Class K is the designation for avenues to certification that accommodate specific populations for teaching, such as Teach for America and Troops-to-Teachers. For a detailed description of the criteria for each class, see the National Center for Alternative Certification Web site: <http://www.teach-now.org/frmClassificationOfAltRtes.asp>.

⁶ Reviews of research generally conclude that the most successful alternative programs tend to have high entrance standards; afford extensive mentoring and supervision; give extensive pedagogical training in instruction, management, curriculum, and working with diverse students; provide plenty of practice in lesson planning and teaching prior to a candidate taking on full responsibility as a teacher; maintain high exit standards, and develop strong partnerships (Allen, M. [2003]. *Eight questions on teacher preparation: What does the research say?* Denver: Education Commission of the States; Humphrey, D. C. and Bo-setti, K. R. [2004]. *What do alternative certification participants get? Implementation challenges*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, Calif.; Wilson, S. M., Floden, R. E., and Ferrini-Mundy, J. [February, 2001]. *Teacher preparation research: Current knowledge, gaps, and recommendations*. Seattle: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy, University of Washington; Zeichner, K. and Schulte, A. [2001]. What we know and don't know from peer-reviewed research about alternative teacher certification programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52, (4), 266–282).

⁷ National Center for Alternative Certification: <http://www.teach-now.org/overview.cfm>

