

ROUTES TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION: EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

AN ISSUE BRIEF FROM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

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OBJECTIVE

Educator Preparation Programs are entities approved by the State Board for Educator Certification to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification fields.

KEY FACTS

- ◆ Texas has three basic routes for obtaining teacher certification: Alternative, Post-Baccalaureate, and University-Based programs.
- ◆ The alternative route for educator preparation has produced the largest number of teachers since school year 2004–05. In school year 2010–11 approximately 48 percent of initial, standard teaching certificates were earned through alternative programs.
- ◆ University-based preparation programs experienced a 7 percent decrease in the number of certified teachers produced from school years 2006–07 to 2010–11.

BUDGETARY IMPACT

The State Board for Educator Certification is funded primarily from fees charged to educators and educator candidates for credentialing-related services. During the 2012–13 biennium, the Texas Education Agency collected approximately \$14.1 million in certification fees, with \$10.9 million collected specifically for teacher certification.

STATUTORY REFERENCES

Texas Education Code, Section 21.045

In school year 2010–11, more than 26,000 teachers received initial, standard teaching certificates in Texas. Approximately 48 percent of those certificates were produced through alternative educator preparation programs, while approximately 36 percent were produced through university-based programs. The remaining certificates were earned through a post-baccalaureate (6 percent) or an out-of-state program (approximately 10 percent).

EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) establishes and prescribes the standards and comprehensive examinations for educator certifications. A classroom teacher certification is one of the nine classes of certificates. Other certificate classes include superintendent, principal, instructional educator other than classroom teacher (i.e., reading specialist), master teacher, school librarian, school counselor, educational diagnostician, and educational aide. Each certificate includes specific job duties or functions, standards for issuance, and comprehensive examinations for the certificate.

Educator preparation programs (EPPs) are entities approved by the SBEC to recommend candidates in one or more educator certification fields. They may be implemented by an institution of higher education, regional education service center, public school district, or other entity. In Texas, there are three categories of EPPs that provide teacher certification:

- **Alternative Programs:** Teacher training offered by education service centers, school districts, community colleges, private vendors, counties, as well as colleges and universities, for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree;
- **Post-Baccalaureate Programs:** Teacher training offered by colleges and universities for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree in which individuals may receive a master's degree in addition to teacher certification; and
- **University-Based Programs:** Teacher training offered by colleges and universities as part of an undergraduate degree program.

University-based programs are called the traditional route because it was the primary method of obtaining a teacher certification until the 1980's. While post-baccalaureate programs are considered a separate route, they may also be classified as alternative because they are for individuals who already hold a baccalaureate degree. However, post-baccalaureate programs are unique in that they are offered only through universities, and individuals in the program may earn a master's degree in addition to obtaining initial, standard certification.

According to SBEC data, in school year 2011–12, there were 154 SBEC-approved EPPs in Texas. EPPs may be approved to offer certification in more than one program type. Approximately 58 percent offered alternative certification, with approximately 48 percent of the programs offering post-baccalaureate and/or university certification. Fig. 1 shows the number of EPPs by program type and total number of approved EPPs for school years 2005–06 to 2011–12.

FIG. 1
EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS BY PROGRAM TYPE
SCHOOL YEARS 2007–08 TO 2011–12

TYPE OF PROGRAM	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11	2011–12
Alternative	86	111	113	99	90
Post-Baccalaureate	70	74	74	74	74
University-Based	68	71	71	72	72
Total Number Approved EPPs	158	169	170	164	154

NOTE: Total Number Approved EPPs does not sum to the total for types of programs because some EPPs offer multiple program types.
 SOURCE: Texas Education Agency, 2012.

Fig. 2 shows the number of candidates who received initial, standard teaching certificates through each preparation route from school year 2006–07 to 2010–11. The alternative route produced the largest number of teachers since school year 2004–05 and increased its production of teachers by approximately 3 percent between 2006–07 and 2010–11. This trend contrasts the other preparation routes which decreased teacher production during the same period. University-based programs decreased production by approximately 7 percent, while the post-baccalaureate route prepared approximately 41 percent fewer teachers. Additionally, Fig. 2 shows that the overall number of initial teaching certificates, those produced through all routes, has declined since school year 2007–08.

FIG. 2
CERTIFIED TEACHERS BY PREPARATION ROUTE
SCHOOL YEARS 2006–07 TO 2010–11

PREPARATION ROUTE	2006–07	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11
Alternative	12,199	13,714	13,416	13,070	12,571
Post-Baccalaureate	2,837	2,285	1,953	1,771	1,679
University-Based	10,243	10,508	10,555	10,394	9,512
Out of State	3,910	3,765	3,716	3,381	2,739
All Routes	29,159	30,140	29,577	28,542	26,432

NOTES: Out of State includes teachers who hold certification from other states, but have not fulfilled all Texas-based requirements. Totals contain duplication because some teachers have been prepared through more than one preparation route.
 SOURCE: State Board for Educator Certification Online data, May 2011.

USEFUL REFERENCES

Title II (Teacher Quality) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*
<https://title2.ed.gov/>

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