

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dallas ISD Alternative Certification program (ISD AC) aims to prepare and certify new teachers who had not completed traditional teacher certification and to provide support and training to new teacher interns. Program applicants are screened for eligibility then go through a selection process. The final pool of candidates participates in content preparation (Phase I), pre-service training (Phase II) and an internship (Phase III).

In 2022-23, the Dallas ISD AC program received \$840,000 from the general operating budget and \$797,774 in Title II, Part A funds to supplement the recruitment, selection, training, and retention efforts.¹ The AC program also received \$894,445 in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to support the Dallas AC Teacher Pipeline and \$4,344,500 to support the External Alternative Certification Program Reimbursement Incentive.

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this evaluation was to summarize context and process information through interviews with AC program staff members and analyze data for the 2022-23 AC interns (e.g., attendance, retention, and teacher survey data). Additionally, the evaluator analyzed program goals outlined in the (a) 2022-23 Dallas ISD Alternative Certification Program Title II, Part A Project Worksopce and (b) 2022-23 ESSER activity goals.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the Alternative Certification program implemented in 2022-23?

In 2022-23, the selection process for program candidates included three stages: (a) screening the applications for program eligibility; (b) inviting eligible intern candidates to participate in an online virtual interview process (HireVue); and (c) selecting the intern candidates.

The AC program was implemented by phase, cohort group, and timeline cycle (Table 1).

Table 1: 2022-23 Alternative Certification Program by Cohort, Phase, and Timeline Cycle

Cohort	Phase	Cycle
57	I	March 10, 2022 - May 31, 2022
	II	June 6, 2022 - July 14, 2022
	III	August 15, 2022 - June 23, 2023
58	I	August 18, 2022 - October 28, 2022
	II	November 7, 2022 - December 8, 2022
	III	January 2023 - January 2024
59	I	February 22, 2023 - May 26, 2023
	II	June 5, 2023 - July 10, 2023
	III	July/August 2023 - May/June 2024

Source: Dallas ISD Alternative Certification Webpage 12/05/22.

After applicants were accepted into the AC program, candidates attended an orientation and completed the following three phases of the program:

Phase I: Content Test Preparation

- Candidates participated in content test preparation, and guidance for the TExES² content test. Candidates were required to complete 30 hours of field-based and video-based observations.
- Candidates were required to attend content study group sessions. Each content area provided knowledge and pedagogy to improve performance on the TExES tests.
- Candidates were required to pass the applicable TExES content test corresponding with their designated certification pathway before proceeding to Phase II.

Phase II: Pre-Service Training

- Candidates engaged in a rigorous, research based pre-service training curriculum. Candidates were closely monitored through performance benchmarks to determine classroom readiness.

Phase III: Internship

- In 2022-23, candidates were not assigned a campus for their internship as in 2021-22. Instead, a job fair was held in November 2022, specifically for AC candidates. Applications for teacher positions were submitted to the campus of the candidate's choice and interviews were conducted with the campus principle.

¹ The funding amount was provided by Special Revenue Funds Management on 06/21/23.

² TExES refers to Texas Examinations for Educator Standards. These exams ensure that new teachers have the content knowledge and skills necessary for entry-level teachers in Texas public schools.

- Interns lead a classroom at the campus where hired, as full-time teachers of record for one year, with full compensation and benefits.
- Interns were required to complete 300 hours of coursework.
- Interns were assigned a field-facilitator (i.e., teacher effectiveness coordinator) and a campus-based mentor (teacher) to provide coaching and feedback. Teacher effectiveness coordinators observed interns at least three times during the internship.
- During observations, teacher effectiveness coordinators provided support and immediate feedback to allow interns to monitor progress and adjust their teaching practices.

AC Program Outcomes³

- A total of 1,346 applications were received in 2022-23, and 413 candidates (30.7%) enrolled in the program in 2022-23 (i.e., entered Phase I).
- A total of 150 interns were hired between summer 2022 and spring 2023 (i.e., entered Phase III; Cohort 57 and 58). This was an increase from the number of interns who were hired in 2021-22 ($n = 90$).
- A total of 116 interns completed the AC program between summer 2022 and spring 2023 (i.e., Cohort 56 and 57). This was an increase from the number of interns who completed the AC program in 2021-22 ($n = 52$).

Because certification tests are taken at the end of Phase I, the most recent data for the 2022-23 reporting year included participants in Phase 58 and 59, who completed certification tests between September 1, 2021, and August 31, 2022 (Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Certifications during the 2022-23 Reporting Year for the ASEP.

Certification Area	Interns (n)
Core Subjects EC-6	111
Social Studies 7-12	11
Science 7-12	16
Total	138

Source: Alternative Certification internal records provided 07/25/23.

