

Beginning Teachers
from Florida Teacher Preparation Programs

**A Report on State Approved Teacher Preparation Programs
with Results of Surveys of Program Completers**

A Report Jointly Prepared by

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It is difficult for policy analysts to bring themselves up to speed in areas as complex as educator preparation and certification. The same people at the DOE who develop and maintain these programs were also superb guides through the process for us outsiders. They demonstrated patience and understanding over our seeming incorrigibility. Would we ever get it right?

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Beginning Teachers from Florida Teacher Preparation Programs

Introduction

Florida's Need for Teachers

Florida's need for teachers is expressed in both quantity and quality. In School Year 2006-07, there were more than 168,000 teachers in Florida public school classrooms, a two percent increase over the previous year.¹ Approximately 16,878 teaching positions need to be filled in 2007-08. Of these, most are in elementary education and exceptional student education. Between 2007-08 and 2016-17 Florida will need to fill between 17,000 and 23,500 classroom teacher positions per year – a total of more than 200,000. This represents nearly 120% of the size of the entire 2006 teacher workforce.

The projected need for 2007-08 was significantly lower than for 2006-07, the first year the class size amendment was implemented at the school level. This drop in need (although 17,000 is still a significant number of effective teachers to recruit) was due to a large and unforeseen drop in population growth and, in some part, due to districts doing a better job than even they anticipated in meeting class size reduction requirements. The Department instituted a number of significant recruitment efforts both in the state and around the nation, many of which were targeted at critical shortage areas, and all of which were based on input from school district recruiters. Many of these were continued leading up to 2007-08. Coupled with improved local efforts at recruiting qualified candidates, vacancy numbers have dropped from the first day of school each year since 2005-06 (2,101) to 1,946 in 2006-07, and 1,158 in 2007-08.²

Teacher Preparation and Certification in Florida

Our K-12 education system is focused on improving achievement for all students, and the key factor in that achievement is the quality of the teachers providing instruction to those students. Therefore, when examining the programs that prepare teachers in a state like Florida where we have experienced a need for thousands of new teachers each year, it is important to understand that Florida's systems are based on two key principles: maintaining high standards and recognizing options. Those principles drive both our certification structure (how individuals become certified or licensed) and our approval of teacher education programs (how individuals learn to teach). Florida has a two-tiered certification system, which provides for an individual to begin teaching under a non-renewable Temporary Certificate by demonstrating subject matter knowledge, during which time professional education and examinations are completed for the Professional Certificate. The Professional Certificate requires that candidates demonstrate mastery in three areas: (1) general knowledge, (2) subject matter knowledge, and (3) professional preparation and education competence. For a brief description of all of Florida's pathways to certification and the options for demonstrating mastery in each of the three required areas, please see the *Pathways to Certification* document in the Appendix.

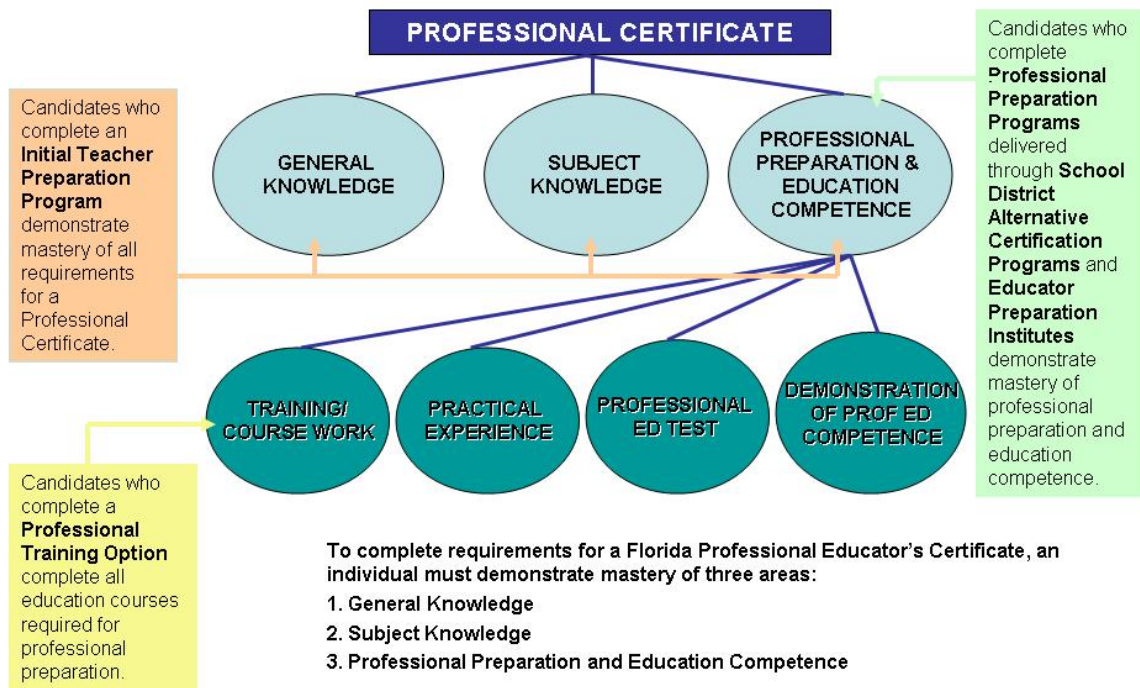
¹ Much of the material in this section is adapted from The Florida Department of Education, Miller, Martha "Projected Number of Teachers Needed Florida Public Schools February 2007" retrieved on September 8, 2007, 2PM from http://www.fldoe.org/evaluation/pdf/tchr_proj_feb07_text_rpt.pdf

² Data Source: Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development and Retention's annual district recruiter survey.

Again, under the same guiding principles, The Florida Legislature and State Board of Education have provided for multiple types of programs designed to prepare teachers for Florida’s classrooms. These include:

- Initial Teacher Preparation Programs (s. 1004.04, F.S.)
- Professional Preparation Programs offered through
 - o Educator Preparation Institutes (s. 1004.85, F.S.)
 - o District Alternative Certification Programs (s. 1012.56, F.S.)
- The Professional Training Option (Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.).

These programs are all approved by the Department of Education based on the regulations cited above and are designed to provide candidates from different backgrounds with routes through which they can meet the preparation requirements for issuance of a Florida Professional Educator’s Certificate in the area they wish to teach. The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the types of approved teacher preparation programs and the certification process.



Sections 1004.04, 1004.85, and 1012.56, Florida Statutes

Initial teacher preparation programs (ITPs) are those that typically terminate in a bachelor’s or master’s degree in education. However, what distinguishes these program completers from others is that they have completed a program in one or more specific subject area(s) and will qualify for a Professional Certification upon program completion. At the time of this publication, there are 389 initial teacher preparation programs offered by 34 Florida state universities, independent colleges, and community colleges (those authorized to offer bachelor’s degrees). Institutions offering an ITP programs are also authorized to offer an approved Professional Training Option (many times delivered as a minor in education) to degree seekers outside of the college of education or as a post-baccalaureate program of study.

To enroll in a Professional Preparation Program, an individual must already hold a bachelor's degree. These programs were conceived to help primarily with critical shortage areas in secondary education where a content major in the areas of arts and sciences could be paired with intense pedagogical training to move teachers without delay into the classroom with the tools they need to become effective. These programs are referred to as "alternative certification" programs and are provided through approved Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) at 26 community colleges and 4 state universities and delivered through district alternative certification programs (DACPs) by all of Florida's school districts.

Because of Florida's two-tier certification system, many individuals receive their teacher "preparation" during their first years of teaching. Only teachers employed by the school district and who hold a Temporary Certificate may enroll in a district's Professional Preparation Program. Over half of the participants in EPIs are currently employed teachers, and a large number of individuals enrolled in ITP programs have completed one or more years of teaching at the time of completion. Therefore, Florida's teacher preparation programs not only contribute potential new teachers to fill vacancies in Florida, but they also respond to the needs of early career teachers by providing them the means to complete their teacher preparation and retaining them in the classroom while they work toward earning a Florida Professional Certificate.

The Report

Section 1004.04(5), Florida Statutes, authorizes ITPs and requires that:

[by] January 1 of each year, the Department of Education shall report ... information for each postsecondary educational institution that has state-approved programs of teacher education to the Governor, the State Board of Education, the Commissioner of Education, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, all Florida postsecondary teacher preparation programs, and interested members of the public. This report must analyze the data and make recommendations for improving teacher preparation programs in the state.

Additionally, Section 1004.85, Florida Statutes, authorizing EPIs, and Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C., which implements approval processes for all types of teacher preparation programs, require that continued approval of teacher preparation programs of each type be based in part on the satisfaction of program completers and their subsequent school district employers with the level of preparedness for teaching provided by their respective programs. This report is published in fulfillment of Section 1004.04, F.S., requirements. It is also provided to assist all institutions with approved programs in meeting their continued approval requirements in the area of completer and employer satisfaction, by annually providing high-level, state-wide data in these performance areas that lead institutions to do further and more in-depth study.

This report is designed to provide information related to the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in Florida by focusing on the early professional experiences of completers from three types of programs described earlier in the introduction, ITP programs and Professional Preparation Programs offered through EPIs and DACPs. (Note: Professional Training Options were too new to have reported any completers at the time this document was completed.) Surveys of program completers and those closely associated with them, their principals, mentors and program coordinators, were designed to glean information about their perceptions of the level of completers' preparedness for the classroom with regard to the competencies and skills that would be associated with their respective preparation programs. To this end, we asked principals

how effective their new teachers were in demonstrating the twelve Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs), and in providing reading instruction and test preparation; we asked principals whether these beginning teachers met their criteria for rehiring; we asked mentors how well the teachers compared with other beginning teachers; and we asked the teachers themselves to rate their own effectiveness.

To provide additional contextual information about the early career experiences of these teachers, the report also documents information about peer mentors, including their professional experience, their roles vis-à-vis the participants, the frequency of contact with their teachers, and others. The survey responses confirm that the respondents believe their mentors are an integral component in their beginning teacher experience. Additionally, district alternative certification coordinators were surveyed, providing an additional system layer of context that includes estimated costs of district alternative certification programs, the type of program they offered (state-developed, district-developed, or a combination of both), and marketing strategies.

Included in the report are the results of a SY 2006-07 study of beginning teachers, their principals, their peer mentors, and district alternative certification coordinators. The information ranges from demographic descriptions of program participants (public school teachers), to summaries of participants' backgrounds, current teaching assignments, their plans for the next academic year, and more. The survey sought information about the respondents' perceptions about the effectiveness of their teacher preparation programs and the kind of support they are receiving in their first years of teaching. The analysis also includes trend data over a five-year period for DACP participants and over a three-year period for ITP program completers, where available. These longitudinal data provide an important historical context for interpreting the data.

Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs)

The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) are essential skills and knowledge that provide the foundation for the pedagogy in all of Florida's approved teacher preparation programs. The FEAPs were developed by the Education Standards Commission and adopted into Rule 6A-5.065, F.A.C., by the State Board of Education. The rule includes sample indicators indicative of the preprofessional, professional, and accomplished levels. Teacher preparation programs should prepare candidates at the preprofessional level. A complete explanation of all FEAPs is found in the Appendix.

The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices
(1) Assessment
(2) Communication
(3) Continuous Improvement
(4) Critical Thinking
(5) Diversity
(6) Ethics
(7) Human Development and Learning
(8) Knowledge of Subject Matter
(9) Learning Environments
(10) Planning
(11) Role of the Teacher
(12) Technology

Organization of the Data Analysis Section

The Data Analysis section is presented in three parts. First is a discussion of the design of the six survey instruments for completers of initial teacher preparation programs (ITPs), district alternative certification programs (DACPs), and Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs); principals; peer mentors of alternative certification completers/participants; and district alternative certification coordinators. Following this is an explanation of the sampling methodology, including the methodology for distribution of the web-based surveys.

