

Alternative Routes to Teaching Partnership Grant Program

In 2007, the legislature provided additional funding to the Professional Educator Standards Board to expand the existing routes of the Alternative Routes to Teaching Program. This funding provides more conditional scholarships to prepare individuals in shortage teaching areas.

Status of Program:

As of June 2008, 688 paraeducators, classified instructional staff, mid-career professionals and conditional certificate holders have transitioned to a new career teaching in statewide and geographic shortage areas through the PESB's Alternative Routes to Teaching Program. 97% of Alternative Route candidates have entered Washington State's teaching force upon completion of their programs. Additional candidates are currently enrolling in programs during the summer and fall of 2008 and are expected to enter the teaching force with shortage area endorsements after completing their programs in June 2009.

There are five Alternative Route programs that serve paraeducators, classified instructional staff, mid-career professionals and conditional certificate holders in the following areas of the state:

- Mt. Vernon, Skagit Valley and Everett
- Seattle/Tacoma
- Olympia
- Yakima Valley
- A new Alternative Route program will open in the Tri Cities area in June of 2009.

Alternative Route Programs are:

- A **performance-based mentored internship** of one year or less with the length of the program determined by the time required for candidates to demonstrate competency related to residency certificate standards;
- **Field-based**, with formalized learning opportunities offered on or near school/district sites, on-line or via K-20;
- Guided by a **Teacher Development Plan** that identifies program requirements based on assessment of the intern's prior experience and education;
- **High quality and quantity mentoring**, including training specifically designed for intern mentors;
- **"More performance-based"** than traditional programs, according to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) evaluation; and
- **Cost effective programs are "package priced"** rather than credit-driven and range from \$7,000 - \$15,000 for post-baccalaureate programs. WSIPP reports that tuition is less for alternative routes programs than for traditional programs at the same institution.

Alternative Route Candidates are:

- Older, with an average age of 41.
- The majority of Alternative Route candidates are prepared to teach in statewide or geographic shortage areas. As of June 2008, program completers had earned a total of 582 endorsements in state identified shortage areas, including 130 in Secondary Sciences, 80 in Secondary Math, 76 in Middle Level Math/Science, 60 in ELL and 236 in Special Education. Additionally, candidates have earned endorsements in geographical shortage areas including foreign languages, music, and health and fitness.
- 76% of mentor teachers report Alternative Route Program teachers to be better prepared than those from more traditional programs and an additional 19% found them at least as well prepared. Similarly, 96% of principals surveyed found Alternative Routes teachers at least as well or better prepared.

What Alternative Routes Program Completers Say:

"I am very happy that I was able to pursue this program. I am a single mom with three kids and I was a paraeducator in special education. This was a smooth transition for me. I could not have accomplished my dream without this program."

"I appreciate the opportunity to pursue my certificate in a non-traditional format. Having lived, worked and volunteered for years – it was great to be able to share and incorporate "real world" scenarios into my learning environment. This was a great fit for me."

The Alt. Rts. program allowed me to work in a career I love. Without the flexibility of the program, it would have been very difficult for to become a teacher."

"The program is a wonderful way to transition into a teaching career. The students that the program attracts are diverse, capable, highly educated and may not have gone into teaching without a program like this."

What's New in Alternative Routes?

New Alternative Routes Program in Eastern Washington Route 1 Regional Consortia Program New urban area Alternative Route Program

- Tri Cities – ESD 123 plus four institutions providing an alternative routes program for mid-career professionals in the Tri Cities area scheduled to begin June 2009.
- Regional Consortia Program - Heritage University serving Route 1 candidates in collaboration with a Community College, the Regional Consortia partners and multiple districts. Program targets bilingual paraeducators with AA degrees to prepare in ELL.
- Seattle Pacific University- opened Alternative Routes for candidates to be eligible for scholarships beginning summer 2008.

For more information on Alternative Routes to Certification please visit our website at .pesb.wa.gov and click on Alternative Routes or contact Mea Moore at mea.moore@k12.wa.us

