

**STATE POLICY TRENDS FOR ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO TEACHER
CERTIFICATION: A Moving Target**

By

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The contents of this paper are based on original data and information collected and analyzed by the National Center for Education Information and the National Center for Alternative Certification. Further information can be obtained at www.teach-now.org and www.ncei.com.

ATC, ACP, ARP, ARTC, ARC, AC... Question: What do they stand for? Answer: Essentially the same thing. Regardless of the terminology or acronym, “alternative _____” -- in the context of teacher certification -- refers to creations of state licensing agencies that are alternatives to the traditional college, campus-based (usually undergraduate) teacher education program route culminating in a certificate (license) to teach. The most accurate term to describe what is now going on at the state level is “alternative routes to teacher certification.”

In 2005, 47 states and the District of Columbia reported to the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) that they were implementing alternative routes to teacher certification. Of these, 43 states described 115 actual alternative routes to teacher certification. These state certification routes are being implemented in approximately 485 program sites, most accurately called “alternative teacher certification programs.”

To date, each state is the only entity that can issue licenses or certificates to teach or grant licensing authority in the state in which one teaches. And, in order to teach in public schools in the United States, one has to have a license to teach in the state in which one is teaching.

The variation in numbers and types of teaching certificates issued by states, as well as requirements for obtaining them through traditional college-based undergraduate teacher education program routes, has been huge. In addition, the certificates issued have been ever changing.

It is no different in the area of alternative routes to teacher certification (ARTC). As ARTCs have proliferated, so have the variations of them.

The National Center for Education Information (NCEI) began tracking what states are doing in this area in 1983 when New Jersey officials, former Governor Tom Keane, then Commissioner of Education Saul Cooperman and Director of Teacher Licensing Leo Klagholz convened a task force, chaired by the late Ernest Boyer, for the purpose of coming up with an alternative to teacher certification that would attract liberal arts graduates into teaching. That was officially the beginning of the alternative teacher certification movement, as such. I was on that task force.

In 1983, NCEI began annually to ask state licensing officials, “What is your state’s status regarding alternative routes to the approved college education program route for certifying teachers?” They were asked to check the following: Implementing alternatives; proposed alternatives, considering alternatives, not even considering alternatives.

Throughout the 1980s, the answers to that question seemed frenetic. It was clear that some states were considering anything and everything they had been issuing – such as emergency certificates – alternative routes to teacher certification.

When New Jersey began implementing its Provisional Teacher Certificate program in 1985, the media took note and the reaction from the education establishment was anything but welcome. The mere hint that schools and school districts might be given authority to establish their own “approved programs” to train and educate their own teachers and that the state would issue teaching certificates to completers of these programs was met with fierce resistance -- primarily from teacher colleges.

The mid-1980s brought other “news breaking” stories of projected huge shortages of teachers. Based on what we now know as somewhat misleading statistics, the nation was going to need to hire 1 million, then 2 million, then 2.2 million *new* teachers in the next decade.

Legislators and policy makers were driven to ward off severe shortages of teachers, and the torch to find ways to get more people into teaching was lit. Efforts to get rid of emergency certification added fuel to the fire. The race was on to create alternative routes to teacher certification.

State teacher education and licensing officials, who are ultimately responsible for issuing teaching certificates, began calling any and every certificate they had been issuing to people who had not completed the traditional college approved teacher education program route, including emergency certificates, “alternative teacher certification.”

In 1990, in an attempt to provide some order to the chaos, as well as attempt to give some direction to the movement, NCEI asked the states to send us original source documents – legislation, regulations, guidelines, brochures – whatever they had – related to their alternative routes to teacher certification. We pored through these documents and created a format for describing each alternate route (Appendix A). In addition, we created a classification system in order to make clear the distinctions among these routes (Appendix B).

Beginning with the 1991 edition of the annual publication, *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis*, NCEI began classifying and providing a detailed description of each alternate route to teacher certification in each state. State officials, legislators and policymakers regularly use the publication to guide their efforts in creating laws with provisions for alternative routes to teacher certification.

In August 2003, NCEI received an unsolicited discretionary grant award from the U.S. Department of Education to establish the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC). NCAC’s web site, www.teach-now.org now serves as a one-stop source of information about alternative routes to teacher certification, including the full text of *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis*.

To recap some history, the 1980s were characterized by two rather divergent phenomena regarding alternative routes to teacher certification:

1. A focus in a few states to develop new and different ways of recruiting non-traditional candidates for teaching and the creation of new pathways for certifying them to teach.
2. A flurry in several states to re-name existing teacher certification routes, such as emergency or other forms of temporary certificates, “alternate routes.”

By 1991, 39 states reported they were implementing 91 alternate routes to teacher certification. In 2005, 39 of those “alternate routes” no longer exist. Most of them had been emergency certificates, waivers or other temporary certificates. Nine of the 91 alternate routes identified in 1991 have undergone revisions since then; 43 are still “on the books,” many of which have, in actual practice, been replaced by newer routes.

The early to late 1990s saw some real definition emerge about what was and what was not an alternate route to teacher certification. More and more states not only stopped calling their emergency and temporary certificates “alternate routes,” but dropped them altogether.

By the late 1990s, common characteristics of alternate routes being created by the states began to emerge:

- Routes specifically designed to recruit, prepare and license talented individuals who already had at least a bachelor’s degree -- and often other careers – in fields other than education.
- Rigorous screening processes, such as passing tests, interviews, and demonstrated mastery of content.
- Field-based programs.
- Coursework or equivalent experiences in professional education studies before and while teaching.
- Work with mentor teachers and/or other support personnel.
- High performance standards for completion of the programs.

The late 1990s also brought the Higher Education Act of 1998 which put the focus squarely on higher education and teacher preparation accountability. Sections 207 and 208 under Title II of the Act mandated new requirements for reporting on teacher preparation, certification and licensing.

Sec. 207(b)(7) stated that states must annually provide, “A description of each State’s alternative routes to teacher certification, if any, and the percentage of teachers certified through alternative certification routes who pass State teacher certification Licensure assessments.”

Since 2000, states have provided such information to the Title II office. Those annual reports can be found at www.title2.org.¹

The fastest growth in alternative routes to teacher certification has occurred since 2000, with most of the new routes administered by colleges and universities. The operative term is “administered by.” Most every alternative route to teacher certification is, in fact, collaboration among the state licensing authority, institutions of higher education and local school districts.

¹ While most of the information from the Title II state reports matches that catalogued by NCEI, there are noticeable differences. The contacts for Title II reporting list several more MAT programs as alternative routes than do the contacts for NCEI. NCEI obtains its information about alternative routes to teacher certification from the offices in the state that directly administer alternative routes to teacher certification. In some cases, that is the overall teacher education and certification offices; in others, it is a special office within the state office of teacher education and certification; in others, it is a licensing commission or board in charge of teacher licensing.

Who, at the state level, is “in charge of” alternative routes to teacher certification is as much a moving target as the routes themselves. In some states that have large numbers of individuals coming into teaching through alternative routes to teacher certification, namely, California, Texas, Georgia, teacher licensing has been in the hands of State Commissions or boards separate from the State Department of Education. In each of these states, that could change any day, as efforts are underway to have those entities be put under the State Departments.