Third, findings are presented. We begin with an analysis of population data describing gender, age and race of teachers who completed their certification in 2005-06 by route to certification. Following this analysis of population data, we describe the characteristics of the sample

responding to the web-based survey. In this section, we also include responses of principals, mentors and district coordinators. We conduct a detailed analysis of the current survey data across the three teacher preparation program types, and then analyze trend data using results from previous surveys. In the case of DACP completers, we are able to compare most findings over four or five years. For ITP program completers, the analysis includes trend data over a three-year period. (We do not include EPIs in the trend data because last year was the first year for reporting completers.)

The survey analysis will include the elements that are common to all three types of teachers. These common elements include a description of teachers' professional backgrounds, their current teaching assignment, and whether they plan to continue to teach. We then provide information collected specifically on ITP programs, including percentages of completers employed in Florida public schools.

Next, we include a section specific only to completers of DACPs. These elements include levels of implementation of specific program components: classroom management training, pre-assessment of skills, the development of an individual professional development plan, and the assignment of a peer mentor. We also analyze costs of alternative certification programs to the local school districts, and the extent and success of districts' marketing the program to attract new teachers. Again, we analyze data from the current study and trend data where available.

A section specific to EPI completers follows. We begin with a brief description of the program and projections of expected numbers of enrollees and completers. We also analyze components specific to EPI completers, including the institute they attended, how long it took them to complete the program, curriculum and field experiences, professional support networks, and a section on how they first heard about the EPIs.

Following the Data Analysis section we return to data related to teachers who completed any of the program types. Here we describe support structures in place for new teachers: principal support, faculty collaboration, and other school climate factors. We then analyze whether these support structures contribute to various outcomes, including teachers' sense of efficacy and their plans to stay in the profession, among others.

Finally, we turn to measures of teacher preparedness. These include teachers' self-reports on their perceived competency and preparation in the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs), techniques of teaching reading, and test preparation for students taking standardized state and national achievement tests; principals' ratings of teacher preparedness on the same 14 skills; and mentors' ratings of the teachers on teachers' overall preparedness. Principals also indicated whether the teacher met his/her criteria for rehiring.

In the Appendices, we include additional information about pathways to certification, the definitions of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, copies of the survey instruments, and a breakdown of ITP completers' self-ratings of effectiveness by institution.

Data Analysis

Instrument Design

The data collection instruments were six web-based surveys, one for each category of respondent: three categories of beginning teachers, principal, classroom mentor, and district alternative certification coordinators. The surveys have been used and modified over the last five years for the teachers completing/participating in the DACPs and for the last two years for ITP program completers.

The teacher survey included many common items (e.g., demographics, teaching position-related, school climate, effectiveness of their training, self-appraisal of effectiveness, etc.) for all three categories of respondent. It included program-specific items, as well as items designed to capture these new teachers' perceptions of the support they received from their schools' principals, colleagues, and mentors. For DACP and EPI completers, items were included that related to their prior workforce experience and others that pertained to an older workforce entering teaching. For all completers, items identified the institution or district where they completed their program.

Principals received one survey for each beginning teacher in his/her school. The principal surveys included items asking the principal to rate each teacher's effectiveness in the twelve FEAPs, reading instruction, and preparing students for the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). One final item asked the principal whether each teacher had met the principal's criteria for rehiring.

The survey of peer mentors of DACP completers and participants included items related to the frequency of contact with their teacher and their own training, professional credentials and experience. In addition, mentors were asked about their role vis-à-vis the teacher, and their own evaluation of the teacher's effectiveness.

The survey of district alternative certification coordinators included information on the type and length of programs they offer, district costs of alternative certification programs, components included in their programs, tuition charged to participants, and qualitative information on program improvement.

Sampling Methodology

Six surveys were developed for four different populations: three categories of beginning teachers, their principals, peer mentors of DACP completers/participants, and DACP coordinators. We first developed population frames. In the teacher study the population included:

- All beginning teachers who completed an initial teacher preparation program (ITP) in Florida in 2005-2006;
- All beginning teachers who completed an Educator Preparation Institute (EPI) in Florida in 2005-2006;
- All beginning teachers who completed a district alternative certification program (DACP) in Florida in 2005-2006 or participated in the program in 2006-2007.

The population frame in a web-based survey such as this one would include names and email addresses of all teachers fitting the above criteria. The second step would be to determine a sampling fraction in order to identify a sample of the desired size. In many web-based surveys, the sampling fraction is 1.0, signifying that all elements in the population will be included in the sample, since there is no increase in cost for distributing surveys once the instrument is designed and the email list is complete. There are often, however, increased costs during data coding, since certain variables must be coded by hand.

When designing the sample for this survey of beginning teachers in Florida, the names of teachers who had completed ITP programs, teachers who had completed EPIs, and teachers who had completed and/or participated in DACPs were obtained from program providers and then matched to the Florida Department of Education's Staff Database.

The most significant difficulty in distributing the web-based surveys to teachers was that all school districts employ powerful spam-catching programs to protect their systems from inappropriate communications. These programs typically are designed to intercept emails that are sent in mass distributions. As a result, we were not able to distribute the survey from outside school districts, as they would have been intercepted by spam-catchers.

We determined that the best way to distribute the web-based surveys was to enlist the help of district professional development coordinators and district alternative certification program coordinators. (In smaller counties, these jobs may be performed by the same individual.) District contacts were sent the list of 2005-2006 completers of all three teacher preparation programs – and their associated school principals per the Staff Database. District contacts were asked to distribute the web-based survey information and web-link to the individual teachers in their school district.

District contacts also were asked to contact school principals and provide them with the information in regards to the web-based surveys. Principals were asked to evaluate each of the teachers in the overall sample who were currently employed at their schools. The principals' surveys were pre-populated with the names of the beginning teachers in their schools, and there were additional places for them to list teachers who may not have been included in the list.

Since there is no comprehensive or centralized list of peer mentors working with beginning teachers, we sampled only mentors serving in the DACPs. We were able to reach these mentors through the alternative certification coordinators. We emailed the coordinators the information and link to the mentor web survey, and they distributed the surveys via email to the mentors in their own districts.

An important limitation of our method of distribution was that we had no way of knowing how many surveys were distributed via email links. In other words, we did not have a mechanism for finding out how many surveys were distributed by district coordinators (if any). As a result, there was no way to calculate response rates: we know the numerator (the number of respondents), but not the denominator (the number of surveys sent out) of the return rate formula.

Comparison of the Characteristics of Completers of Teacher Preparation Programs

Analysis of age, gender and race/ethnicity are based on the actual number of teachers who completed ITPs, DACPs, and EPIs during the 2005-2006 academic year. We refer to these data

as “population statistics.” Other findings in the report are based on samples of current teachers or on previous samples across time. These are referred to as “sample statistics.”³

The demographic profile of the population of 2005-06 program completers confirms that the state’s efforts to expand the teaching labor pool have succeeded in many ways. There were higher percentages of male teachers among DACP (29.9%) and EPI completers (25.6%) than from ITP programs (13.1%). (See Table 1.) The differences in gender representation have remained stable over time, as well as in previous surveys (see Figures 2-4).

Table 1

Teacher Gender by Teacher Preparation Program Type (Population Data)				
Gender	ITP Programs	DACPs	EPIs	Total
Male	805	390	22	1067
	(13.1%)	(29.9%)	(25.6%)	(13.7%)
Female	5333	913	64	6740
	(86.8%)	(70.1%)	(74.4%)	(86.3%)
Total	6136	1303	86	7807

Age of beginning teachers showed a slightly different pattern. Participant respondents in DACPs are considerably older than other completers. Sixty-nine percent of the DACP respondents were over 30 years old, compared to only 43% percent of ITP teachers. EPI teachers were even older than DACP respondents. Forty percent of DACP completers were over 40 years old; nearly 56 percent of EPI teachers were over 40. The initial cohort of EPI graduates, then, do not appear to be recent college graduates using the EPI as an alternative to majoring in education. (See Table 2 below and Figures 5 and 6.)

Table 2

Age of Teachers by Preparation Program Type (Population Data)			
Age	ITP Programs	DACPs (based on survey data)	EPIs
20-29	3520	82	19
	(57.3%)	(30.8%)	(22.1%)
30-39	1492	77	19
	(24.3%)	(28.9%)	(22.1%)
40-49	769	58	24
	(12.5%)	(21.8%)	(27.9%)
50+	355	49	24
	(5.7%)	(18.4%)	(27.9%)
Total	6136	271	86

³ Where individuals do not report any of their characteristics, those individuals are omitted from the calculation for that characteristic. This is the reason for differing totals in each table.

There are not consistent racial/ethnic differences between teachers who have followed different routes to certification. Percentages of whites and blacks are virtually the same between ITP and DACP teachers (66% and 70.8 for whites; 13.2 and 16.6% for blacks). However, nearly twice as many beginning Hispanic teachers graduated from ITPs than DACPs. (See Table 3 following and Figures 7 and 8.) The racial/ethnic breakdown in DACP survey respondents has remained stable over time, while ITP graduates have been less consistent (see Figures 9 and 10).

Table 3

Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondent/Teachers by Teacher Preparation Program Type				
Race	ITP programs	DACPs	EPIs	Total
White	4054 (66.0%)	919 (70.8%)	74 (87.1%)	5000 (66.8%)
Black	816 (13.2%)	216 (16.6%)	10 (11.8%)	1079 (14.4%)
Hispanic	949 (15.5%)	130 (10.0%)	0 (0%)	1257 (16.8%)
Asian	81 (1.3%)	24 (1.8%)	1 (1.2%)	106 (1.4%)
American Indian	22 (0.3%)	5 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	31 (0.4%)
Other	16 (0.2%)	4 (0.3%)	0 (0.0%)	16 (0.2%)
Total	5938	1298	85	7489

Sample Statistics and Generalizability

There were 660 valid surveys received from ITP program completers; 71.3 percent had attended state colleges or universities and 28.7 percent had attended private institutions. We received 1,025 valid survey instruments from DACP participants (still enrolled in the program) and 271 from DACP completers. Since 2005-06 was the EPIs' first year of program completers, staff at the Florida Division of Community Colleges identified 86 completers, of whom 54 returned surveys, a return rate of 63.0 percent.

The estimates in the sample closely approximated the real parameters in the population for both ITP completers and DACP completers. In the case of gender and ethnicity, percentage estimates were close to those of actual numbers of completers teaching in Florida public schools. However, despite the high return rate from EPI completers, their estimates were far from the true population parameters. For example, just over 20 percent of the actual EPI graduates who were teaching in Florida schools were in their twenties. In contrast, nearly 60 percent of EPI completers responding to the survey were between 20 and 29 years of age. (Compare Figures 2 and 3; Figures 5 and 6; Figures 7 and 8.) Thus, inferences drawn from the sample of ITP and DACP teachers may be considerably more reliable than those for EPI graduates. However, given the small number of the initial cohort of EPI completers, it is premature to draw significant inferences.

Teaching Assignment, Prior Employment and Future Employment Status of Respondents

Teaching assignments of responders from ITP programs differed substantially from those of responding DACP and EPI completers. Less than 20% of responding ITP completers are teaching at the secondary level, while between 30 and 40 percent of responding DACP completers are assigned to middle and high schools. (See Table 4 and Figures 11-12.)

