



Frequently Asked Questions

I have heard of the DVUSD Teacher Prep Program, but what is it?

The Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) is an alternative pathway to teacher certification. The program is designed, taught, and supervised by Deer Valley educators to help ensure the next generation of DVUSD teachers are well prepared to teach in our district. At the end of the program, participants are fully certified teachers in the state of Arizona.

What are the qualifications to enter the program?

To qualify for the program, you must have:

- A bachelor's degree (in any discipline)
- A valid Arizona Fingerprint Clearance Card
- A commitment to supporting students and learning

I'm interested in teaching, but I don't have a background in education. Can I still apply?

Yes. Many successful teachers begin their careers with degrees in fields outside of education. The Teacher Preparation Program is specifically designed for individuals who want to transition into teaching. Through coursework, mentorship, and hands-on classroom experience, the program provides the training and support needed to develop the instructional skills, classroom management strategies, and professional knowledge required to become an effective educator. What matters most is a commitment to students, a willingness to learn, and a desire to grow as a professional teacher.

How do I apply for this program?

If you are interested in the Teacher Prep Program, please complete [this application](#) for the program. You will then use our [WinOcular system](#) to complete the certified application. Someone will then be in touch with you to give you further guidance and set up your series of interviews to help us determine the best placement for you.

What degree would I be earning through this program?

This is a certification program. You are NOT earning a degree, only earning a post-baccalaureate certificate. This certification allows you to teach in Arizona; however, it is non-reciprocal should you move out of state.

Ok then, what certificate would I be earning through this program?

While in the program you will be placed on an Alternative Pathway Certificate. If you do not successfully complete the program at the end of those 2 years, you will be able to apply for a 1 time extension. Upon completion of the program, your Alternative Pathways Certificate will be converted to a Standard Classroom Based Certificate in the program you completed.



When are classes meeting? Are they online? In person?

All classes meet in person at one of our district schools. Classes meet on Wednesdays for the Special Ed programs and Thursdays for the Gen. Ed programs, from 4:30-7:30 pm.

I am worried about the time commitment. What kind of time would I have to dedicate to this program?

Classes meet once a week for 3 hours of instruction. There may be another 1-3 hours of work outside of that class meeting. However, the courses are built to be very practical in nature. What you do in class on Wednesday can be applied in your classroom on Thursday. The course work is designed with your classroom in mind and incorporates best practices, instructional strategies, and reflective thinking.

Can I work while completing the program?

Yes. In fact, the program is designed specifically for individuals who are teaching full time while completing their certification. Classes meet once a week in the evening, and assignments are designed to directly connect to your classroom practice. Many participants find that the work they complete for the program supports and improves what they are already doing with their students.

What kind of support would I get as I enter my own classroom?

Deer Valley Unified School District prides itself on the mentorship programs that exist for all new to district and new to profession teachers. As a participant in this program, you would be eligible for those same supports. Additionally, the program coordinator will provide field supervision and will meet you at your school to review your goals as a teaching professional and support you in your instruction as you begin to implement new learning from your course work.

What areas/subjects would I be certified to teach?

The program currently offers three certification pathways:

- Special Education (Mild/Moderate Disabilities K–12)
- Elementary Education (K–8)
- Secondary Education (6–12)

Candidates pursuing middle or secondary grades must demonstrate content knowledge in their subject area and may be required to pass the appropriate subject area exam before beginning the program.

I am very interested in the program, but I don't know if I am ready to take on my own classroom. What options do I have?

We understand that taking on your own classroom can feel overwhelming. To meet this need, we have designed [The Rise](#) Track. This track allows participants to begin coursework focused on child development, classroom management, and foundational teaching skills before taking on their own classroom. The goal is to meet you where you are and support your growth into the educator you are meant to become.



Do I need to already work for DVUSD?

No. While many participants currently work in Deer Valley schools as paraprofessionals, substitutes, or support staff, employment with the district is not required to apply. However, candidates must be hired into a teaching position within DVUSD in order to participate in the program, since the coursework is designed to support teachers while they are actively teaching.

How competitive is admission to the program?

Admission to the Teacher Preparation Program is not competitive in the sense that there are only a few slots available; however, the program is selective. Candidates must meet basic eligibility requirements and complete an interview process in order to obtain provisional acceptance into the program. During the selection process, we look for individuals who demonstrate a strong commitment to students, a willingness to learn, and the resilience needed to grow as a professional educator. Our goal is to ensure that participants are prepared for the challenges and rewards of teaching.

What does this program cost?

This program is completely FREE.

When does the program start?

New cohorts of the Teacher Preparation Program begin once each school year, typically at the start of the school year in August. The application and interview process takes place in the months leading up to the school year to allow time for hiring and placement within the district.

Why should I choose the DVUSD Teacher Preparation Program instead of a university program?

The Deer Valley Teacher Preparation Program is uniquely designed by Deer Valley educators for Deer Valley classrooms. Because the program is operated by the district, the coursework focuses on the practical skills teachers need every day—classroom management, instructional strategies, lesson design, and supporting diverse learners.

Participants immediately apply what they learn in class to their own classrooms, allowing them to grow as educators while receiving support from experienced teachers and instructional leaders. In addition to coursework, participants receive mentorship and field supervision to help guide their development as a teacher.

Another key difference is that the program is completely free, allowing participants to earn their certification while gaining real classroom experience without the cost of a traditional university program.

What do I do if I want more information?

Please contact Stefanie Ewbank at: stefanie.ewbank@dvusd.org or 623.445.4928. You can also complete [this interest form](#) and she will get back to you soon.