Another problem with state data has been the lack of uniform reporting and data collection procedures.

⁴ *The contents of this paper are based on original data and information collected by the National Center for Education Information and the National Center for Alternative Certification. Further information can be obtained at www.teach-now.org and www.ncei.com.*

The 1990s also brought some other programs that have had a major impact on the discussion about who enters teaching and how they enter the profession.

The Teach for America program, begun in 1990, has been at the forefront of these discussions. So has Troops to Teachers which began in 1994. The New Teacher Project and the Transition to Teaching program followed.

It is terribly important to remember that NONE of these programs is an alternative route to teacher certification. These non-traditional recruitment programs may use state alternative routes; they may even help design them, but they are *not* alternative routes to teacher certification.

In their own words, these programs are:

Teach for America

Who we are

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates of all academic majors who commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools, and become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity. Our mission is to build the movement to eliminate **educational inequity** by enlisting some of our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort.

Our alumni, now numbering more than 10,000, are already starting schools, becoming principals and district administrators, winning accolades as teachers, and working to expand educational opportunity while pursuing careers in law, public policy, medicine, and business.

Since 1990, more than 14,000 **exceptional individuals** have joined Teach For America. They have directly impacted the lives of 2 million students and form a growing force of civic leaders committed to ensuring that our nation lives up to its ideal of opportunity for all.

Accessed from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/about.html>, Sept. 6, 2005

How does certification work?

School districts hire Teach For America corps members through state-approved alternative certification programs, whereby corps members must meet specific requirements and demonstrate proficiency in the grades and subject areas they will teach. These program requirements vary by region and by position, but in most cases they call for corps members to pass subject-area tests before teaching and to take ongoing coursework during the school year. Teach For America works with school districts, states, and schools of education to ensure that corps members have access to coursework, test information, and preparation tools to meet these requirements. In many regions we have established partnerships with graduate schools that enable our corps members to obtain their master's degrees in education. While Teach For America connects corps members to these resources, ultimately corps members are responsible for ensuring they meet the required standards and for covering the related costs.

Accessed from <http://www.teachforamerica.org/certification.html>, Sept. 6, 2005

The New Teacher Project

The New Teacher Project (TNTP) is a national non-profit organization that partners with educational entities to increase the number of outstanding individuals who become public school teachers and create environments for all educators that maximize their impact on student achievement. Since 1997, we have worked with school districts, colleges of education and state departments of education to enhance their capacity to recruit, select, and train outstanding new teachers.

Accessed from <http://www.tntp.org/who/index.html>, Sept. 6, 2005

High-Quality Alternate Routes to Certification

The New Teacher Project works with districts, states and universities that are interested in establishing alternate routes to teaching and certification in order to expand the pool of teachers by attracting talented, diverse individuals from non-education backgrounds.

Accessed from <http://www.tntp.org/wht/ser.html#alternate>, Sept. 6, 2005

Transition to Teaching

The Transition to Teaching program supports the recruitment and retention of highly qualified mid-career professionals, including qualified paraprofessionals, and recent college graduates who have not majored in education to teach in high-need schools and districts through the development of new or enhanced alternative routes to certification.

The program provides five-year grants to state and local educational agencies, or for-profit organizations, non-profit organizations, or institutions of higher education collaborating with state or local educational agencies. Grantees develop and implement comprehensive approaches to train, place, and support teacher candidates whom they have recruited into their programs, which must meet relevant State certification or licensing requirements. Grantees then ensure that program participants are placed to teach in high-need schools and districts and support candidates to serve in these placements for at least three years.

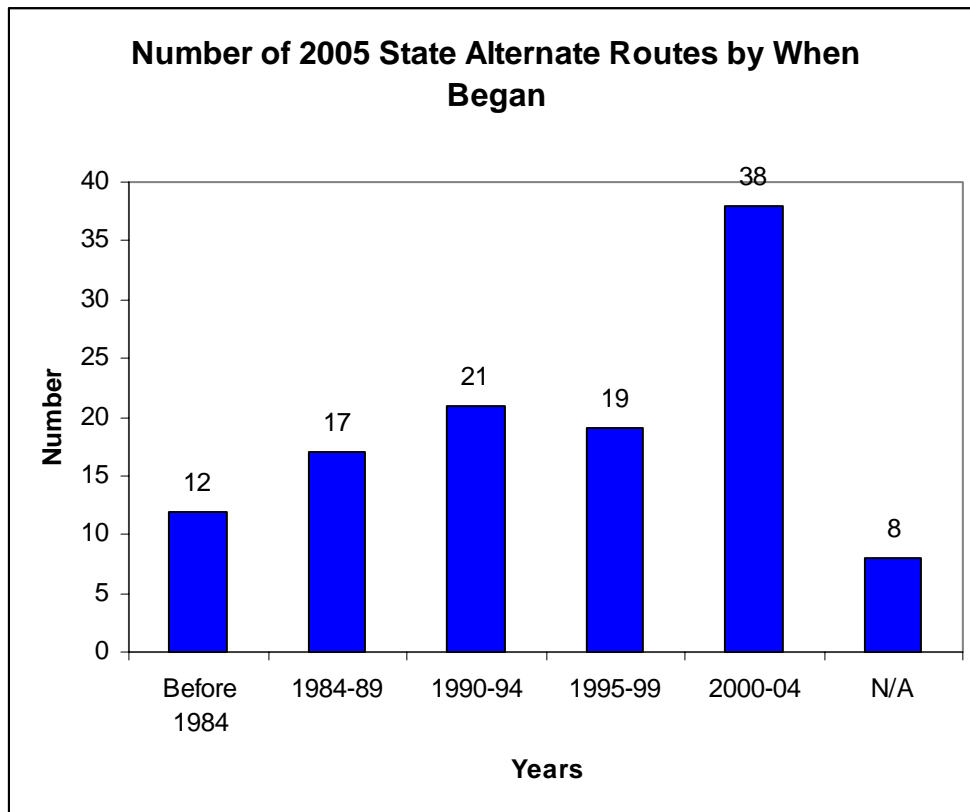
Accessed from <http://www.ed.gov/programs/transitionteach/index.html>, Sept. 6, 2005.

Troops to Teachers

Troops to Teachers is a U.S. Department of Education and Department of Defense program that helps eligible military personnel begin a new career as teachers in public schools where their skills, knowledge and experience are most needed.

Accessed from <http://www.proudtoserveagain.com>, Sept. 6, 2005.

The Troops to Teachers program was authorized by the Congress of the United States in the Defense Authorization Bill introduced in 1993. Since 1994, the program has been managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). Troops to Teachers provides referral assistance and placement services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career in public education as a teacher. DANTES helps applicants identify teacher certification requirements, programs leading to certification and employment opportunities. Nearly 8,000 former military personnel have entered K-12 teaching through this program.



Source: Basic data from *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*

One-third of current state alternative routes to teacher certification have been created since 2000. More than half of them have been established in the last 15 years.