Table 4

Subject Area Placement of Respondents by Teacher Preparation Program Type				
	ITP Programs	DACPs	EPIs	Total
Business/Computers	1 (0.2%)	7 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	8 (.9%)
Early Childhood	2 (0.3%)	0 (.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (.2%)
Elementary Integrated	307 (52.7%)	43 (16.5%)	28 (51.9%)	378 (42.1%)
ESOL	1 (0.2%)	0 (.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (.1%)
Fine Arts	8 (1.4%)	12 (4.6%)	2 (3.7%)	22 (2.5%)
Foreign Language	5 (0.9%)	6 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (1.2%)
Gifted	3 (0.5%)	1 (.4%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (.4%)
Math	44 (7.5%)	44 (16.9%)	9 (16.7%)	97 (10.8%)
Media	11 (1.9%)	1 (.4%)	0 (0.0%)	12 (1.3%)
P/E Health	4 (0.7%)	7 (2.7%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (1.2%)
Reading/Language Arts	77 (13.2%)	54 (20.8%)	7 (13.0%)	138 (15.4%)
Sciences	26 (4.5%)	30 (11.5%)	2 (3.7%)	58 (6.5%)
Social Sciences	28 (4.8%)	23 (8.8%)	0 (0.0%)	51 (5.7%)
Exceptional Student Ed (ESE)	38 (6.5%)	14 (5.4%)	5 (9.3%)	57 (6.4%)
Vocational Education	1 (0.2%)	4 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (.6%)
Other	27 (4.6%)	14 (5.4%)	1 (1.9%)	42 (4.7%)
Total	583	260	54	897

Similarly, the subject area placement of ITP program completers differs from DACP and EPI completers. Less than 10% of ITP program completers are assigned to subject area specialties, compared to DACP and EPI completers who are assigned between 10 and 25 percent in subject area specialties. These figures are reflective of the structure of professional preparation programs (content degree plus professional training) and the number of institutions with state-approved ITPs producing completers in the areas of Elementary Education and Exceptional Student Education. These figures have remained stable over the study period. District alternative certification programs and EPIs have provided additional preparation routes for potential teachers in some of the secondary subject matter critical shortage areas (see Table 5 and Figures 13-14).

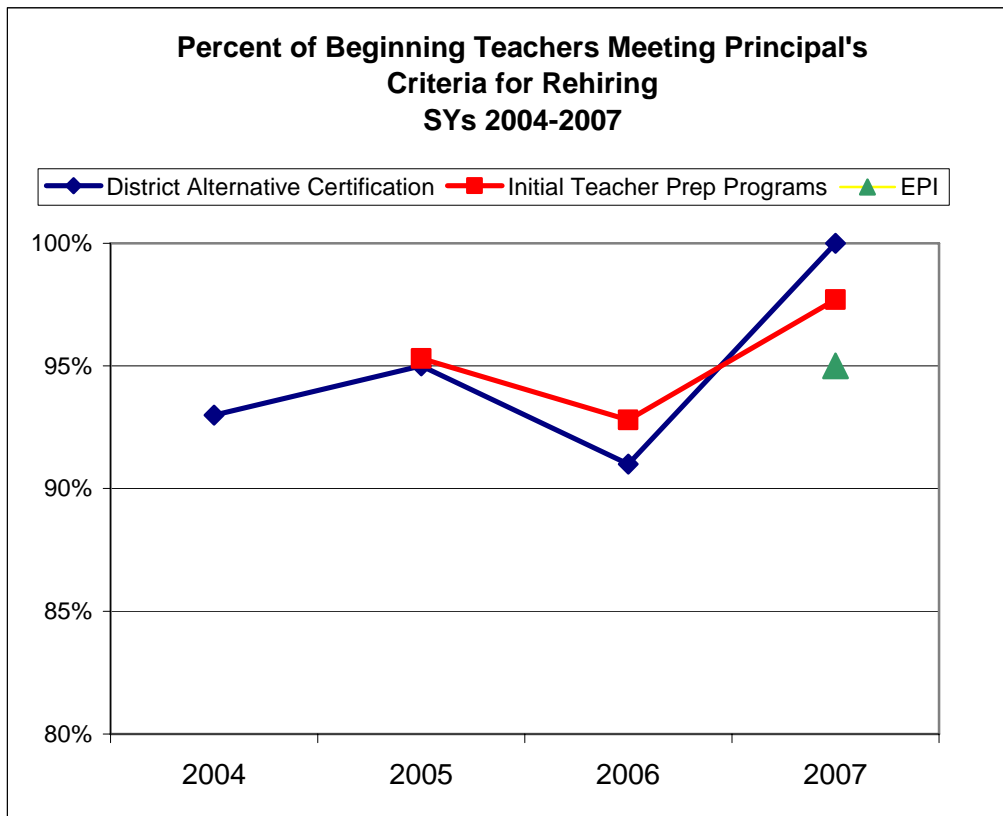
Table 5

Teacher's Activity One Year Prior to Teaching				
	DACP Completers		EPI Completers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Business	282	25.2	14	28.6
Student	154	13.7	22	44.9
Substitute teacher	103	9.2		
Paraprofessional	55	4.9	-	-
Science and Engineering	48	4.2	-	-
Stay at home parent/guardian	47	4.2	-	-
Social work	43	3.8	-	-
Education	42	3.7	5	10.2
Administrative staff/Secretary	36	3.2	-	-
Health related	25	2.2	-	-
Teacher	23	2.1		
Day care worker	22	2.0	-	-
TV/Radio/News	20	1.8	-	-
Technical	20	1.8	-	-
Fine Arts	19	1.7	-	-
University/College	17	1.5	-	-
Military	17	1.5	1	2.0
Legal related	13	1.2	-	-
Government	13	1.2	2	4.1
Volunteer	8	0.7	-	-
Unemployed	7	0.6	-	-
Librarian	3	0.3	-	-
Other	104	9.0	5	10.2
Total	1121	100	49	100.0

The prior jobs held by DACP and EPI completers showed similar patterns. In both groups, approximately one in four respondents had worked in the business world one year prior to entering the teaching force. Among DACP participants, over 20% had worked in education-related areas as substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, or day care workers. The DACP appears to be an important mobility channel for persons working in education to realize professional growth and change. Over ten percent of EPI respondents also cited education as their previous job.⁴ (See Table 5.)

There were no significant differences among teachers regarding their employment status for the next academic year, either from teachers' self-reports or principals' evaluation of whether teachers met their criteria for rehiring. Fewer than three percent in any of the teacher preparation program types reported they would not be rehired. Similarly, principals reported that over 95% of each group met their criteria for rehiring. (See Figure 1 below and Figure 15.)

Figure 1



⁴ ITP completers were not asked about their prior work experience.

