



A Career in Teaching: Alternative Certification Program

McAllen, Texas

Secondary Preparation Program

Secondary preparation program structure:



Teacher candidate enrollment: **178** (2011-2012)

Teacher production: **178** (2011-2012)

(2013 Title II Reports)

Secondary Preparation Program Grade

F

Score Breakdown

Alt Cert Std A: Selection Criteria

○

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

○

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 are used to justify preparation short-cuts. Alternative certification programs should make sure, by either reviewing transcripts or requiring that candidates pass rigorous assessments, that before secondary candidates enter the classroom as the teachers of record they know the subjects they will teach.

The program does not meet this standard because it allows teacher candidates to enter their classrooms as the teachers of record without the transcript review or testing that would ensure that the candidates have sufficient content mastery.

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 four 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.

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.