

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO TEACHER CERTIFICATION

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This report details the background, purposes, and methods by which the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) reports every two years on Washington’s Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification, as required by the Revised Code of Washington [\(RCW\) 28A.660.020](#)

Introduction

What are alternative routes to teacher certification?

Washington’s Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification are preparation programs built upon intentional partnerships between districts and teacher preparation programs. The Washington State Legislature created these programs in 2001 to address a shortage of certified teachers and to prioritize particular program design elements, such as yearlong mentored internships, job-embedded learning, and flexible course delivery.

Washington has four alternative routes that cater to specific populations. All four routes lead to full residency certification.

Washington has **four alternative routes** that cater to specific populations.
Each route leads to full residency certificates.

- Route 1**
 - District Staff (e.g. paraeducators) with an associate's degree
 - Route 1 typically takes 2 years
 - 10 Programs offered
- Route 2**
 - District Staff with a bachelor's degree
 - Route 2 takes 1 to 2 years
 - 13 Programs offered
- Route 3**
 - Career changers with a bachelor's degree
 - Route 3 takes 1 to 2 years
 - 14 Programs offered
- Route 4**
 - District Staff with a bachelor's degree and a limited certificate
 - Route 4 takes 1 year
 - 10 Programs offered

Find your route



The four alternative routes are intended to provide certification pathways for district staff and career changers. Depending on the route, candidates are required to have an associate's or bachelor's degree and varied levels of educator-based experience, and they may serve in their current district role.

Alternative routes candidates must seek certification in a geographic or content [shortage area](#), complete a one-year mentored internship, and 540 hours of student teaching. District-employed Routes 1, 2, and 4 candidates are required to have district or building validation of qualifications, including one year of student interaction and leadership. Route 3 "career changers" need to provide external validation of qualifications, such as reference letters and letters of support from previous employers, which includes demonstrated experience with students or children. All alternative routes candidates must meet age, good moral character, and personal fitness requirements, including [fingerprinting, a background check, and character references](#).

Legislative background

Prior to April 2017, RCW 28A.660.040 governed alternative routes. Through passage of HB 1654, the Legislature transitioned the specific program requirements to expectations for program outcomes, seen in the *Purpose* section. PESB subsequently reestablished the four routes within Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 181-80. This change has created greater flexibility to improve program definitions and designs based on feedback from candidates, stakeholders, and through an ongoing review of processes and performance data.

In 2018, two advisory groups began work to support and inform these changes. PESB convened an alternative routes steering committee that reviewed and made recommendations for revisions to alternative routes policy. These changes included the addition of a definitions section and created consistency across program design elements and ongoing program review.

The Education Research and Data Center (ERDC) collaborated with PESB to convene an Educator Preparation Program Data Governance Task Force in response to the legislative action HB 1741. This act requires all preparation programs to submit data about their candidates to ERDC, rather than directly to PESB. The task force coordinates preparation programs' data collection and reporting activities to support this process, and continues to define and refine new data procedures. This requires extensive changes to how preparation program providers gather, use, and report data about their candidates, including candidates in alternative route programs.

DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this report is to provide the Legislature and the public with details on alternative routes programs by responding to five key questions:

1. What are the number and percentage of alternative routes program completers hired in Washington P-12 public schools?
2. What percentage of these completers identify as members of candidate groups historically underrepresented in Washington's educator workforce?
3. What are the three-year and five-year retention rates of these candidates in Washington P-12 public schools?
4. What is the average time-to-hire for these candidates who have completed an alternative route program?
5. What percentage of program completers are hired within the districts in which they completed student teaching experiences?

Responses to questions will be produced in collaboration with support of ERDC and the Educator Preparation Program Data Governance Task Force. As the work of this group continues to support all preparation programs' capacity, change management, and data systems integration, PESB will continue to respond to these key questions annually and report responses to the Legislature every odd year.

ERDC status of data analysis

The Alternative Route report uses data from the relatively new Education Preparation Program (EPP) data collection and data from multiple OSPI data systems.

To do the milestone tracking as required in this report, the list of candidates enrolled in educator preparation programs must be matched at the record level to data collected by OSPI in the S275 report (employment information) and the E-cert system (endorsement and certification information).

In 2019, the first year of EPP data collection, the person identifiers, which are used to track a candidate from their preparation program into the workforce, were not available. As such, ERDC was not able to fulfill the milestone tracking requirement for the 2019 report. In 2020, the second year of EPP data collection, the required identifiers were added and have been collected each year since.

In 2021 we attempted to match EPP data to the K12 data, but only achieved a match rate of less than 30%, likely due to both data quality inconsistencies and the manual nature of the matching process used. This low match rate, in conjunction with the fact that the report requires a full five years of data to complete the milestone tracking requirements resulted in the decision to hold back what could only be low-quality and incomplete results for 2021.

Beginning in 2023, ERDC took a new approach to the EPP matching task, using the more sophisticated method utilized with other data sources that feed the P20W data warehouse. This resulted in a much higher match rate. The matching task was integrated into the work plan for ERDC staff who manage this process. However, persistent data quality issues with the most recent year of collection data (2022), including issues with the institution student identifiers, have delayed the timing of completing the match process and producing a clean dataset for analysis. Analyses for those questions that could be addressed with reliable, validated data have been provided for the 2023 report, encompassing enrollment, program progress, and completion metrics.