Figure 2

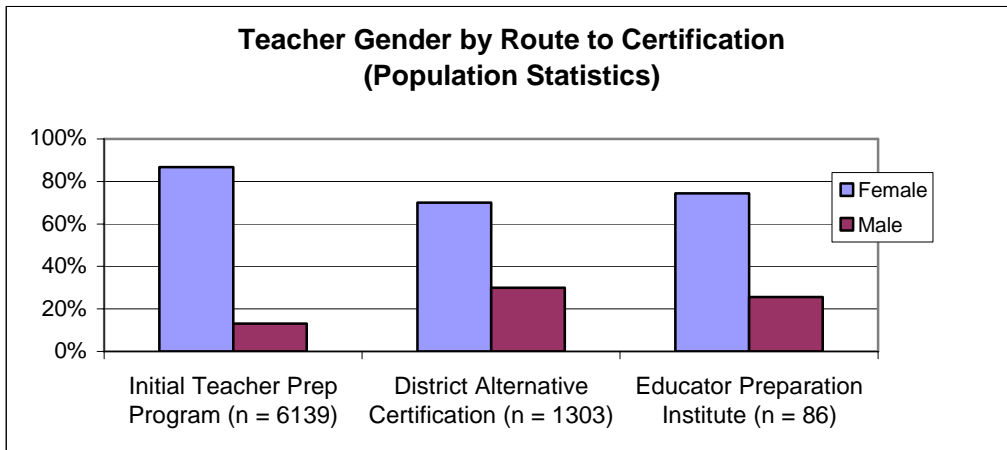


Figure 3

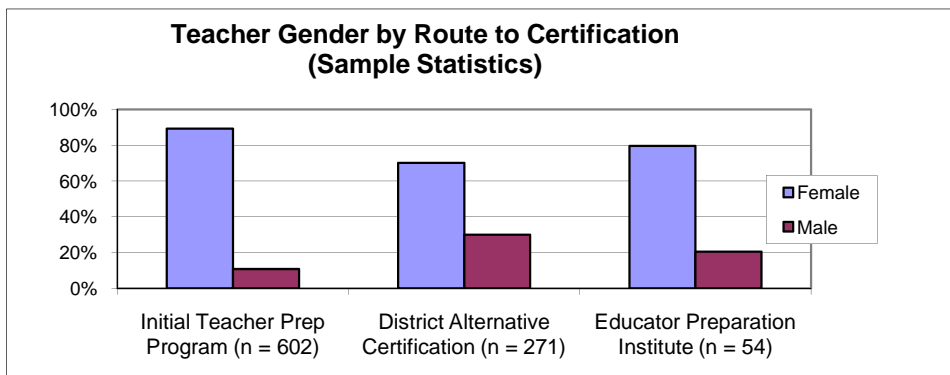


Figure 4

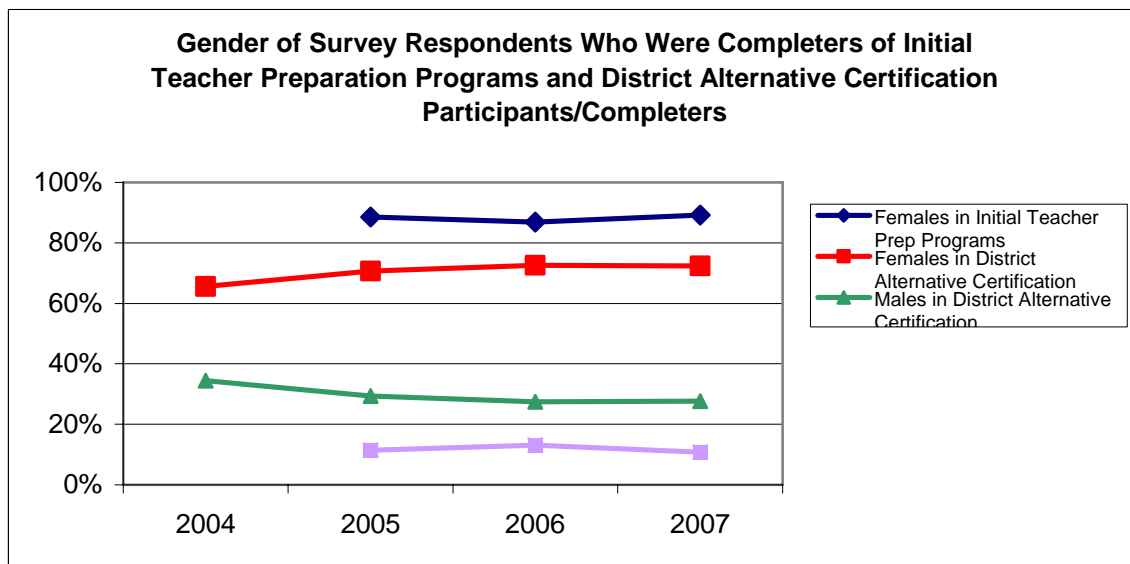


Figure 5

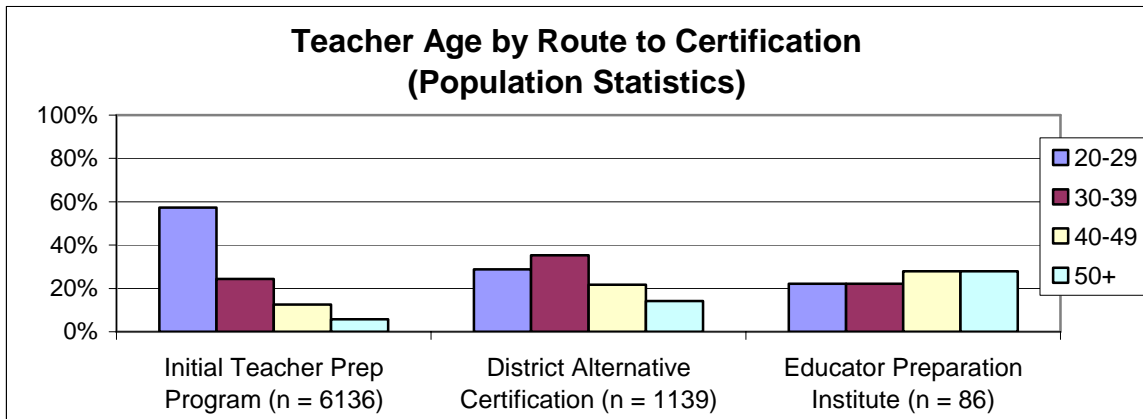


Figure 6

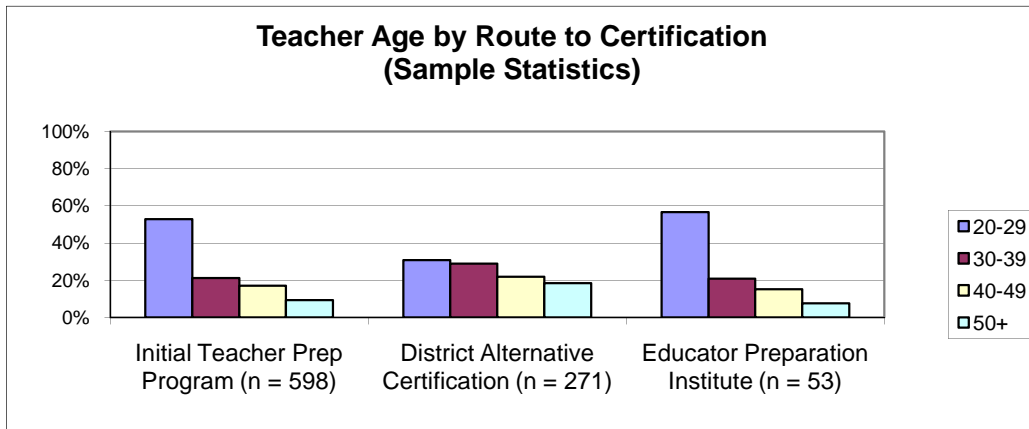


Figure 7

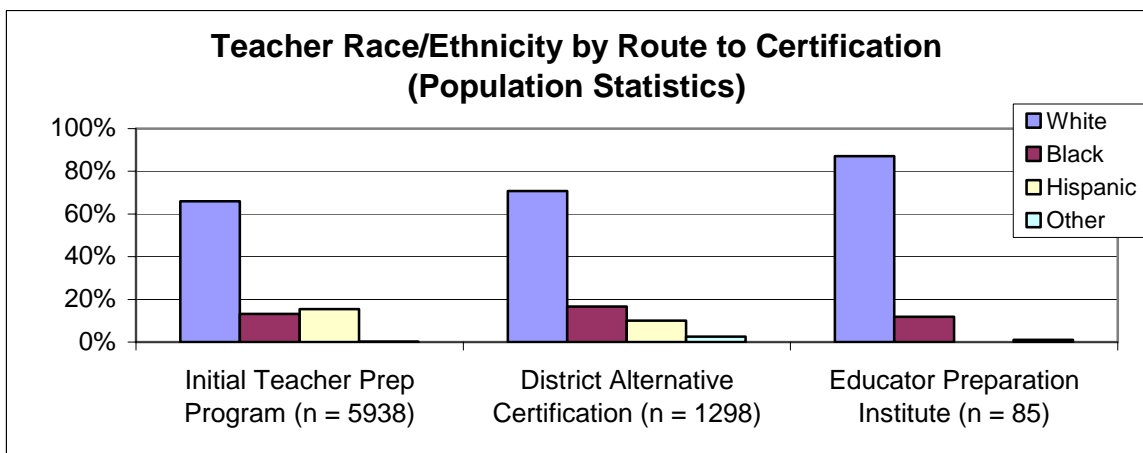


Figure 8

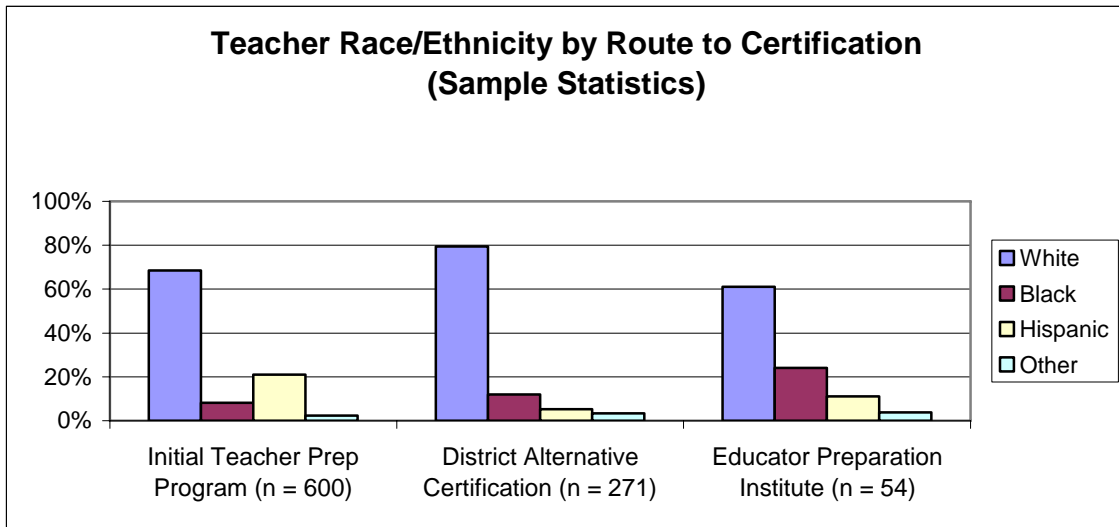


Figure 9

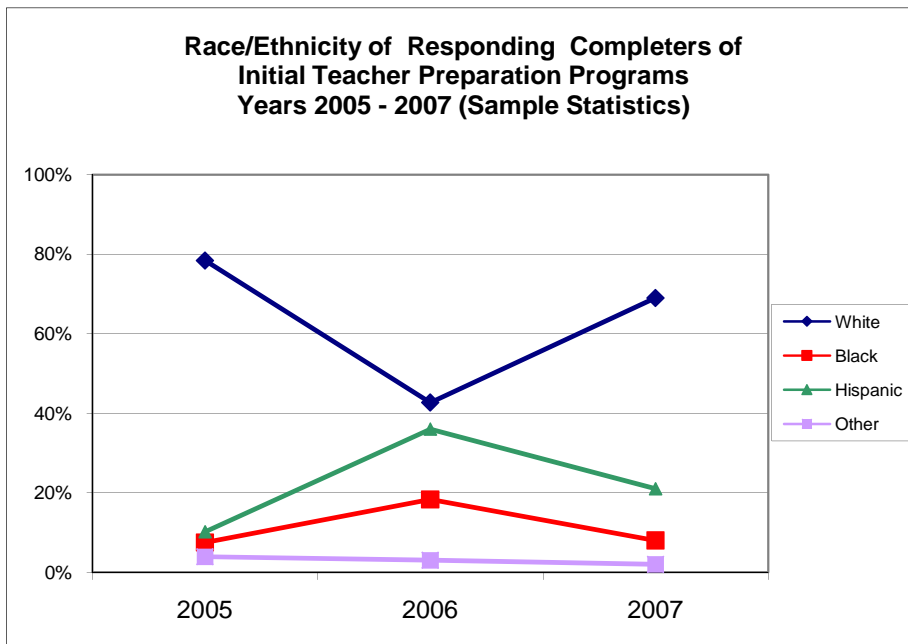


Figure 10

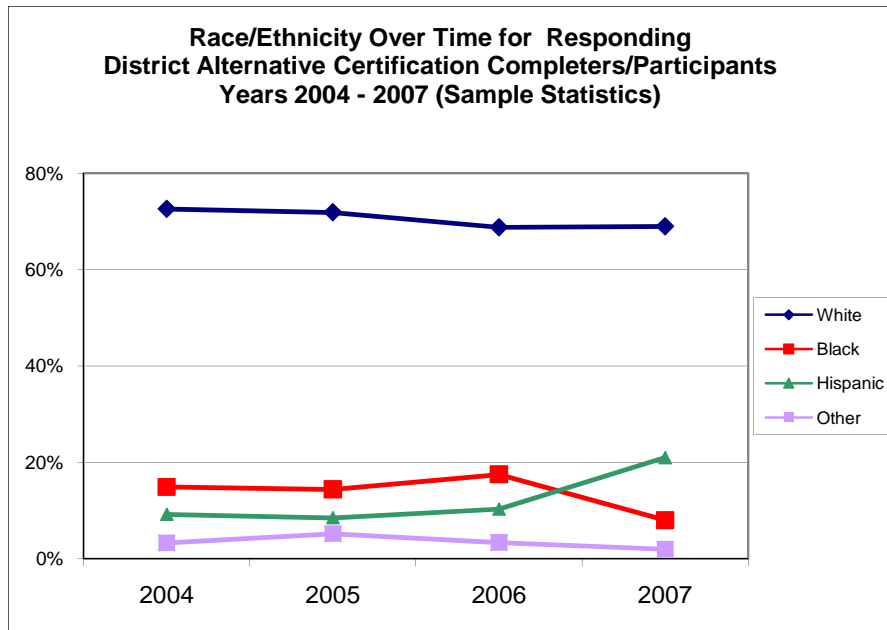


Table 6

Grade Level Taught by Teacher Preparation Program Type Survey Respondents/Completers				
	Initial teacher preparation programs	District alternative certification programs	Educator preparation institutes	Total
Pre-K	2 (.3%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (.2%)
K-5	406 (67.7%)	66 (24.4%)	38 (70.4%)	510 (55.2%)
6-8	84 (14.0%)	98 (36.3%)	12 (22.2%)	194 (21.0%)
9-12	103 (17.2%)	104 (38.5%)	3 (5.6%)	210 (22.7%)
Other	5 (.8%)	2 (.7%)	1 (1.9%)	8 (.9%)
Total	600	270	54	924