Two of the 12 alternate routes still listed by states (the two Intern programs in California) have been revised and upgraded several times. The remaining 10 include such routes as New York's Transcript Analysis, Internship Certificate and Visiting Lecturer programs – all of which have been around since the 1960s.

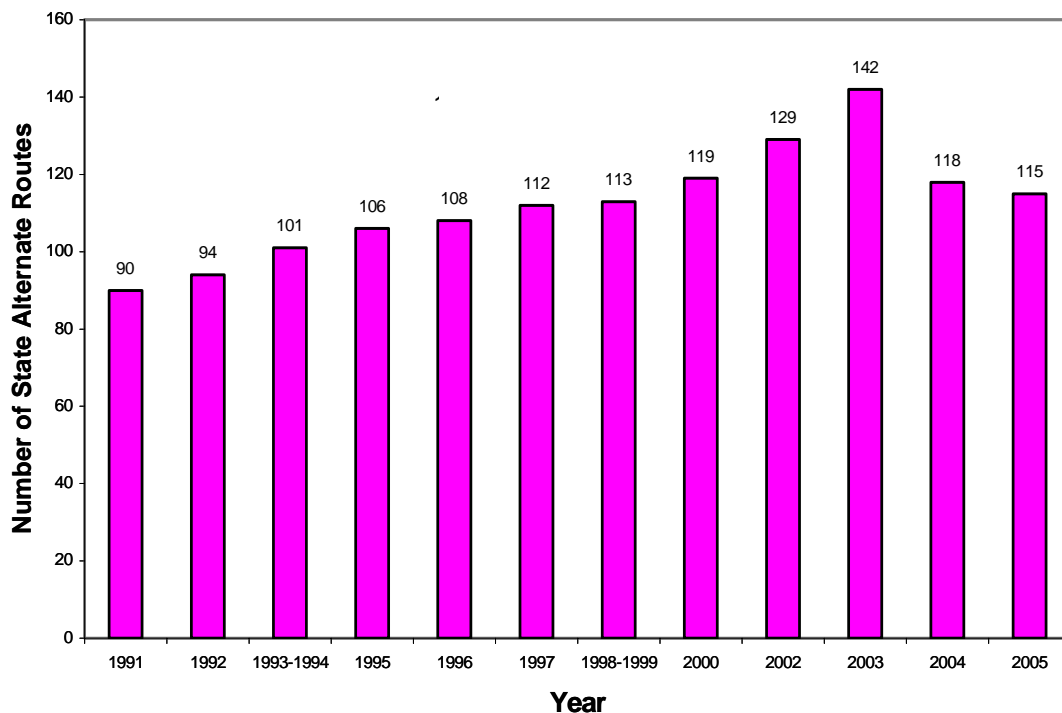
The most prolific alternate routes in terms of production of new teachers – per year, as well as total -- are the oldest and most established -- in the states of California, New Jersey, and Texas. The alternative routes to teacher certification in these three states began in the mid-1980s, with some additions and modifications since then. The number of individuals certified through the alternative routes in these three states in 2004 accounted for nearly half of all teachers certified through alternate routes that year. New Jersey reports that about 40 percent of its new hires come through alternate routes. For Texas and California, about one-third of their states' new hires come through alternate routes.

Additional states where alternative routes to teacher certification are growing rapidly in producing more and more of the state's new teachers are: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Virginia.

Local areas where alternative routes in other states are producing significant numbers of new teachers are: Chicago, New York City, Milwaukee, and the District of Columbia.

Currently, there are 115 alternative routes to teacher certification actually being implemented by approximately 485 providers in 43 states and the District of Columbia. An analysis of data from the states and a representative sampling of local providers can be found in Appendix B of NCEI's 2005 publication, PROFILE OF ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHERS, which is also available at www.teach-now.org.

Total Number of State Alternate Routes by Year



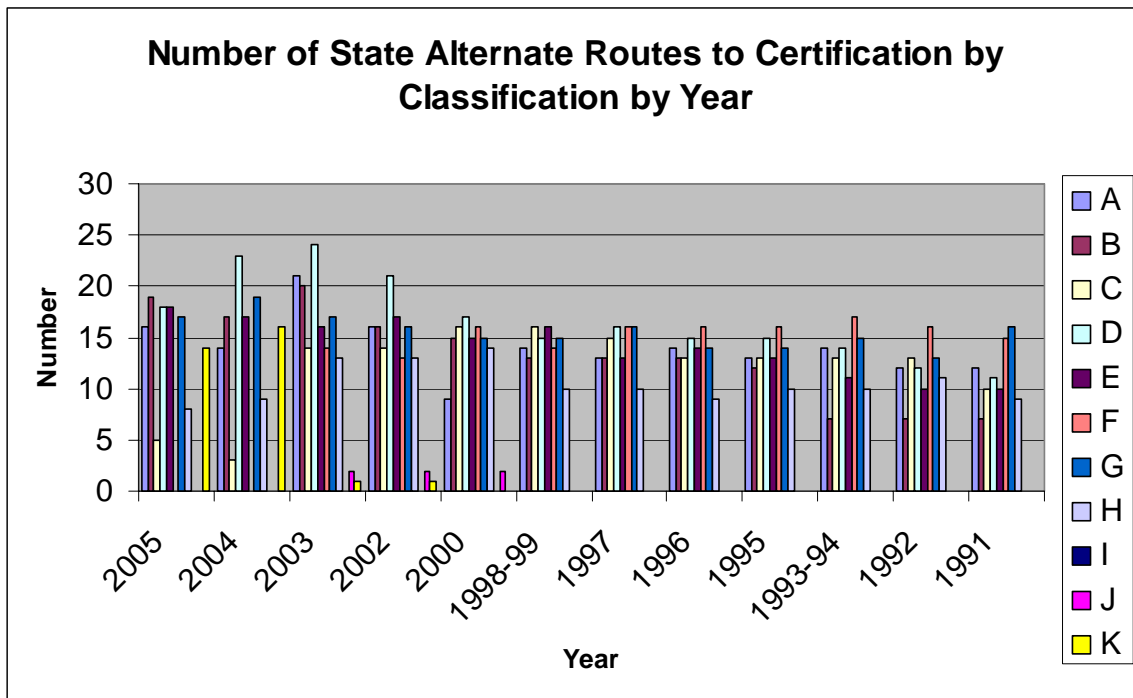
Number of State Alternate Routes by Classification, by Year

Years	Classification											K Total
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
2005	16	19	5	18	18	0	17	8	0	0	14	115
2004	14	17	3	23	17	0	19	9	0	0	16	118
2003	21	20	14	24	16	14	17	13	0	2	1	142
2002	16	16	14	21	17	13	16	13	0	2	1	129
2000	9	15	16	17	15	16	15	14	0	2	0	119
1998-99	14	13	16	15	16	14	15	10	0	0	0	113
1997	13	13	15	16	13	16	16	10	0	0	0	112
1996	14	13	13	15	14	16	14	9	0	0	0	108
1995	13	12	13	15	13	16	14	10	0	0	0	106
1993-94	14	7	13	14	11	17	15	10	0	0	0	101
1992	12	7	13	12	10	16	13	11	0	0	0	94
1991	12	7	10	11	10	15	16	9	0	0	0	90

Source: Basic data from *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*

The number of alternative routes to certification states have turns out to not be very important. Some states list four or five alternate routes, yet use them sparingly or not at all. From year to year, routes are added and routes are dropped by states.

