



# Pasco County Schools: Alternative Certification Program

Land O'Lakes, Florida

Secondary Preparation Program

## Secondary preparation program structure:

Notable features of internship:  
Program supervisor conducts at least three formal observations  
Mentor provides support

Teacher candidate enrollment: **525** (2010-2011)  
Teacher production: **486** (2011-2012)  
(2013 Title II Reports)

## Secondary Preparation Program Grade

**D**

## Score Breakdown

### Alt Cert Std A: Selection Criteria

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By employing sufficiently high but pragmatic admissions standards, the program is designed to attract talented individuals who otherwise would not choose to teach.

*Selection criteria for admission into the program do not satisfy this standard because neither requirements for post-secondary grade point averages nor standardized test scores are set sufficiently high to ensure that candidates have the requisite academic talent. And although the program may interview candidates and/or require "critical thinking" assessments, the program does not require candidates to audition, and so cannot ascertain whether a candidate has non-academic traits important for teaching.*

### Alt Cert Std B: Subject Area Expertise

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Before teacher candidates have full-fledged teaching responsibilities, the program ensures their content mastery in every subject for which they could be responsible for instruction.

*Without a thorough grasp of the subject they will teach—typically acquired by majoring in an academic discipline—secondary teachers will be unable to provide the sophisticated level of instruction that their students need to progress. All children deserve to have teachers who are well versed in each and every one of the subjects they teach, regardless of teacher shortages that may be used to justify preparation shortcuts. Alternative certification programs should make sure, by either reviewing transcripts or requiring that candidates pass rigorous assessments, that beforesecondary candidates enter the classroom as the teachers of record they know the subjects they will teach. We have evaluated programs on this standard with an eye toward regulations in each state regarding the nature of multiple-subject*

certification and required content licensing tests. Because our evaluation parallels the evaluation conducted for secondary preparation in traditional teacher preparation programs, more information can be found in the scoring methodology for the comparable standard applied to such programs, Standard 8: High School Content.

The program only partly meets this standard because although it reviews transcripts or requires content testing, it offers one multiple-subject certification for which its review of the content preparation of candidates is not adequate to ensure that all teacher candidates have sufficient content knowledge in every subject they will be qualified to teach. The multiple-subject certification is in the area of:

- Social science

The program's review of the content preparation of candidates in one or more of these single-subject certifications is adequate:

- English
- Mathematics
- Specific sciences (such as Biology or Chemistry)
- Specific social sciences (such as History or Government)

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**Alt Cert Std C: Supervised Practice**



The program provides adequate supervised classroom instruction practice opportunities.

The fundamental premise of alternative certification is that full-time, independent teaching can serve as a clinical training ground for teacher candidates. To the extent that this is even possible, it requires a co-teaching arrangement with a highly qualified mentor teacher, or—barring that—as close to a co-teaching arrangement as can be offered through intense support and feedback from the alternative certification program. In the latter case, the program's support with five or more formal observations in the beginning months of teaching must be supplemented by the support of a school-based colleague who has been selected to be a mentor on the basis of demonstrated mentoring capabilities as well as effective instruction as measured by student performance.

The program satisfies only a small part of the standard because the candidate

- is not provided a co-teaching arrangement of any kind;
- is provided only three formal observations by a program supervisor in the first year, therefore fewer than five formal observations in the first three months of teaching; and
- is provided with the support of a teacher-colleague who is a capable mentor (or has had mentorship training), but who is not required to be an effective instructor.

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**Alt Cert Std D: Evidence of Effectiveness**

**NA**

The program's graduates have a positive impact on student learning.

A score on this standard is not applicable because evaluation depends on reports on the relative effectiveness of the program's graduates from a teacher preparation student performance data model; either 1) the program's state does not publish any such report, 2) the state publishes such a report, but the results do not pertain specifically to only this secondary program, or 3) the state publishes such a report, but the results for this program are not consistent for two consecutive years.