Figure 11

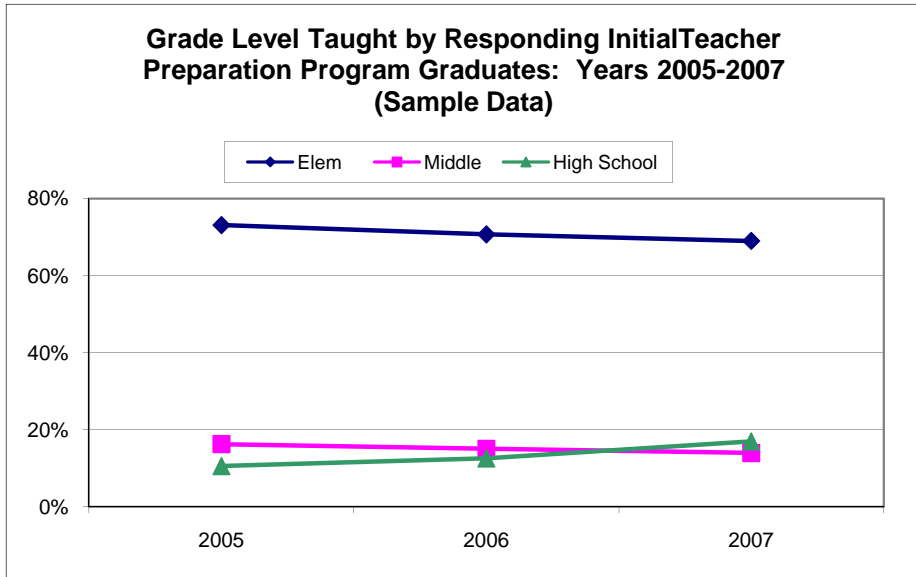


Figure 12

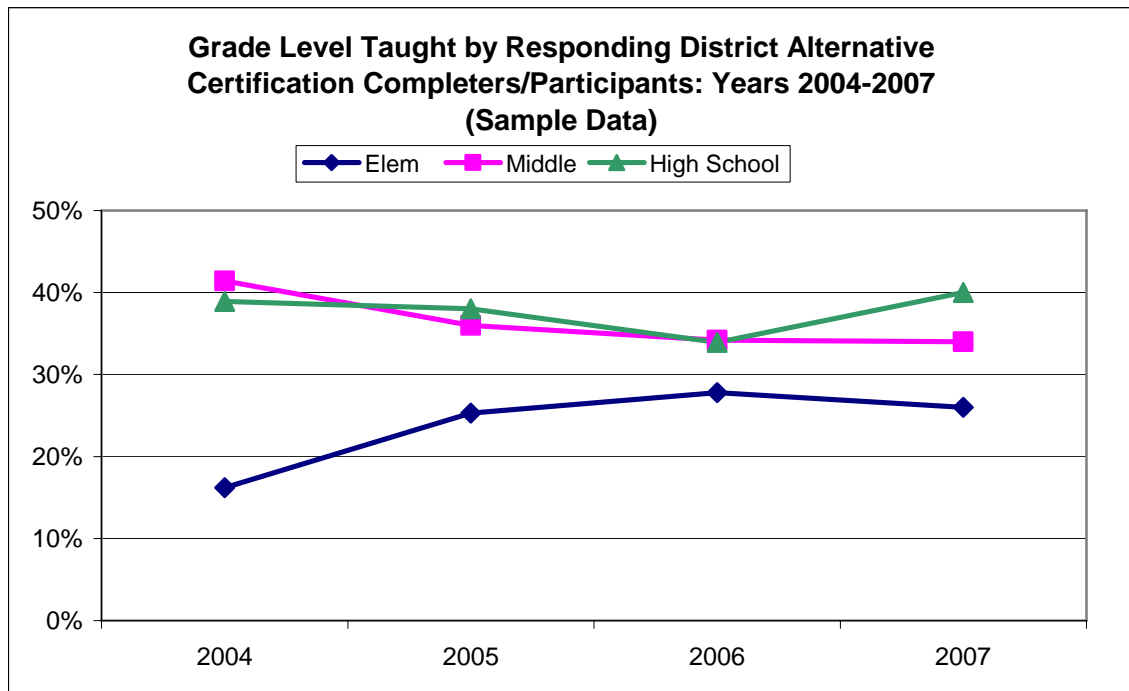


Figure 13

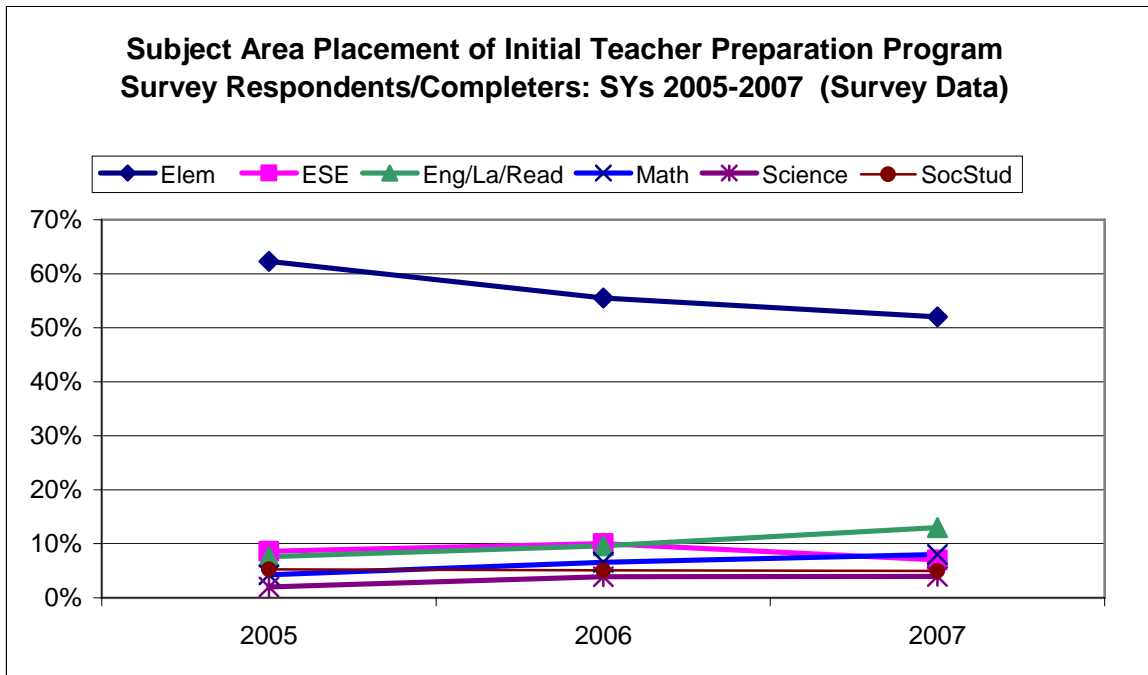


Figure 14

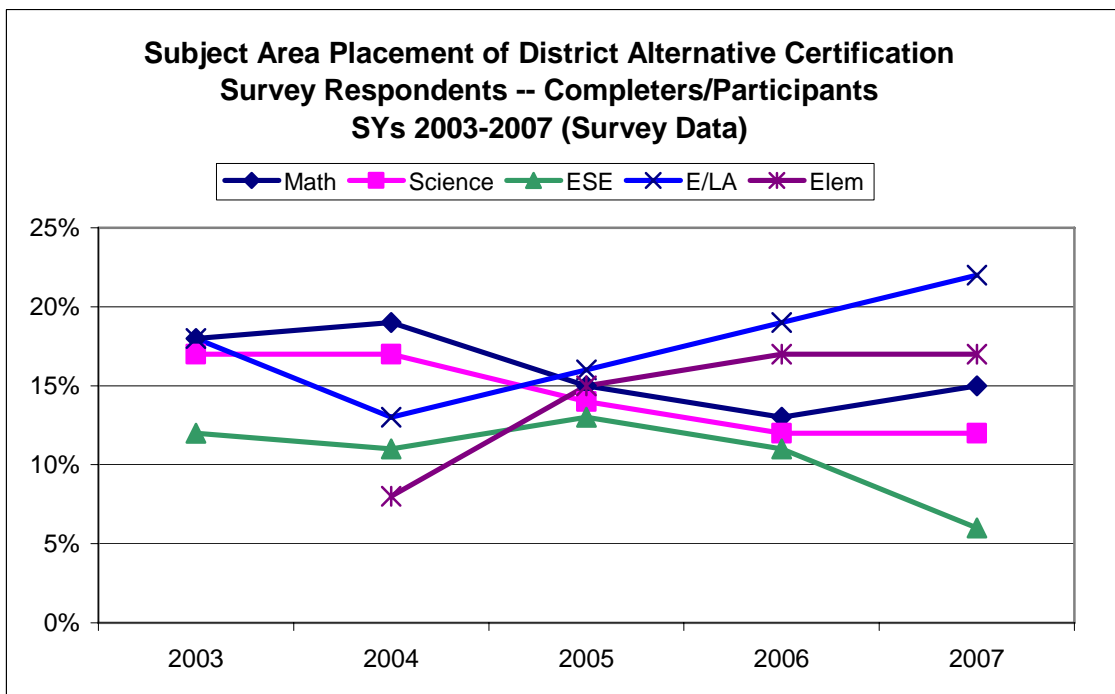
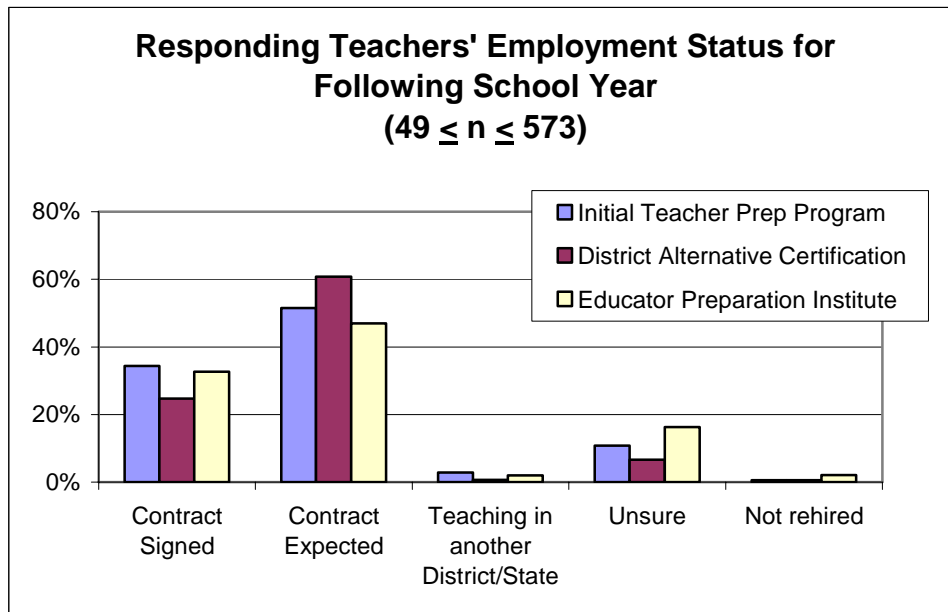


Figure 15



Initial Teacher Preparation Programs

Initial teacher preparation programs (ITPs) are authorized in section 1004.04, Florida Statutes, and typically terminate in a bachelor’s, master’s, or specialist’s degree in education with specific subject area expertise, and completers are qualified for a Professional Certificate. At the time of this publication, there are 389 Initial Teacher Preparation Programs offered by 32 Florida state universities, independent colleges, and community colleges with authorization to offer bachelor’s degrees. For the 2005-06 school year, 6,139 individuals completed an ITP program, 4,405 of which were employed in a full-time instructional position in a Florida public school during the 2006-07 school year (Figure 16). Some of these individuals begin teaching after their program is completed; others complete the program as their initial teacher preparation under a Temporary Certificate; and others are experienced teachers with a Professional Certificate who enroll in the program to add a new certification subject area. These programs also provide master’s or specialist’s level certification for guidance counselors, school psychologists and reading specialists. Table 7 on the following page shows the percentages for program completer employment by institution.

Figure 16

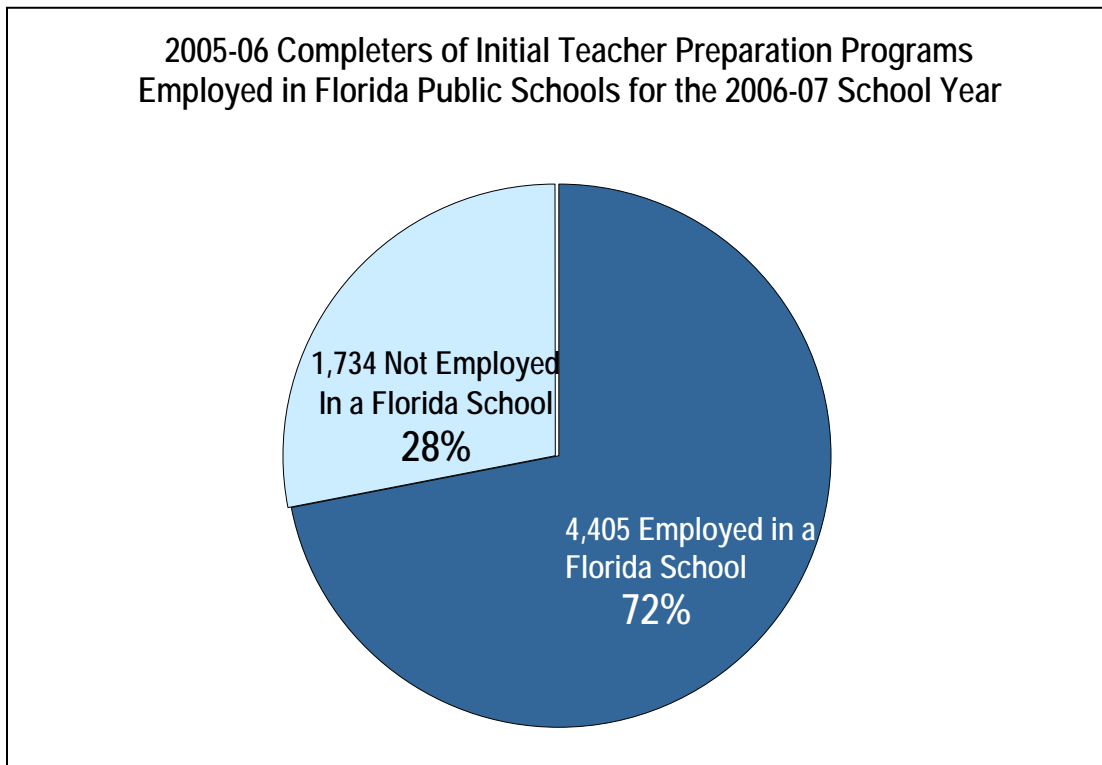


Table 7

Initial Teacher Preparation Program Institution	Number of Program Completers 2005-06	Number of Completers Employed in Florida Public Schools 2006-07	Percentage of Completers Employed in Florida Public Schools 2006-07
Barry University	386	278	72%
Bethune-Cookman Univ.	29	20	69%
Chipola College	9	9	100%
Clearwater Christian Coll.	19	7	37%
Flagler College	103	57	58%
Florida A&M University	56	33	59%
Florida Atlantic University	601	429	71%
Florida College	3	2	66%
Florida Gulf Coast Univ.	122	91	75%
Florida Inst. of Technology	4	2	50%
Florida International Univ.	376	285	76%
Florida Memorial Univ.	72	55	76%
Florida Southern College	63	53	84%
Florida State University	360	215	60%
Jacksonville University	12	6	50%
Lynn University	23	12	52%
Miami-Dade College	24	23	96%
Nova Southeastern Univ.	540	429	79%
Palm Beach Atlantic Univ.	41	23	56%
Rollins College	21	12	57%
Southeastern University	23	9	39%
St. Leo University	95	83	87%
St. Petersburg College	145	119	82%
Stetson University	45	32	71%
Univ. of Central Florida	1003	756	75%
University of Florida	258	158	61%
University of Miami	86	51	59%
University of North Florida	331	247	75%
University of South Florida	1090	755	69%
University of Tampa	37	25	68%
University of West Florida	141	113	80%
Warner Southern College	21	16	76%
Total	6,139	4,405	72%