What has been noteworthy as alternative routes have gained in noteriety is a shift away from emergency and other temporary routes to new routes designed specifically for non-traditional polulations of post-baccalaureate candidates, many of whom come from other careers.



In February 2004, during the first annual conference of the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC), which was created by NCEI with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in 2003, participants asked us to develop a template that could be used by providers of alternate route programs to describe their programs, as well as record basic data and information about their programs and would be uniform across the country.

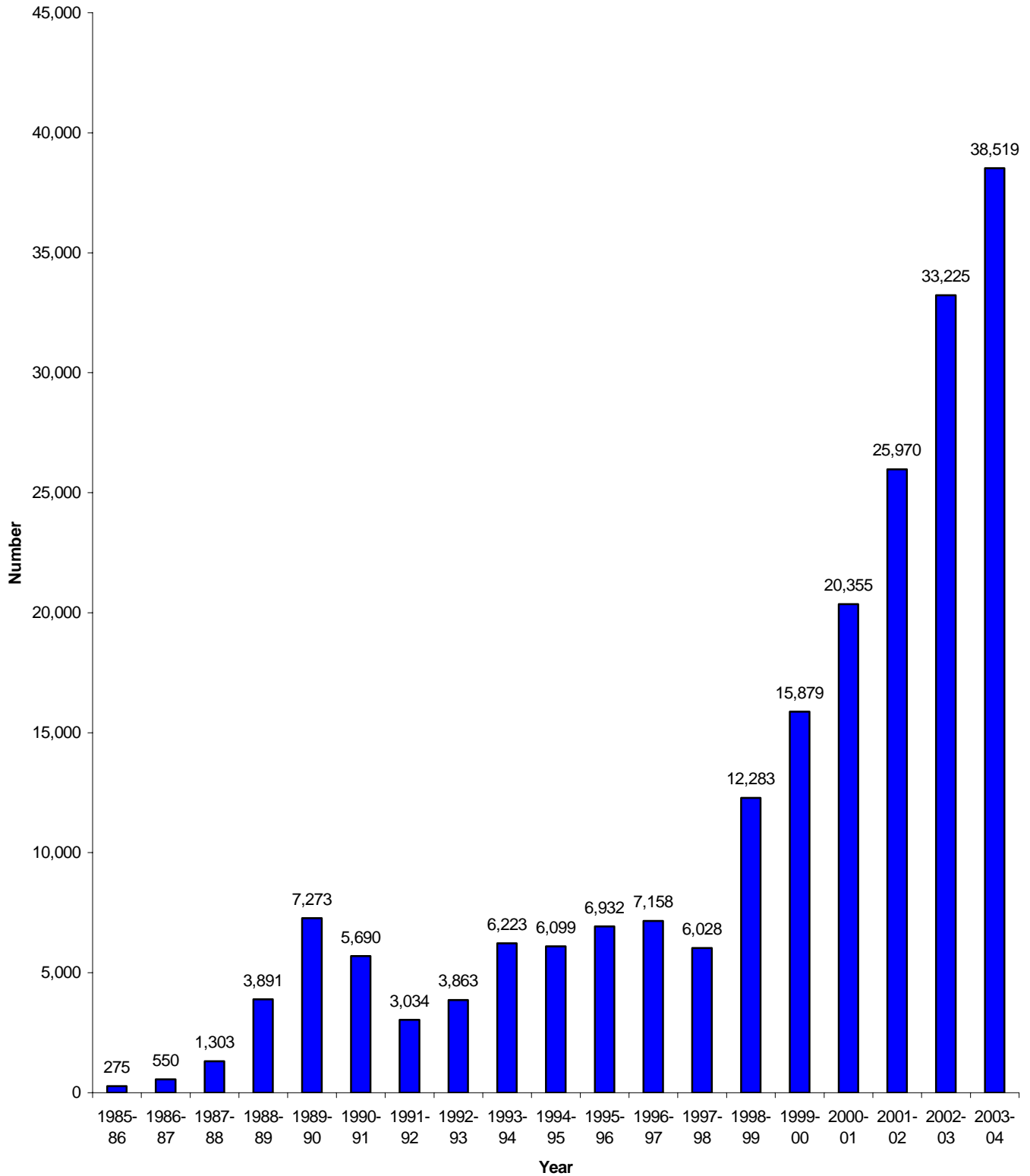
That template was designed with input from numerous state officials, providers of alternate route programs and researchers. It was made available for use online in June 2004 at NCAC's web site, www.teach-now.org. The providers of alternate route programs for whom NCAC had contact information were informed through several emails that the template was available for their use in describing their programs, recording basic data and information about their programs and that it could be accessed online through a user ID and password which they could obtain from NCAC.

From information provided to NCAC by the states, 538 individual sites where alternate route programs are being implemented across the nation were identified. By spring of 2005, 464 had contact information and 265 providers of alternate route programs had completed a data template designed by NCAC. The information for each program can be found, by state, at www.teach-now.org.

NCAC maintains a running analysis of the data as it is entered by providers of alternate route programs. It is noteworthy that, from when only 150 providers had completed the data template to when 265 had, there has been no significant change in the profile of alternate route programs.

Data submitted to NCAC from the states that issue teaching certificates and from providers that are implementing alternate route programs within the state indicate that approximately 38,000 individuals who were entering teaching through alternate route programs were issued certificates to teach in 2004.

**Number of Individuals Issued Teaching Certificates Upon Completion of Alternate Routes,
1985 - 2004**



Source: Basic data from *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*

Data from providers of alternate route programs report that about one-third of those who apply for their programs get accepted and enter a program. About two-thirds of those who enter an alternate route program actually complete it and obtain a certificate to teach. Nearly all of those who complete a program and receive a teaching certificate are teaching the following year – usually in the same school where they taught while in the alternate route program.

Most alternate route programs are created specifically to meet the demand for teachers in the areas where they are established. Seventy-one percent of providers of alternate route programs say their alternative programs serve students in a high-needs area (e.g. low socioeconomic area, high poverty level, and high minority) school. An additional 27 percent say that they serve some students in high needs areas. Only 2 percent say their programs do not serve students in high needs areas.

Appendix C of this paper is an analysis of current alternative routes to teacher certification programs being implemented throughout the states.

The variations in program requirements for alternative routes to teacher certification are immense. Herein lies the biggest challenge for research.

APPENDIX A
NCEI Format for Describing Alternate Routes to Teacher Certification

TEXAS	Class A
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TITLE: Alternative Teacher Certification

HISTORY: First implemented in 1985 with single program in the Houston school district. The state currently has 67 programs, including 21 programs in community colleges and 8 programs conducted by private entities.

MOTIVATION: Originally to alleviate shortages, but state legislation passed in 1989 eliminated that requirement.

