Louisiana Believes

Educator Preparation in Louisiana: Mentoring in Post-Baccalaureate Preparation

USHCA State Alliance Convening
Winter 2019

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Agenda

- Session objectives
- Background on post-baccalaureate preparation
- Innovative approaches to post-baccalaureate preparation
- Discussion

Objectives

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- Learn about efforts in rural communities to pilot innovative, cost-neutral models of post-baccalaureate or “alternate” certification preparation

- Identify strategies for providing significantly more time to practice with an expert mentor to strengthen post-baccalaureate candidates’ preparation

Every day in Louisiana, educators are committed to ensuring that *every child* has the opportunity to grow and thrive.

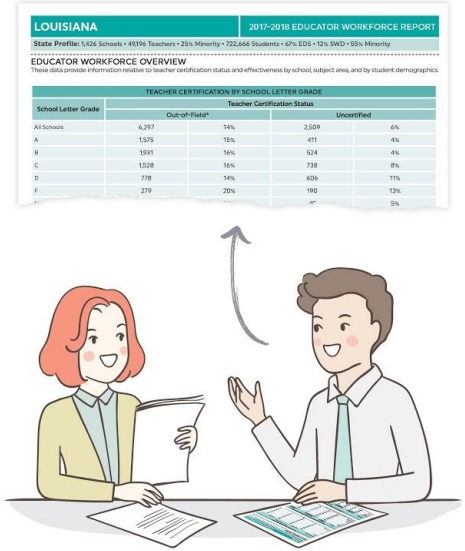
As a result of this vision, Louisiana has a relentless focus on these five areas:

- **Unified Early Childhood Systems**
- **Academic Alignment**
- **Teacher and Leader Preparation**
- **Pathways to College or a Career**
- **Struggling Schools**

TEACHER AND LEADER PREPARATION

FULL PREPARATION FOR TEACHERS:
Ensure meaningful preparation for prospective teachers through strategic partnership between school systems and educator preparation providers.

CONTINUOUM OF LEADERSHIP ROLES:
Establish and expand leadership roles to ensure that teachers are supported.



INFORMED WORKFORCE DECISIONS:
Publish educator workforce data to inform school and school system leaders' workforce decisions.

Background

Believe and Prepare

In order to better prepare new teachers for their first years in the classroom, the Louisiana Department of Education launched the nationally recognized Believe and Prepare pilot program in 2014. This pilot program:

- called teacher preparation providers to offer aspiring teachers a full year of practice under an expert mentor and a competency-based program design, and
- catalyzed strategic partnerships between school systems and educator preparation provider partners.

In October 2016, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), with support from the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR), adopted landmark regulations to **expand yearlong residencies and competency-based curricula statewide** by July 2018.

Since the regulations were passed, providers have received approximately $8.3 million in transition funding and have made substantial progress in shifting to yearlong residencies and competency-based program design.

The Need for Mentoring in Post-Baccalaureate Preparation Programs

Roughly half of all teachers in Louisiana are prepared through post-baccalaureate or "alternate" certification training programs that require fewer pre-service practice experiences as compared to undergraduate residents.

Research shows that structured support from and practice with a strong mentor teacher has a significant impact on teacher success and student growth.[1] Therefore, **the LDE has supported a pilot community of rural school systems that are implementing innovative, cost-neutral approaches to alternate preparation**, which include:

- mentoring by expert teachers at each school site
- increased time for practice throughout the school year

These pilots offer insight into how Louisiana can strengthen alternate certification candidates' preparation through dedicated time to practice with an expert mentor teacher throughout the school year.

[1]Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers: A Critical Review of the Research. Review of Educational Research, 81(2), 201–233. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1127&context=gse_pubs

Improving Preparation for Post-Baccalaureate Candidates

In Louisiana, there are two pathways to teaching, undergraduate and post-baccalaureate.

Undergraduate teacher preparation providers have made significant progress in shifting to yearlong residencies with ample time for practice with a mentor teacher.