District Alternative Certification Programs

District-level alternative certification programs in Florida provide competency-based, on-the-job professional education preparation to newly hired teachers who have demonstrated subject area expertise, but who have not previously completed an initial teacher preparation program. All district-level alternative certification programs are either developed or approved by the Florida Department of Education and implemented by Florida school districts.

Districts may develop their own program or use Florida's Alternative Certification Program (FACP) at no cost. The FACP offers professional education preparation via distance learning and face-to-face peer support to beginning teachers with subject area expertise. The FACP includes the following program components:

1. **Survival Training** to ensure an initial period of preparation before the teacher assumes responsibility for the classroom;
2. **CD-ROM** to train users on features of the web-based learning management system used to deliver the learning activities;
3. **Support Team** to coordinate and support the professional development of the teacher (Peer Mentor, On-Line Tutor, Building Level Administrator, and Outside Educator);
4. **On-line Professional Preparation Learning Activities** to provide in-depth, in-time acquisition of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices;
5. **Collaborative Partners** to assist school district implementation;
6. **Pre-Assessment** to determine the learning needs of each teacher;
7. **Individual Action Plan** to outline the structured learning experiences for each teacher;
8. **Summative Assessment Tasks** to ensure a standards-based method of determining mastery of the professional education competencies;
9. **Database Tracking System** to document the progress of each teacher in successfully demonstrating the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices; and
10. **Professional Education Test** to demonstrate knowledge of educational pedagogy.

Teaching Assignments of Respondents

District alternative certification participants are teaching at all levels in the public schools. Importantly, three out of every four alternative certification completers responding to the survey (75%) were teaching in middle and high schools. (See Figures 17-18.) This figure has remained stable over the study period, and has been responsive to the critical shortages in secondary subject matter teachers, fulfilling the mission for which they were designed. For three out of the four years, the percent teaching in middle or high school was between 74 and 81 percent. In SY 2006-07, 62 percent of respondents were teaching at the secondary level.

Figure 17

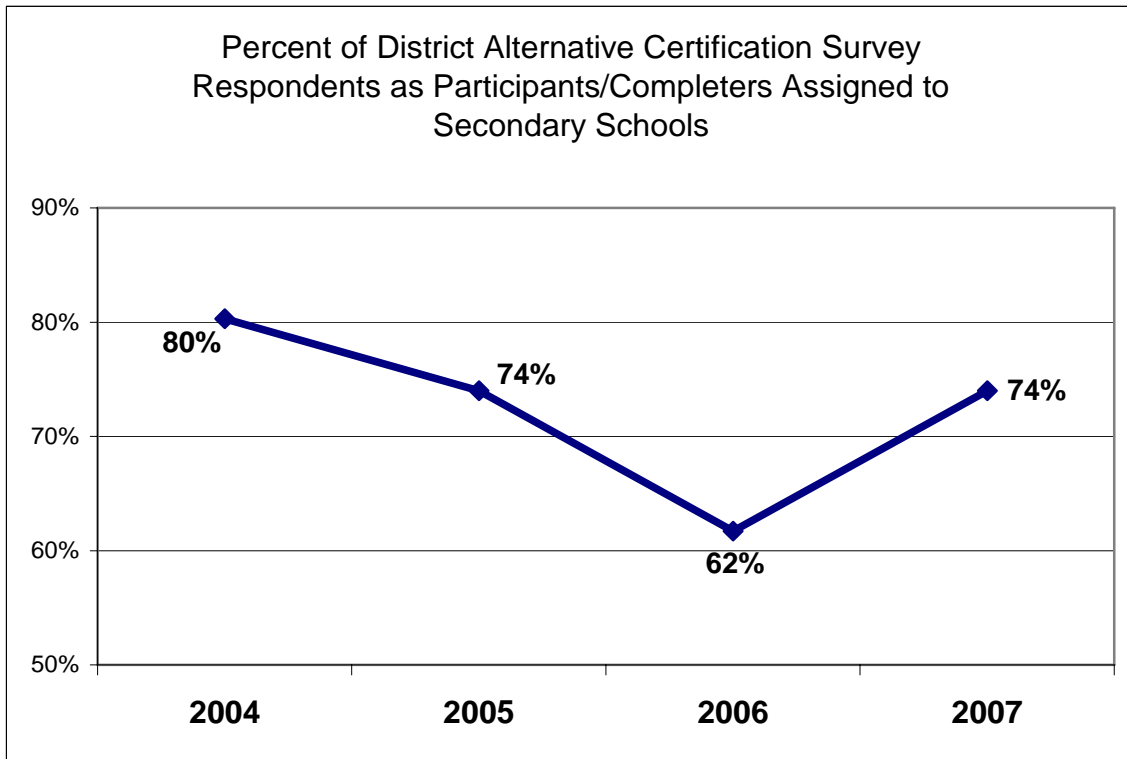


Figure 18

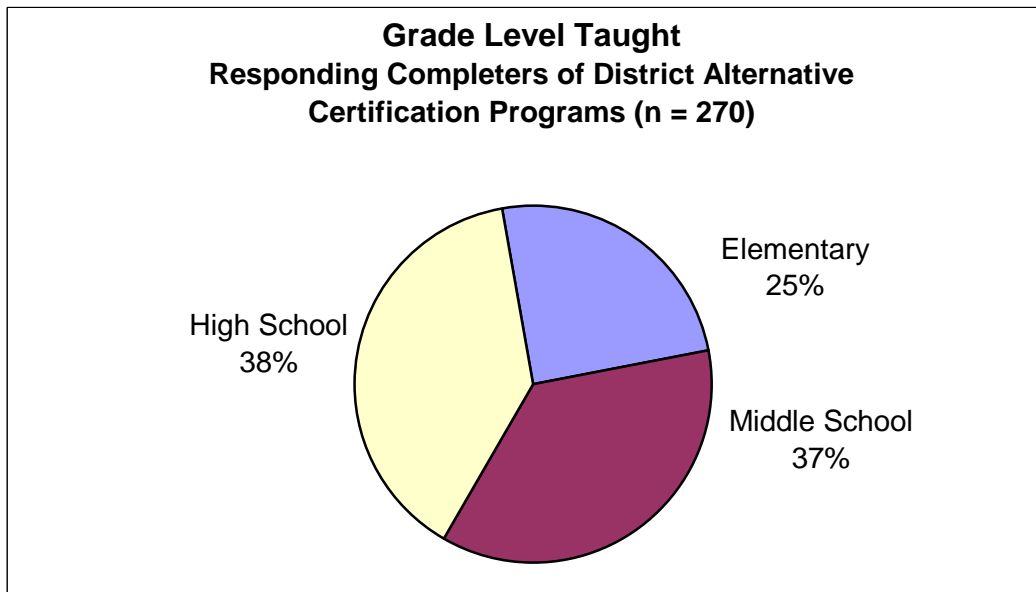
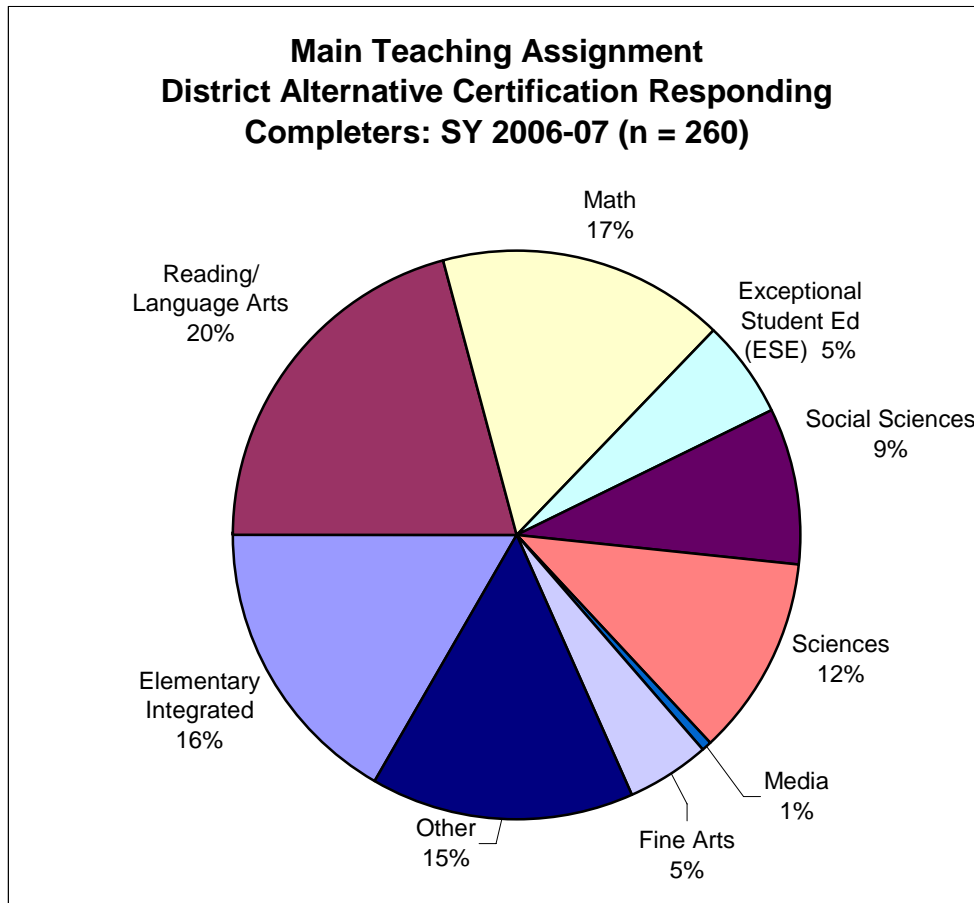