GRADE LEVELS AND/OR SUBJECT AREAS COVERED:

The alternative preparation programs are approved to offer teacher preparation in all grade levels and content areas offered by the State of Texas. In addition, alternative preparation programs are currently available for administrators to include principal, superintendent, educational diagnostician and master teacher.

WHO OPERATES: Typically, each program involves a combination of three entities ---LEA, IHE, and regional education service center. Development of each certification area includes practitioners from the field. Recently, community colleges and private entities have created programs in partnership with LEAs.

REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER:

The individual must:

Hold a bachelor's degree.

Demonstrate acceptable college level skills in reading, oral and written communication, critical thinking, and mathematics as determined by the program.

Complete screening activities to determine appropriateness for the certification sought.

If seeking a Bilingual Education/English as a second language (ESL) certificate, must give evidence of oral and written language proficiency before being assigned to a bilingual education classroom.

Source: *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*, page 288.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

All programs are jointly created through a collaborative process involving the local school districts, colleges, and education service center. Participants from these entities develop the curricula, based on the State's standards that are necessary to prepare teachers for the target certificate. The curricula cover the same State standards that would be included in traditional undergraduate programs, as well as any unique local needs. Instruction is delivered by the partners most suited to the task, either in coursework or in contact hours, and includes a one-year internship.

During the one-year internship, the intern holds a one-year probationary certificate and receives close support and assistance on a regular basis from a certified mentor teacher who is teaching either in the same or in a related subject area.

Since the intern is on a probationary certificate, he or she receives the full financial benefits of a classroom teacher (i.e., salary and benefits.)

Provisions are made for the intern to observe the teaching of the mentor teacher, and for the mentor teacher to observe the intern.

The intern must complete any training in teaching methods and classroom management prescribed by the state, either during the pre-assignment training or during the internship year.

The internship leads to a full teaching certificate, identical to that received by a graduate of a traditional undergraduate teacher preparation program.

NUMBER OF CREDIT HOURS TO COMPLETE:

Individual certificate programs require varying amounts of additional coursework to meet unique competency requirements of each certificate.

WHO EVALUATES: The school principal, ACP program supervisor or ACP director.

LENGTH OF TIME: Probationary certificate is valid for one year. It may be renewed annually for up to two additional years.

Source: *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*, page 289.

APPENDIX B

CLASSIFICATION OF ALTERNATE ROUTES TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The National Center for Education information, for the sake of consistency in reporting and analyzing what is going on in the field of alternative teacher certification, developed the following classification system in 1990 for categorizing the "alternate routes" to the approved college teacher education program route for certifying teachers submitted by the states.

CLASS A is the category reserved for those routes that meet the following criteria:

- *The alternative teacher certification route has been designed for the explicit purpose of attracting talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor degree in a field other than education into elementary and secondary school teaching.*
- *The alternate route is not restricted to shortages, secondary grade levels or subject areas.*
- *These alternative teacher certification routes involve teaching with a trained mentor, and any formal instruction that deals with the theory and practice of teaching during the school year -- and sometimes in the summer before and/or after.*

CLASS B: Teacher certification routes that have been designed specifically to bring talented individuals who already have at least a bachelor degree into teaching. These routes involve specially designed mentoring and some formal instruction. However, these routes either restrict the route to shortages and/or secondary grade levels and/or subject areas.

CLASS C: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis of the candidate. They involve specially (individually) designed in-service and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. The state and/or local school district have major responsibility for program design.

CLASS D: These routes entail review of academic and professional background, and transcript analysis. They involve specially (individually) designed inservice and course-taking necessary to reach competencies required for certification, if applicable. An institution of higher education has major responsibility for program design.

CLASS E: These post-baccalaureate programs are based at an institution of higher education.

CLASS F: These programs are basically emergency routes. The prospective teacher is issued some type of emergency certificate or waiver which allows the individual to teach, usually without any on-site support or supervision, while taking the traditional teacher education courses requisite for full certification.

CLASS G: Programs in this class are for persons who have few requirements left to fulfill before becoming certified through the traditional approved college teacher education program route, e. g., persons certified in one state moving to another; or persons certified in one endorsement area seeking to become certified in another.

CLASS H: This class includes those routes that enable a person who has some "special" qualifications, such as a well-known author or Nobel Prize winner, to teach certain subjects.

CLASS I: These states reported that they were not implementing alternatives to the approved college teacher education program route for licensing teachers.

CLASS J: These programs are designed to eliminate emergency routes. They prepare individuals who do not meet basic requirements to become qualified to enter an alternate route or a traditional route for teacher licensing.

CLASS K: These avenues accommodate specific populations for teaching, e.g., Teach for America, Troops to Teachers and college professors who want to teach in K-12 schools.

Source: *ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: A State-by-State Analysis 2005*, page 35.

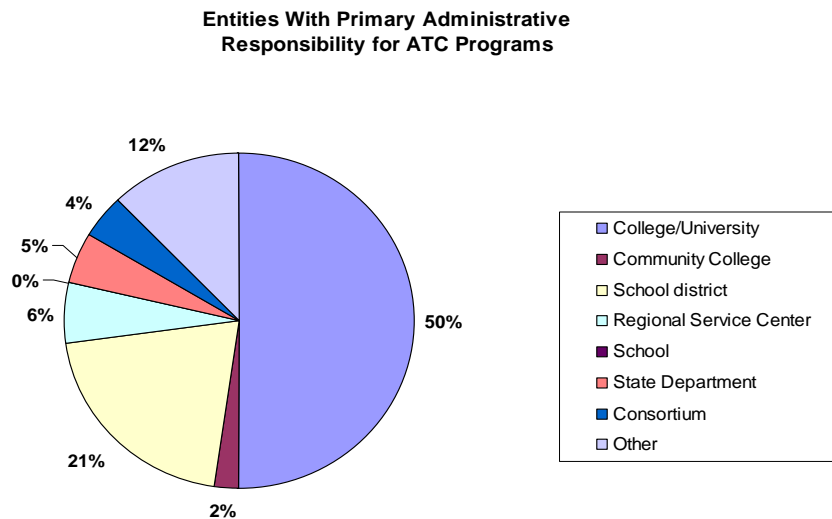
APPENDIX C

ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAMS

The following is from APPENDIX C of *PROFILE OF ALTERNATE ROUTE TEACHERS* published by the National Center for Education Information in June 2005. The full report can be found at www.teach-now.org and www.ncei.com

An analysis of the data and information provided by the providers of alternate route programs show the following:

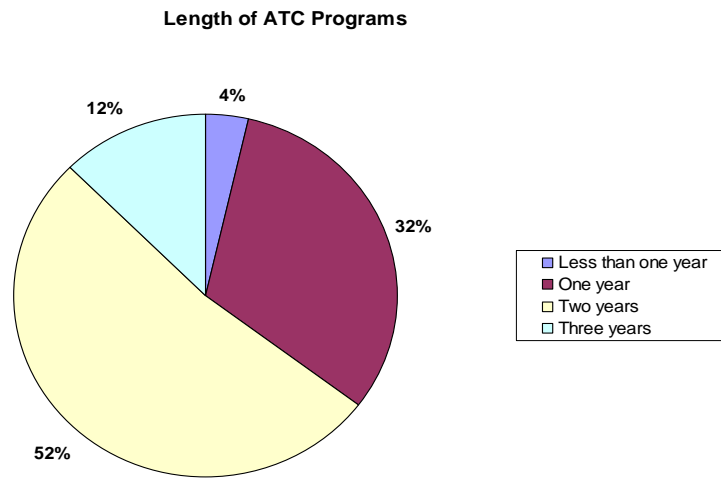
FIGURE 1
WHO HAS PRIMARY ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAMS



It appears that half (50 percent) of alternate route programs are administered primarily by colleges and universities and 2 percent by community colleges. About a fifth of alternate route programs (21 percent) are administered at the school district level, 6 percent by a regional service center, none at the school building level, 5 percent by the state department of education, and 4 percent through a consortium.