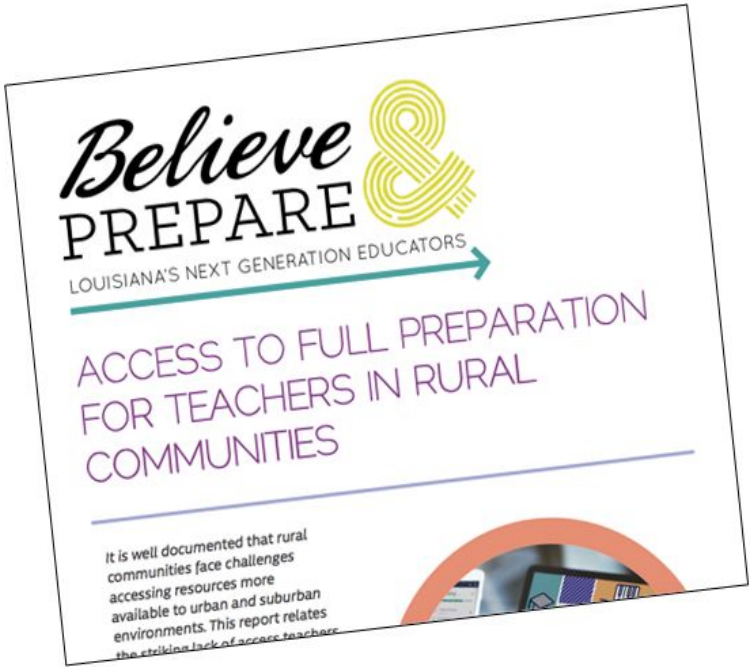
For the **post-baccalaureate or "alternate" certification route**, current policy requires these candidates to have a school-based mentor; however, **mentoring practices for alternate certification teachers vary statewide**.[1] In many cases, candidates do not have dedicated time to practice with their mentors. This results in first-year teachers who have had minimal practice and are, therefore, more likely to struggle in their first year. This is detrimental to student learning and teacher retention.

- Nearly 20 percent of teachers prepared through alternate certification routes leave the profession after only two years, compared to 12 percent of teachers prepared through undergraduate routes.[2]

[1]Louisiana Bulletin 996 - Louisiana Standards for State Certification of School Personnel

[2]As reported by school systems in EOY Profile for Educational Personnel (PEP) data in December 2017, 2016, and 2015

Believe and Prepare:
Focusing on Rural Communities



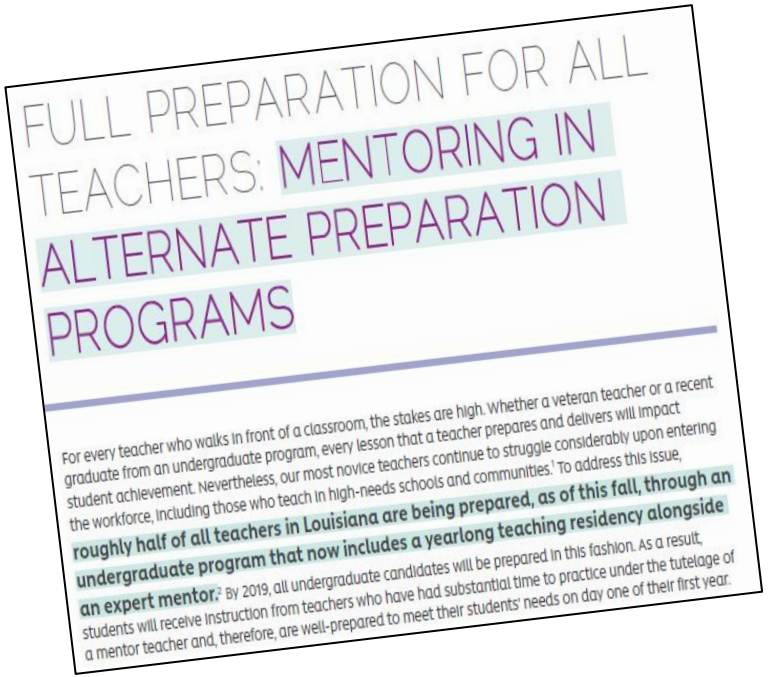
In September 2017, the Department studied and reported on the issue of post-baccalaureate or "alternate" certification preparation in Access to Full Preparation in Rural Communities, a report highlighting these unique challenges of preparing teachers to teach in rural communities.

Additional time for mentoring was one area of further exploration noted in the report.

In response to this report, the Department released a request for applications in October 2017, seeking school systems committed to piloting innovative approaches to post-baccalaureate preparation. The Department received 24 applications for this grant opportunity.

Innovative Approaches to Post-Baccalaureate Preparation

Innovative Approaches to Improving the Alternate Model



FULL PREPARATION FOR ALL TEACHERS: MENTORING IN ALTERNATE PREPARATION PROGRAMS

For every teacher who walks in front of a classroom, the stakes are high. Whether a veteran teacher or a recent graduate from an undergraduate program, every lesson that a teacher prepares and delivers will impact student achievement. Nevertheless, our most novice teachers continue to struggle considerably upon entering the workforce, including those who teach in high-needs schools and communities.[1] To address this issue, **roughly half of all teachers in Louisiana are being prepared, as of this fall, through an undergraduate program that now includes a yearlong teaching residency alongside an expert mentor.**[2] By 2019, all undergraduate candidates will be prepared in this fashion. As a result, students will receive instruction from teachers who have had substantial time to practice under the tutelage of a mentor teacher and, therefore, are well-prepared to meet their students' needs on day one of their first year.