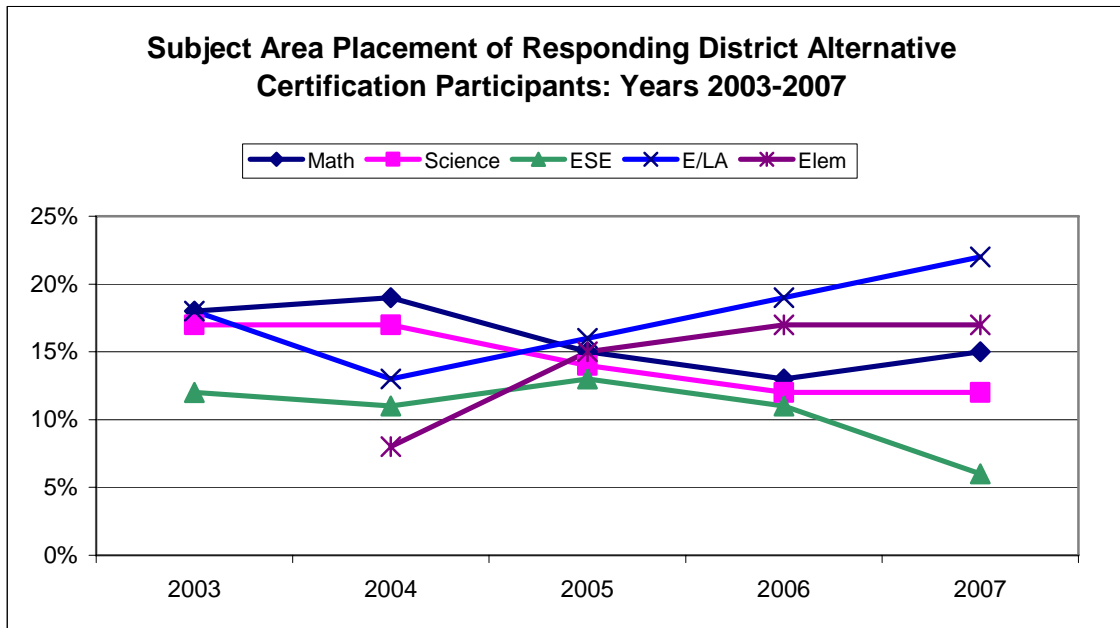
Figure 19



There have been interesting changes in subject area assignments over the five-year study period. Responding teachers assigned to math and science classes have been a relatively stable percentage, comprising between 12 and 19 percent of DACP respondents. The percentage of responding district alternative certification participants/completers assigned reading or language arts also remained stable, ranging from 13 percent and 22 percent (See Figures 19 and 20.)

Two other trends are pronounced. There has been a steady increase in the number of respondents who were assigned to elementary grades. The proportion doubled from 8 percent in SY 2003-04 to over 15 percent in SY 2006-07. Thus, the labor market has responded to the projected shortages in elementary teachers. Of some interest is the decline from 12 percent to 6 percent in the proportion of district alternative certification participants who were given Exceptional Student Education (ESE) assignments. However, since the DACP is not specifically designed for ESE teachers, there is little reason to expect a change in this trend as a result of the DACPs.

Figure 20

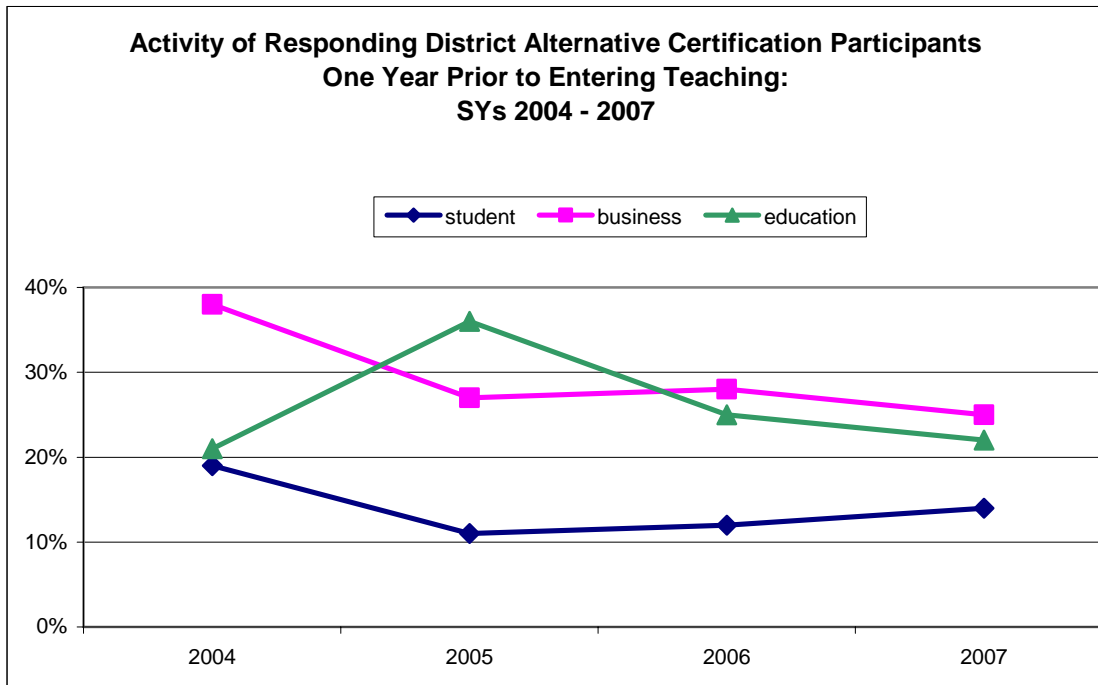


Prior Experience of Respondents

District alternative certification participant respondents brought a wide range of professional experiences to their teaching. The majority of the respondents came from fields that were not related to education, such as business, health, and technical fields. Over 20 percent came with education-related work experience including teaching in preschools, public schools and private schools, and serving as teachers’ aides. Some served in non-teaching roles, and others provided education in non-school settings. (See Figures 21-22 on the following pages.) Among survey respondents in 2007, only 14 percent had gone straight from college to their teaching job.

Over the four-year study period, the area of business ranged from 38 to 25 percent of activities one year prior to entering teaching (as described by respondents). This significant percentage reflects the expectations of many designers of alternative education programs – to attract teachers from outside the education area, perhaps those who have chosen to change careers to give back the expertise they gained in business and training settings.

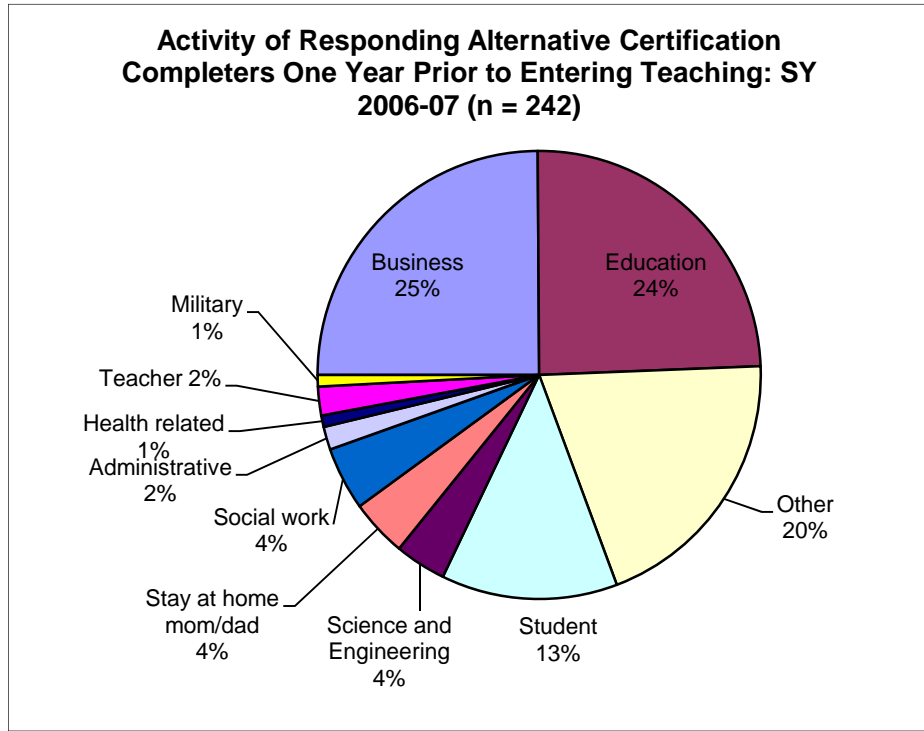
Figure 21



The percentage of respondents who reported being students one year before entering teaching has declined from 19 percent in SY 2003-04 to 14 percent in SY 2006-07. While not a dramatic decline, the change may reflect the influence of the newly formed EPs, which offer college graduates an alternative teacher preparation program prior to employment. However, it does not appear that students are using the opportunity for alternative certification to replace more traditional four-year education degrees, at least not in large numbers as some policymakers had projected.

An important finding is that the DACPs served as a route to professionalization among persons who had worked in and around education prior to becoming teachers, including paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, child care workers and others. Over the four years of the study, between 21 and 36 percent of respondents classified themselves as working in some area of education one year prior to entering teaching. Thus, the district alternative certification programs can facilitate social and economic mobility among persons in the workforce, many of whom would not be able to become professionally certified otherwise. (See Figures 21-22.)

Figure 22



Marketing and Publicizing the District Alternative Certification Program

A central goal in DACP policy is to attract individuals to the profession of teaching. For such programs to be successful, the program should serve as an incentive in participants’ decisions to enter the field. Since teachers participating in the district alternative certification program may well have entered teaching first, and then have heard about the alternative option, it was important to find out whether the teachers knew about the program before accepting their first position.

Among teachers who responded to the survey, well over half had heard of the program before entering the profession. (See Figure 25.) This figure represents a steady increase over the four-year study period from 45 percent in 2004 to 60 percent in 2007. Clearly, the district alternative certification option has been growing in visibility since its inception. Even more significantly, in the 2007 sample, among the 687 respondents who were aware of the district alternative certification option before entering teaching, more than 75 percent (520) said that knowing about the alternative route to Professional certification served as an incentive for their choosing to enter the field. (See Figure 24.)

Nearly half the respondents first heard about the district alternative certification option from school or district administrators (39%), or other teachers (9%). However, more than one out of four learned of the program through recruitment events (8%) or from the Florida Department of Education website (19%). Thus, continuing and even stepping up such marketing efforts appears to be valuable. (See Figure 23.)

Figure 23

Where Participants First Heard about the District Alternative Certification Option (n=1167)

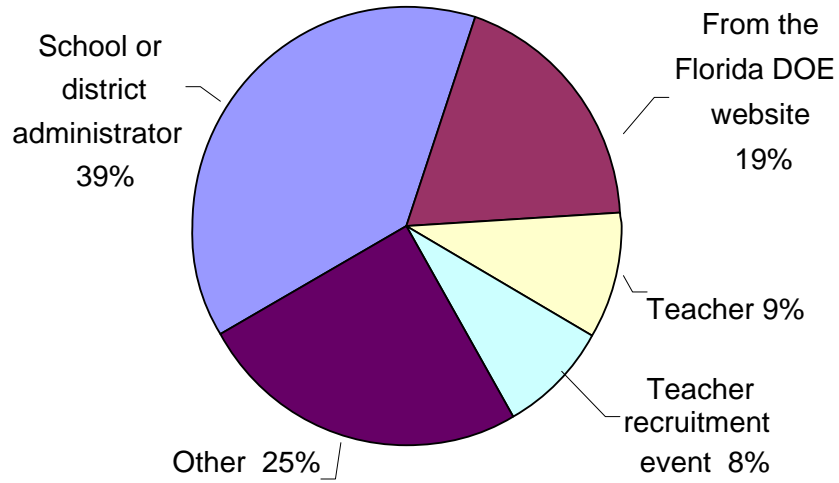


Figure 24

Percent of Participants Who Indicated that Knowing about District Alternative Certification Influenced Their Decision to Teach SY 2006-07 (n = 1152)