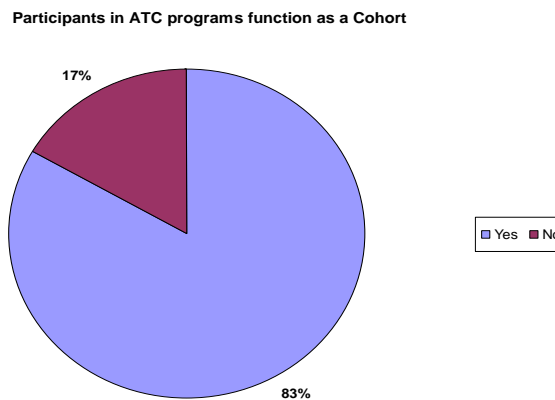
The 12 percent who checked “other” gave responses indicating mostly collaborations among any one or more of the above entities and a few private entities.

FIGURE 2
LENGTH OF ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAMS



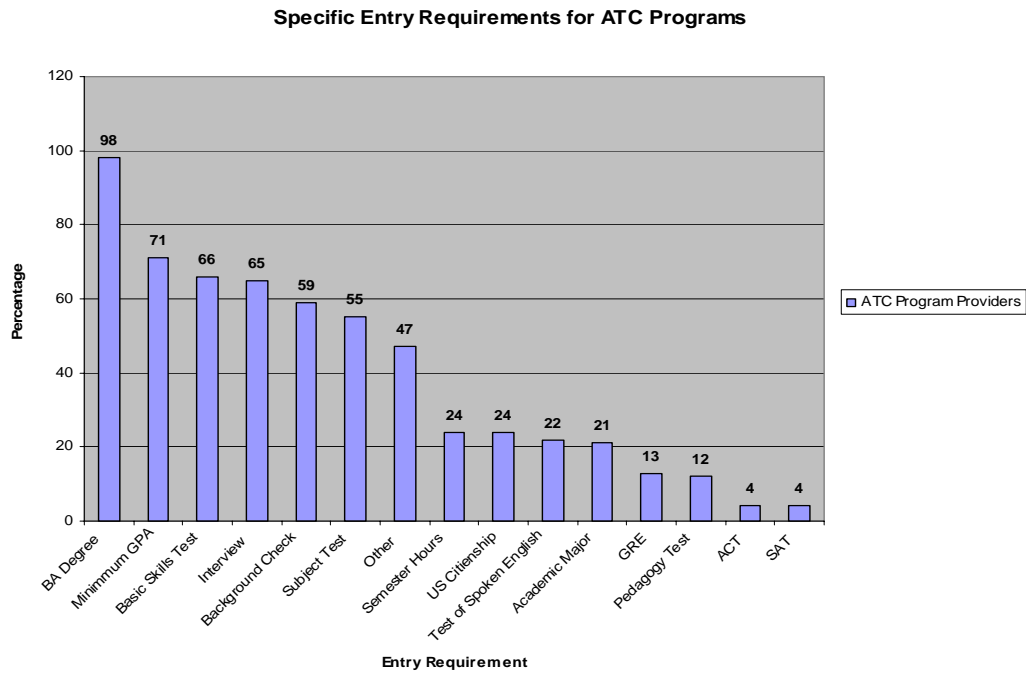
About half (52 percent) of alternate route programs take two years to complete and about one-third (32 percent) can be completed in one year. Four percent of providers report their programs can be completed in less than one year.

Figure 3
PARTICIPANTS FUNCTION AS A COHORT DURING THE ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAM



About eight out of ten program providers report that the participants in their programs function as a cohort while in the program, e.g., they meet together regularly, take courses/seminars together, and learn from each other.

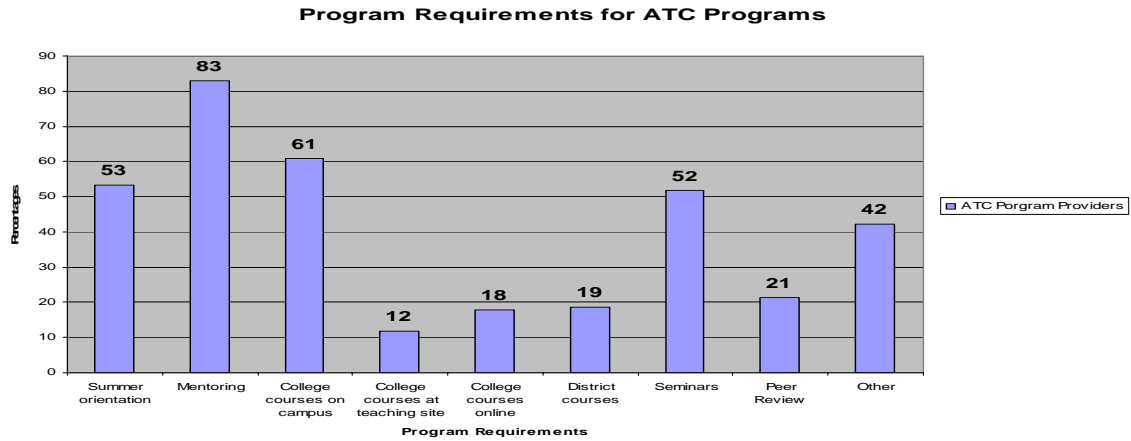
FIGURE 4
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAMS



Nearly all (98 percent) alternate route programs require at least a bachelor degree in order to enter the program. A few community colleges have begun to establish alternate route programs that do not require a bachelor degree at entry. Two-thirds require an interview; 62 percent requiring passing a basic skills test, and 56 percent a subject area test for entry.

Nearly half (48 percent) of the program providers who completed the template checked “other” under entry requirements. Their specific responses included mostly exact grade point averages required, ranging from 2.5 to 3.0; exact number of credit hours in subject(s) to be taught, ranging from 18 to 36 semester hours; various test requirements; references, background checks and, sometimes, prior work experience.

**FIGURE 5
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAMS**



More than half of the alternate route program providers say their programs include a summer orientation; 83 percent have a mentoring component, 58 percent say they require college courses that are taken on the college campus; 11 percent say their programs include college courses at the teaching site and 18 percent have online college courses. Nearly one-fifth (19 percent) report courses offered by the school district are part of their program. Seminars are included in about half (51 percent) of the alternate route programs. About one-fifth (21 percent) include peer review as part of their alternate route program.