Note: EC=Early Childhood. ESL=English as a Second Language. ELAR=English Language Arts and Reading. Certification tests were completed between September 1, 2021 and August 31, 2022.

AC Program Goals

Goals 1-3: From the 2021-22 to 2022-23 reporting years for the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP), there will be a 20 percent increase in the number of candidates passing the (a) Core Subjects EC-6 TExES exam on the first attempt; (b) Science 7-12 TExES exam on the first attempt; and (c) Social Studies 7-12 TExES exam on the first attempt.^{4,5}

From the 2021-22 to 2022-23 reporting years for ASEP:

- The number of interns who passed the Core Subjects EC-6 TExES exam on the first attempt increased from 49 to 73, which met the goal of a 20 percent increase. However, the rate of interns who passed on the first attempt decreased from 56 percent ($N = 87$) to 44 percent ($N = 165$).
- The number of interns who passed the Science EC-6 TExES exam on the first attempt increased from eight to 15, which met the goal of a 20 percent increase. In addition, the rate of interns who passed on the first attempt increased from 44 percent ($N = 18$) to 54 percent ($N = 28$).
- The number of interns who passed the Social Studies EC-6 TExES exam on the first attempt increased from seven to nine, which met the goal of a 20 percent increase. In addition, the rate of interns who passed on the first attempt increased from 37 percent ($N = 19$) to 64 percent ($N = 14$).

Goal 4: Through a research-based screening, selection process, and strategic recruitment,⁶ the Dallas ISD AC program will identify a diverse group of 200 interns to transition into the classroom for the 2022-23 academic year.

- In 2022-23, 150 interns were hired between summer 2022 and spring 2023 (i.e., entered Phase III; Phase 57 and 58), which did not meet the goal.

Teacher Retention

- The retention rate for interns who had completed the AC program in 2021-22 ($N = 52$)⁷ and continued to teach in the Dallas ISD at the end of the 2022-23 school year was 69 percent.
- The 2021-22 retention rate for teachers who completed the AC program trended downward compared to previous years [i.e., 2018-19 (66%, $n = 67$); 2019-20 (81%, $n = 26$), and 2020-21 (88%, $n = 45$; Figure 5)].

³ Data were reported for Phase 56-59 in 2022-23 and provided by AC program staff members on 07/19/2023.

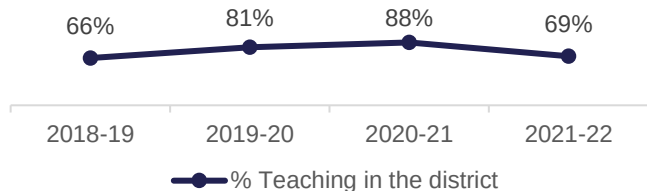
⁴ Data provided by AC program staff members on 07/19/2023.

⁵ AC program staff members helped AC candidates prepare for their exam and pass on the first attempt by providing content test preparation materials (E Publishing materials and Certify Teacher) for each content area.

⁶ Recruitment strategies included information sessions, job fairs, flyers, billboards, paid advertisements, social media postings, alternative certification website, etc.

⁷ This included interns from Phase 52, 53, 54, and 55.

Figure 5: 2018-19 through 2021-22 Retention Rates of Alternative Certification Interns



Source: Data from AC program staff received on 07/19/23 and district personnel file dated internal records retrieved 06/26/23.

Note: Previous data pulled from 2021-22 evaluation report (Zhang, 2022).

What was the perception of teachers who had completed the AC program in 2022-23?

Methodology

A teacher satisfaction survey was sent to 60 teachers in April 2023 who participated in the AC program during the 2022-23 school year. The purpose of the survey was to collect feedback about the training they received. A total of 34 teachers (57% response rate) responded to the survey.

The survey items asked teachers about their preparedness to: (a) plan instruction (i.e., lesson design); (b) implement instruction in the classroom, (c) establish a positive classroom environment, and (d) meet their professional responsibilities. Teachers also responded to two open-ended questions about challenges they faced in the program and their suggestions for improving the program in the future.

Results

- Survey data indicated that 82 percent of teachers felt the training received from the AC program had prepared them for classroom teaching.
- Eighty-eight percent of teachers were satisfied or very satisfied with the support provided by the campus mentor, and 97 percent of teachers were satisfied with the support provided by their field facilitator.

Regarding lesson design, most respondents agreed that they felt prepared after completing the AC program to:

- Ask questions that promote higher-order thinking skills (94%); measure student progress (91%); and create lessons aligned with state content standards (85%).

Regarding instruction in the classroom, most respondents agreed that they felt prepared after completing the AC program to:

- Encourage students to use various types of thinking (88%) and meet the diverse learning needs of all students through differential instruction (88%).
- Use content-specific pedagogy to deliver lessons aligned with state standards (85%); communicate effectively with the parents of my students (82%); and

show how learning objectives are related to other content areas (82%).