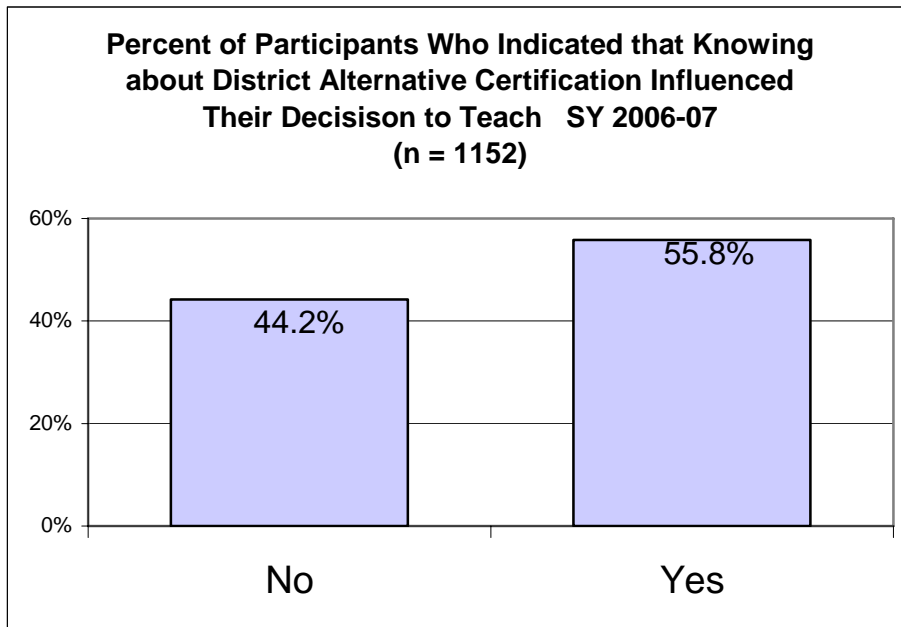
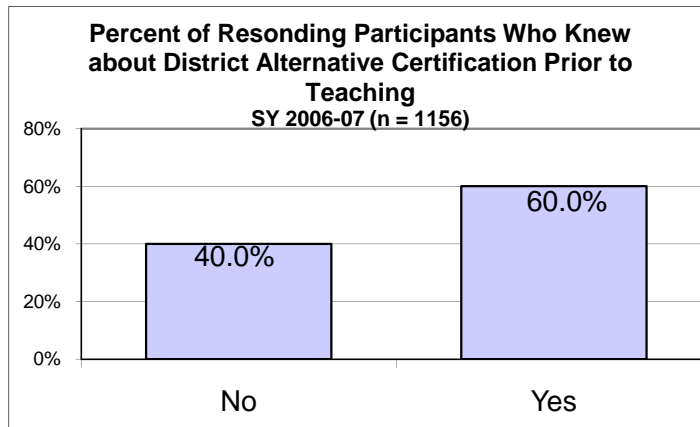
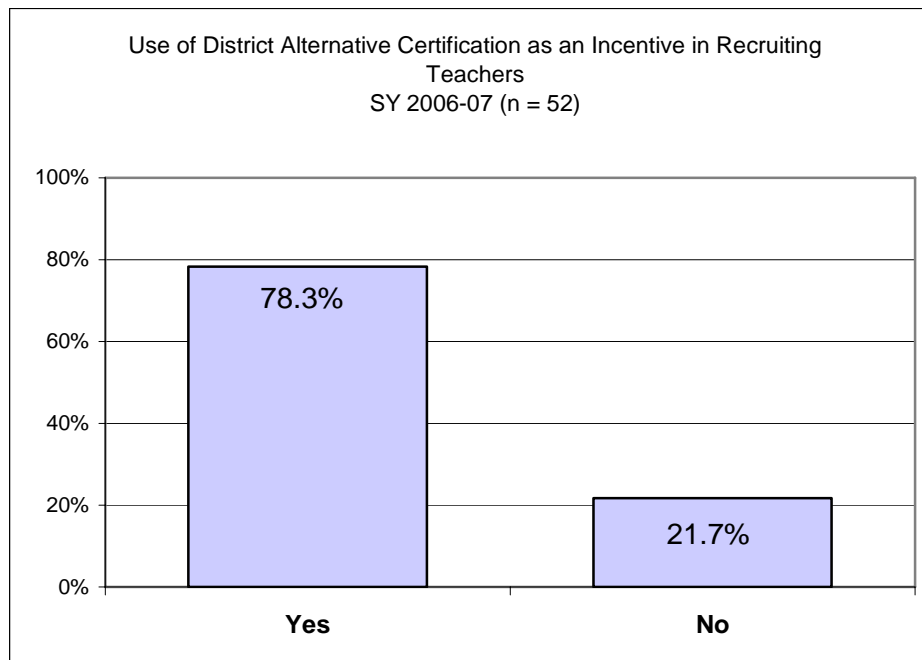


Figure 25



Turning to the district level, we asked district alternative certification coordinators to report the extent to which they used alternative certification as a recruitment strategy. Among coordinators responding to the survey, nearly four out of five (78%) reported using the program to actively recruit new teachers. This figure has been relatively stable over the study period, and the data in SY 2006-07 represent a significant increase, especially given the larger sample of coordinators responding. (See Figure 26.)

Figure 26

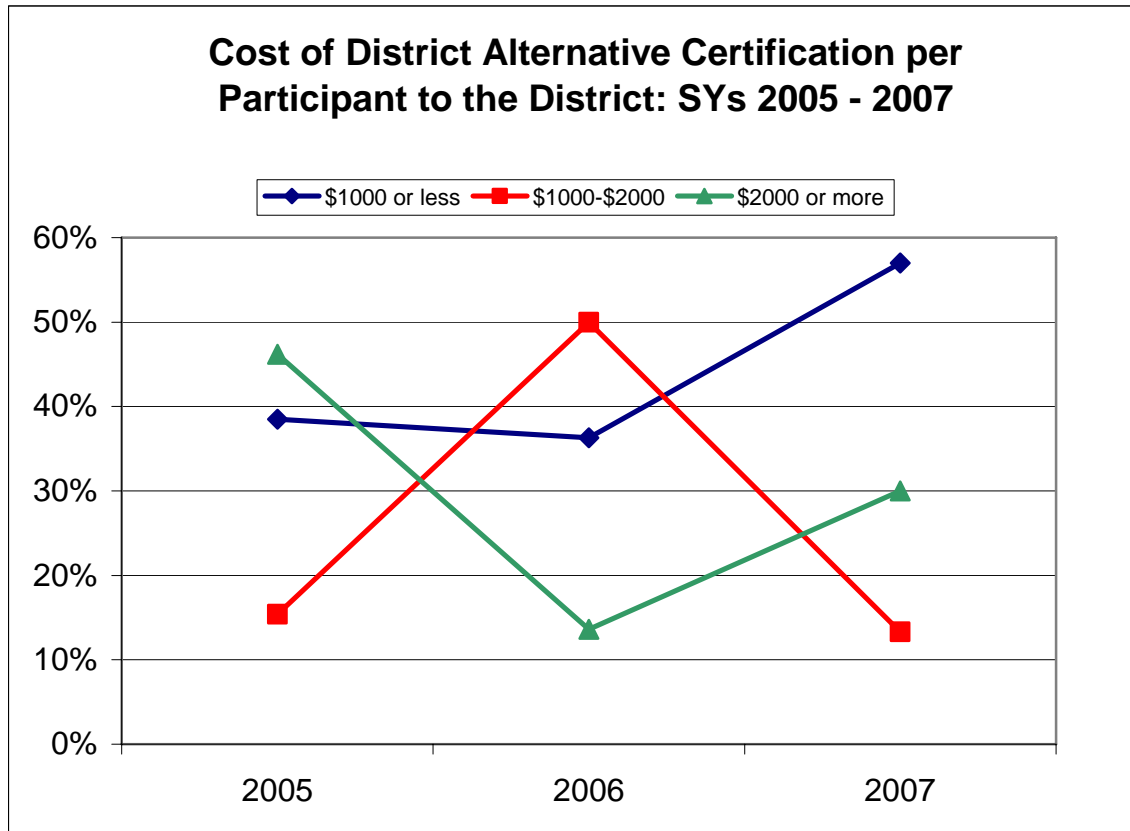


Cost to Districts per DACP Participant

We also included several questions about the costs of the program to the districts themselves (whether they used “Florida’s Alternative Certification Program,” a district-developed program, or a district program using certain components of the FACP). Cost items were of two types. First, data were collected on district costs such as the coordinator’s salary, other staff salaries, FTEs committed to the program, training costs, and others. These are difficult to obtain reliably through a self-administered survey, since the enumeration of “real costs” of programs is generally a separate study, and is most reliably conducted interactively. However, we also included questions that asked coordinators to estimate per participant costs of mentors, books and materials, courses, contracted services, and others.

In school year 2006-07, over 50 percent of districts estimated their costs per participant between \$500 and \$1600. The median cost per district was estimated to be \$850, though these estimates did not include salaries of coordinators and other staff, or hidden costs. Despite the difficulties in estimating costs of programs over many districts, the estimate for SY 2006-07 was considerably lower than in previous cohorts, which ranged between \$1750 and \$1200. This year’s study probably presents a more reliable estimate, since it is based on a sample size of 30, over twice that in prior studies. (See Figure 27.)

Figure 27

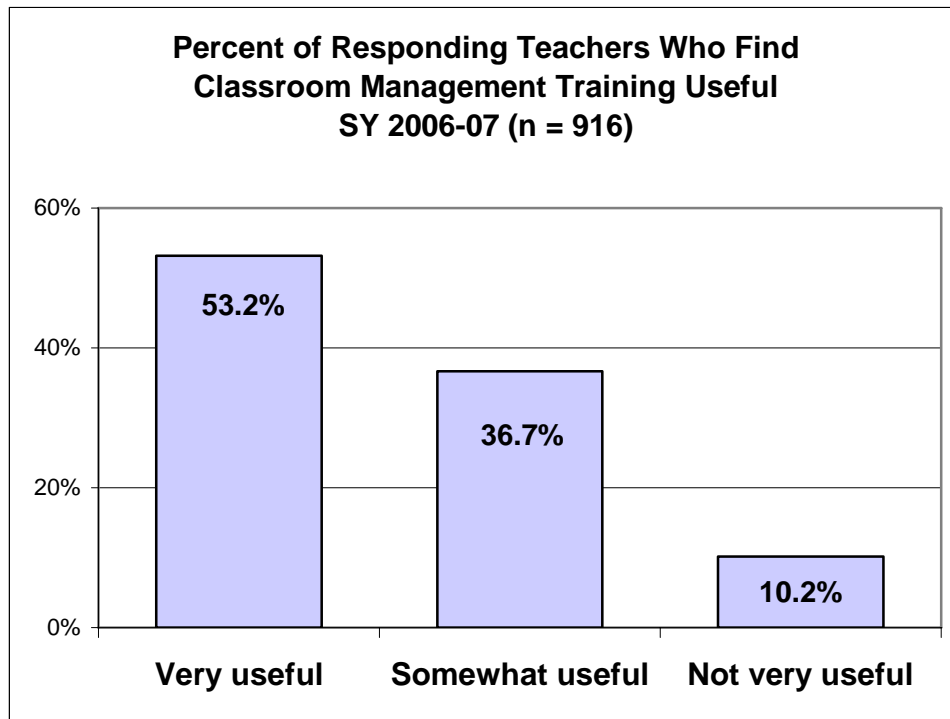


District Alternative Certification Program Components

The FLDOE in collaboration with educators from around the state identified the program components essential to ensure that Florida’s DACPs prepare high quality teachers. Four crucial components that must occur during the early phases of the program to prepare beginning teachers are survival training (a period of initial preparation prior to entering the classroom that includes classroom management training and curriculum development), mentoring, a pre-assessment of skills and abilities, and an individual learning plan.

We asked district alternative certification program participants whether they had received each component. Survival training, including classroom management training, is usually conducted right before the school year begins. The training is meant to familiarize new teachers with school rules and regulations, to train them in keeping attendance, writing lesson plans, and establishing classroom routines early in the term. In SY 2006-07, only three out of four respondents (74%) had received classroom management training. This represents a small decline over the study years, from a high of 83 percent. However, fully (90%) of respondents felt that the training was very useful or somewhat useful. Only ten percent reported that it was “not very useful.” (See Figures 28 and 29.)

Figure 28



Five out of six responding DACP participant teachers (83%) had received a professional development plan, a continuing increase since 2003 when only 69 percent had received a plan. However, only 65 percent of respondents reported having had a pre-assessment of their skills on the twelve Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. This percentage has remained stable over the last five years, except for an unexplained spike in 2004. (See Figure 29.)

Figure 29