**FIGURE 6
TEACH DURING ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAM**

Both program providers and alternate route teachers report that approximately nine out of 10 participants in alternate route programs teach with salary and benefits during their alternate route programs.

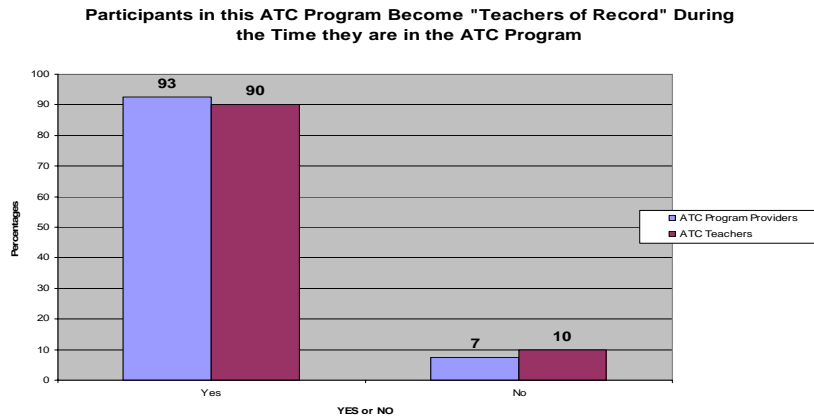
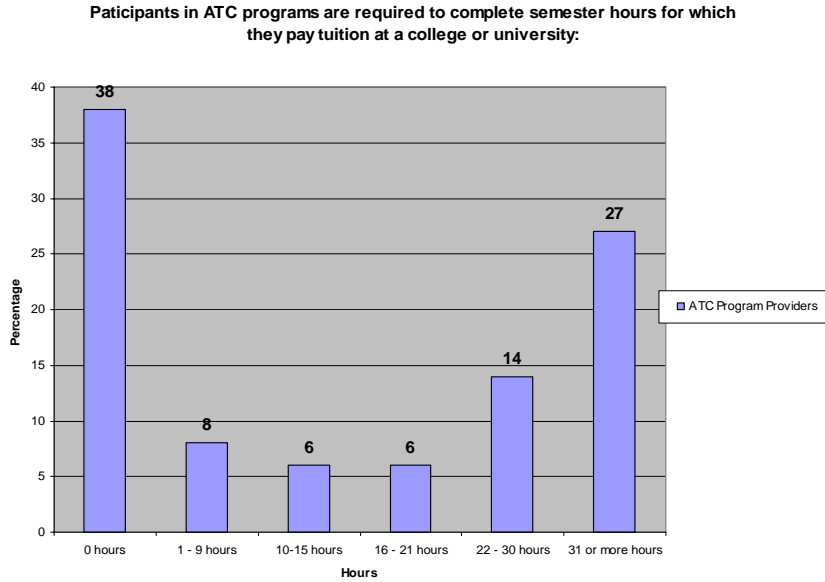
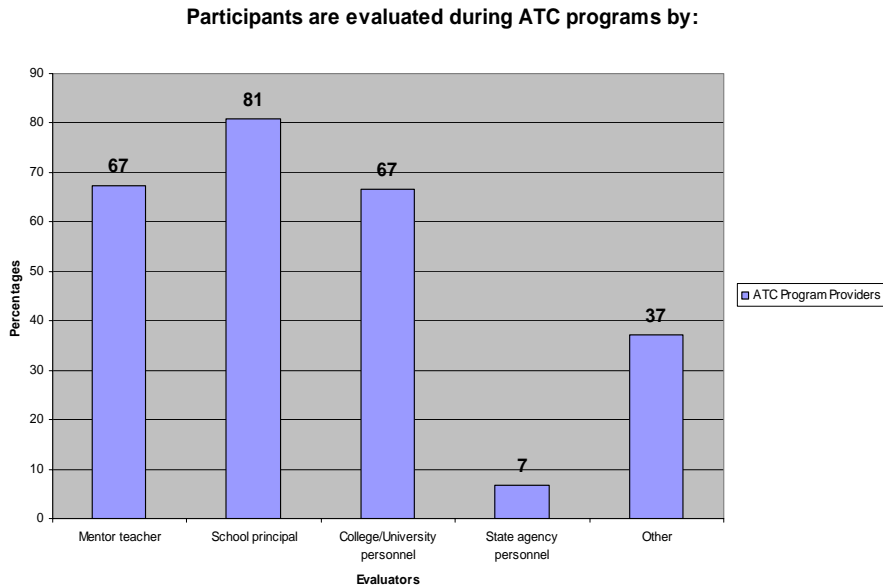


FIGURE 7
COLLEGE TUITION-BASED COURSES REQUIRED



About four out of ten alternate route programs do not require participants to take any college semester hours for which they pay tuition at a college or university. At the other end of the spectrum, about four in ten (41 percent) require participants to take 22 or more semester hours for which they pay college tuition.

FIGURE 8
EVALUATION OF ALTERNATE ROUTE CANDIDATES



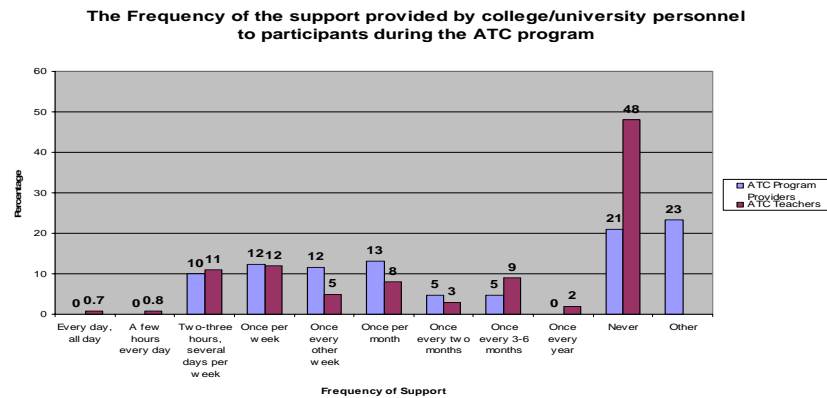
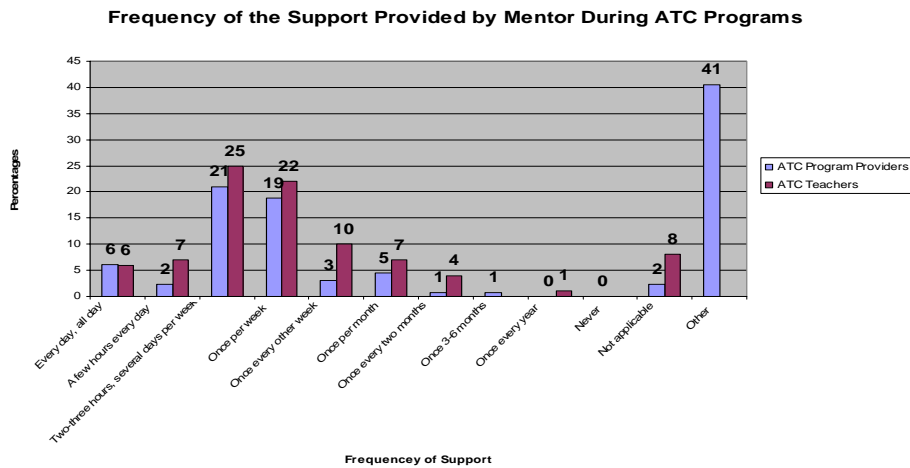
SUPPORT PROVIDED TO ALTERNATE ROUTE CANDIDATES

Ninety-six percent of alternate route program providers report that candidates receive support from mentor teachers; 78 percent say they receive support from school principals, 70 percent from college personnel, 12 percent from state agency personnel and 47 percent from “other.”