Research shows that **structured support from and practice with a strong mentor teacher has a significant impact on teacher success and student growth**. Given that most alternate candidates enter their first year in the classroom with minimal practice, mentoring is essential.

In order to meet this need, **eight rural school systems are partnering with teacher preparation programs to implement innovative approaches to post-baccalaureate preparation** which include significantly more time to practice with a mentor teacher.

In December 2018, the Department released Full Preparation for All Teachers: Mentoring in Alternate Preparation Programs, a report highlighting important lessons learned from these pilots thus far that offer insight into how Louisiana can strengthen alternate certification candidates' experiences.

Innovative Approaches to Improving the Alternate Model

Current preparation provider partners helping to inform the implementation phase of these pilots include the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM), TNTP, Louisiana State University (LSU) Cain Center, and Northwestern State University (NSU).

On average, the pilots offer candidates **structured practice and mentoring for one period per day, every day, during the entire school year** and provide time for co-teaching, collaborative planning, and observation and feedback sessions.

The pilots increase the amount of mentoring that these teachers typically receive by 350 percent, making the preparation experience **substantially more supportive than what current policy requires**.

School Systems: Bogalusa, Cameron, Grant, JS Clark Leadership Academy, Morehouse, Pointe Coupee, Richland, West Carroll

Number of Candidates: 38

Number of Schools: 16

Pilot Participant Perspectives

"**I wish I had the mentoring experiences that my candidates get.** I have seen the power of this co-teaching experience. I was not expecting my candidate to do so well so fast, but she has."

- Mentor, Richland Parish

"I honestly don't think that there is anything more that my school system could do for me. I have an amazing coach that co-teaches with me the last two hours of the day. **Her help has been invaluable.**"

- Candidate, Richland Parish

"**It is a big help and relief when my mentor shows up** [... I am] glad I have the person I have for this program."

- Candidate, City of Bogalusa

"During a recent recruitment event, we noticed an **increased level of interest in new teachers** wanting to teach in Bogalusa as a result of strengthening our mentoring program at the pilot school and throughout the school system."

- School System Leader, City of Bogalusa

In the News

"CAMERON SCHOOL BOARD FINDS SUCCESS WITH PILOT PROGRAM"

https://www.americanpress.com/news/local/cameron-school-board-finds-success-with-pilot-program/article_c285070c-039d-11e9-bc3f-7b915ab12f93.html

Cameron School Board finds success with pilot program

Marlisa Harding Dec 19, 2018

The Cameron Parish School Board was recently featured in a special report by the Louisiana Department of Education regarding the district's participation in a new grant-based initiative to better prepare alternative certification teacher candidates.

America Press (December 19, 2018)

"THIS STATE IS REIMAGINING HOW TO MENTOR TEACHERS IN ALTERNATIVE-CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS"

Education Week's blogs > Teacher Beat

This State Is Reimagining How to Mentor Teachers in Alternative-Certification Programs

By Madeline Will on December 20, 2018 9:55 AM

Share 1

Teachers who enter the profession through alternative-certification programs quit at higher rates, **research has found**--and experts have pointed to these teachers' feelings of preparedness in the first years on the job as a potential factor.

In Louisiana, almost 20 percent of teachers who are prepared through alternative routes leave the profession after just two years, compared to the 12 percent of teachers who go to a traditional college of education. This is especially notable because half of aspiring educators in the Bayou State are prepared through alternative-certification programs. Teachers in these programs hold an undergraduate degree outside the education field and complete their training while serving as a lead teacher.

"Access to high-quality preparation is ultimately an equity issue," said Hannah Dietsch, the department's assistant superintendent for talent. "I

Education Week (December 20, 2018)

Next Steps

In January, the Department released a toolkit describing strategies that school systems have used to provide increased support for alternate certification candidates, including shifts in scheduling and staffing plans.

These pilots provide promising models for how school systems can make structural changes to provide significantly more time to practice with an expert mentor to strengthen alternate certification candidates' preparation.

The Department will continue to examine the impact of each pilot, including the impact of increased mentoring.

Discussion

Questions

Please contact Ariel.Murphy@la.gov for questions.

Thank you for your time.