Regarding classroom environment, most respondents agreed that they felt prepared after completing the AC program to:

- Create an accessible learning environment for students (91%); create efficient procedures and routines for students in my classroom (85%); and set clear behavior standards for students in my classroom (85%).

Regarding professional responsibilities, most respondents agreed that they:

- Follow the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators (97%); follow the Dallas ISD's professional standards (94%); set professional goals using feedback (88%).

Challenges

Teachers were asked about the biggest challenges they encountered during their participation in the AC program ($N = 25$). The most common theme regarding challenges was related to training content (48%; $n = 12$).

- Some respondents felt that some training content from Phase I and Phase II of the AC program were not relevant to the internship during Phase III.
- In addition, they reported that class scenarios presented during the training did not always reflect what teachers faced in the classroom. They also felt they needed more training about differentiation and more instruction on content to prepare for certification tests.

The second most common theme regarding challenges was related to time management (40%, $n = 11$).

- Some respondents reported that they struggled with balancing their personal responsibilities with work, the training program, and meetings.

Suggestions

Teachers were also asked about their suggestions to improve the AC program in the future ($N = 24$). The most frequent theme was related to training resources they received in the AC program (63%; $n = 15$).

- Respondents suggested (a) replacing the Certify Teacher program because it was not helpful as they hoped, (b) using more real-life classroom scenarios and role play, (c) including classroom resources, (d) using more hands-on teaching strategies, and (e) including more engaging sessions and workshop/course on essay writing.

The second most common theme regarding suggestions was related to the support they received in the AC program (25%, $n = 6$).

- Respondents encouraged program staff to (a) provide additional support for participants who are experiencing extenuating circumstances, (b) provide training for how to support Emergent Bilingual students, and (c) have more facilitators who can provide social emotional support for new teachers.

What were the context and outcomes of the ESSER-Funded activities in 2021-22?

The Dallas AC Teacher Pipeline

- The Dallas AC Teacher Pipeline supplemented the AC program costs of approximately 40-50 Bilingual, 20-30 Mathematics, 20-30 Science and 20-30 Special Education teachers and teachers in other areas of high need (e.g., 10-15 secondary ELAR teachers), along with test preparation and supports.
- The AC program staff members set a goal that they would hire 160 interns (i.e., 80 from Phase 57 and 80 from Phase 58) during the 2022-23 school year.
 - In 2022-23, 81 interns were hired in Phase 57 and 69 interns were hired in Phase 58, which partially met the goal.
- The AC program staff members also set a goal that the overall pass rate of all certification tests will increase by 10 percent for all phases that start in 2022-23. However, because the 2022-23 reporting year for ASEP only includes certification tests that were completed in 2021-22, this goal could not be measured yet.

The External Alternative Certification Program Reimbursement Incentive

- The External Alternative Certification Program Reimbursement Incentive provided up to \$4,000 for all new teachers onboarded before November 1, 2022, to encourage candidates to join the Dallas ISD.

- The AC program staff members set a goal that the teachers applicant pool will increase 400 additional teacher applicants for the year.
 - In 2022-23, 1,346 applications were received for the AC program, compared to 443 in 2021-22, which met the goal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue efforts to increase the number of participants in the AC program. In 2022-23, the AC program received 1,346 applicants and 116 interns completed the program, which were both greater than 2021-22. Most teachers who participated in the program had positive responses about the training they received. This indicates that the AC program made progress towards recruiting and preparing new teachers who had not completed traditional teacher certification.

Continue efforts to increase both the number and rate of interns passing their certification test on the first attempt. In 2022-23, the AC program met all three goals of increasing the number of interns passing the TExES exam on the first attempt. As the number of participants in the AC program increases, it is important that the program continues to provide quality support so that the number and rate of interns passing on the first attempt trends upward over time.

Ensure that participants in the AC program receive sufficient support to be successful as district teachers. Respondents on the AC teacher survey indicated that AC program staff members should strengthen the connection among all three phases in the program, such as providing more training on what they to expect in the classroom, additional preparation for certification tests, and providing more emotional support for new teachers.

REFERENCE

- Zhang, J. (2022). 2021-22 Evaluation of the Selected Human Capital Management Title Workscopes. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.

EA23-265-3

Rosemary Garcia-Rincon, B.S., Evaluation Analyst I

©2023 Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD)

Mail a written request for permission to use or reproduce any part of this document to:

Dallas ISD Department of Evaluation and Assessment; H. B. Bell School Support Center; 2909 Buckner Blvd.; Box10; Dallas, TX 75228

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888.

For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.