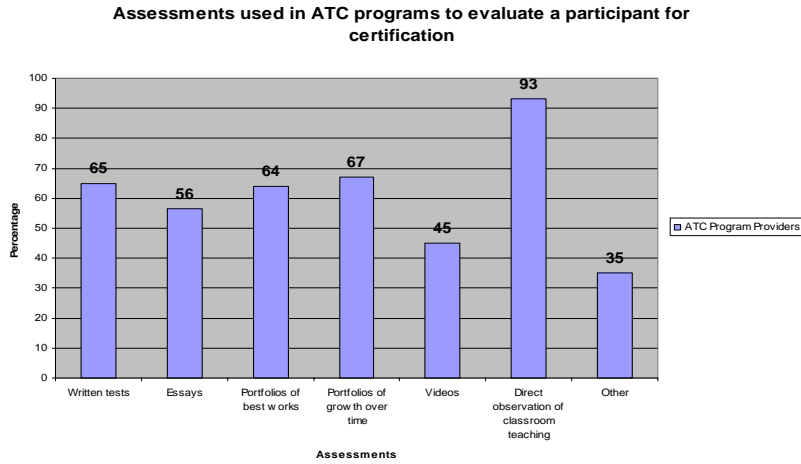
As you can see from responses from teachers entering teaching through alternate route programs from the survey, these responses are quite different from responses of providers. The two charts below show the comparison between responses from providers (in blue) and those of participants (red) on the frequency of support provided by mentors and by college/university personnel during their programs.

Figures 9 and 10

Frequency of support provided by mentors and by college personnel

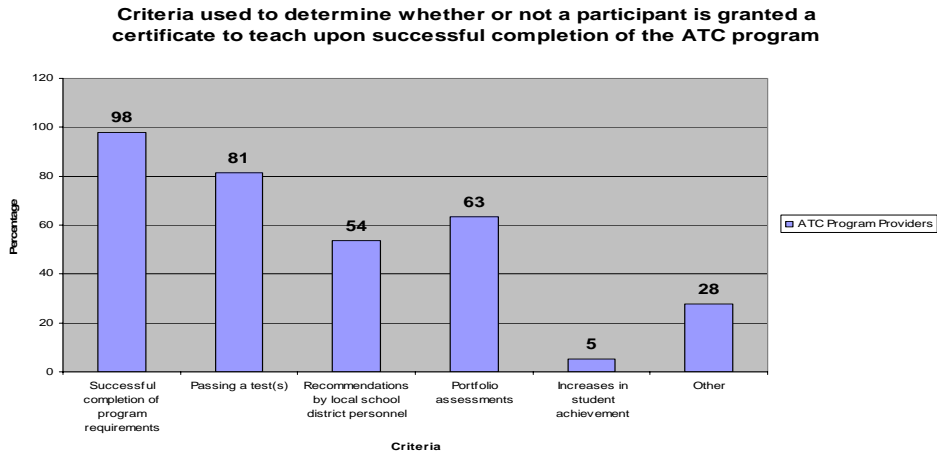


**FIGURE 11
ASSESSMENTS OF CANDIDATES**



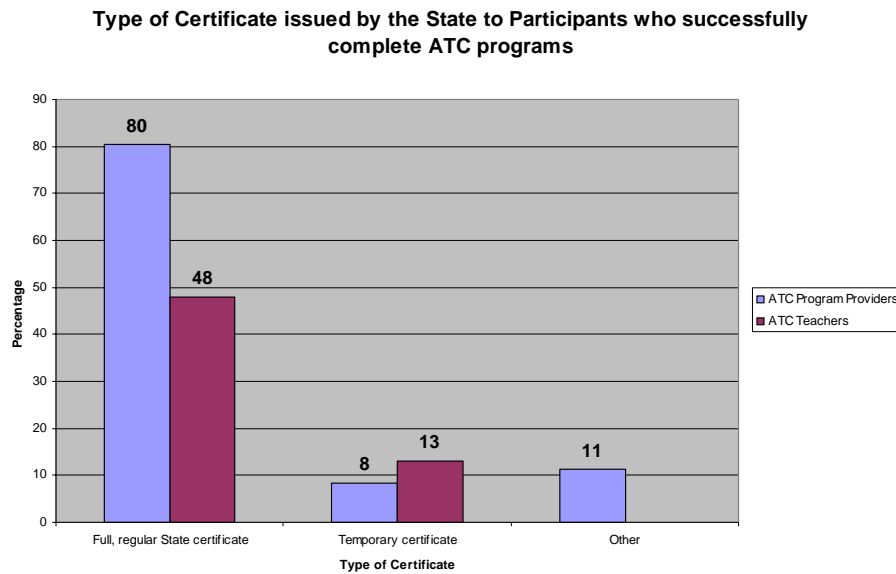
The most commonly used assessment to evaluate a candidate for certification is direct classroom observation, reported by 93 percent of alternate route program providers, followed by portfolios, written tests, essays and videos. Most programs use several of these assessments in their programs to evaluate candidates.

**FIGURE 12
CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATION**



Ninety-eight percent of alternate route programs use completion of the program to recommend candidates for certification. Eight out of ten (81 percent) require passing specific tests, 54 percent require recommendations by local school district personnel, 63 percent use portfolio assessments and 5 percent use increases in student achievement. The 28 percent “other” listed mostly specific tests that are required and recommendations.

Figure 13
TYPE OF CERTIFICATE ISSUED UPON COMPLETION OF AN ALTERNATE ROUTE PROGRAM



Eighty percent of providers of alternate route programs say completers of their programs receive a full regular teaching certificate. It is noteworthy that when candidates in these programs are asked what type of certificate they receive upon completion of their programs, 48 percent say they receive a full regular certificate.

Author’s note: I have maintained for a long time, based on our own surveys of teachers and those of teachers by other organizations that teachers coming through *any* route don’t know, by name, what route they go through or what type of certificate they receive. That is a major reason it is almost impossible to rely on teacher self-reported data concerning what type of route a person goes through or what type of certificate they receive. The only reliable sources for who enters teaching through an alternate route and what types of certificates teachers receive is the granting agency – the state that creates the routes to teaching and grants the certificates to teach and the providers of the programs. The sources for the sample participants in this survey of teachers entering through alternate routes to teacher certification were the state certifying agencies and alternate route programs. – Emily Feistritzer

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