Work continues to prepare data needed to complete the hiring and retention milestones called for in the remainder of the report, and an addendum to the report will be provided as soon as those analyses can be completed. The expected delivery time for that work is late winter / early spring of 2024.

Data collection

Preparation program providers submitted annual data about their candidates and programming directly to PESB prior to HB 1741. Educator preparation programs submitted this data at the program unit, which means PESB received information about the numbers and percentages of, for example, candidates of color, candidates' assessment data, graduates' hiring rates, and rates of retention in Washington P-12. HB 1741 mandated changes to this process that would result in program providers submitting data at the candidate unit directly to ERDC, who would then aggregate the data and provide them to PESB. This change required new data collection and reporting manuals, data submission templates, and individualized technical assistance to providers.

As of fall 2019, all preparation programs approved by PESB have changed their data collection policies and procedures in alignment with HB 1741 and the requirements of this alternative routes report.

Methods

This section details the definitions, data elements, and methods involved in responding to each of these questions.

What are the number and percentage of alternative routes program completers hired in Washington P-12 public schools?

Definition

The number and percentage of alternative routes program completers hired as certificated teachers.

Data elements

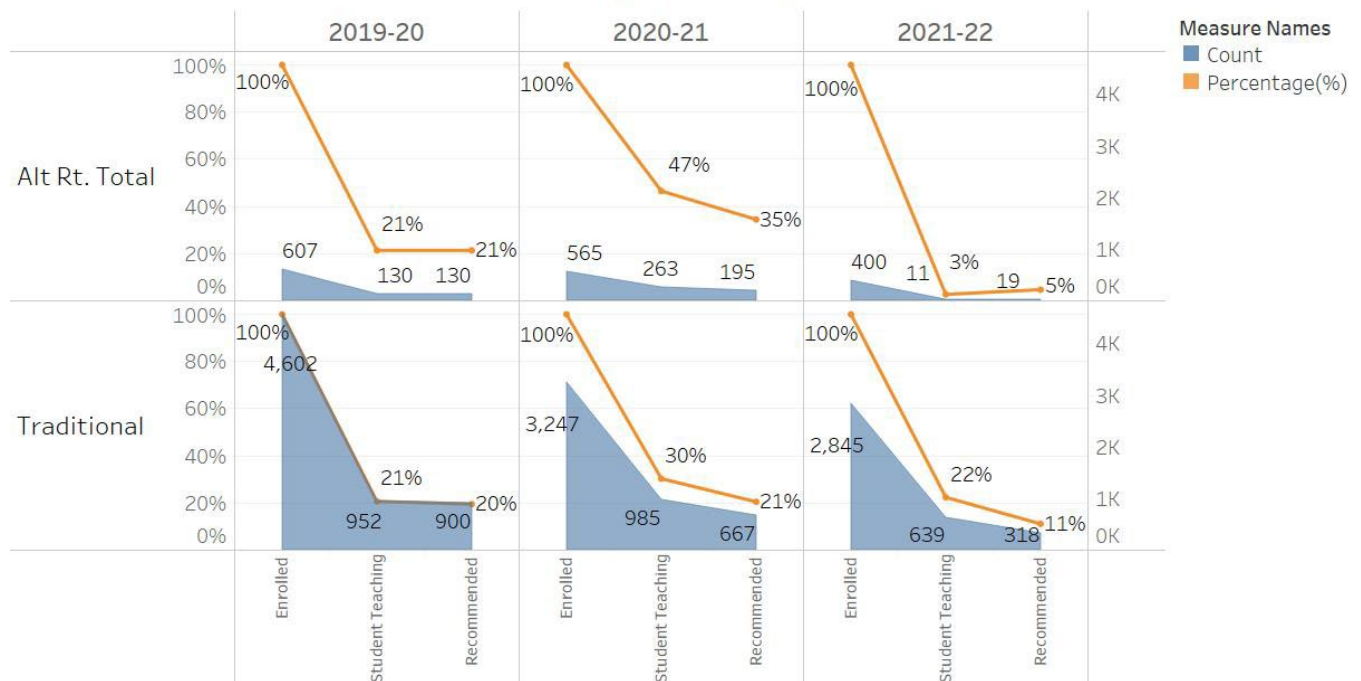
This analysis requires the number of program completers, by program; the number of these completers hired by school districts; and the total number of candidates enrolled in alternative route programs across the state.

Method

To complete this analysis annually, we compare the number of candidates hired within the previous three years and five years with the total number of alternative routes program completers, including the not-hired individuals. This count includes the number of candidates recommended for certification from a given enrollment year.

As noted above, ERDC was not able to provide hiring data for this report request, but could provide the following related information:

How many candidates are enrolled, complete student teaching, and are recommended for certification across program types?



Data source: PESB/ERDC educator preparation program data
Date: November 2023

What percentage of these completers identify as members of candidate groups historically underrepresented in Washington’s educator workforce?

Definition

The percentages of alternative routes program completers who identified as members of candidate groups historically underrepresented in the Washington teacher workforce. We may disaggregate those hired by the following candidate group identifiers:

- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- First generation college student
- First language is English
- Alternative route (Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4)
- Alternative Routes Block Grant participant
- Endorsement received (duplicated headcount for those with multiple endorsements)
- Hired in "challenging schools," as defined by WAC 392-140-973

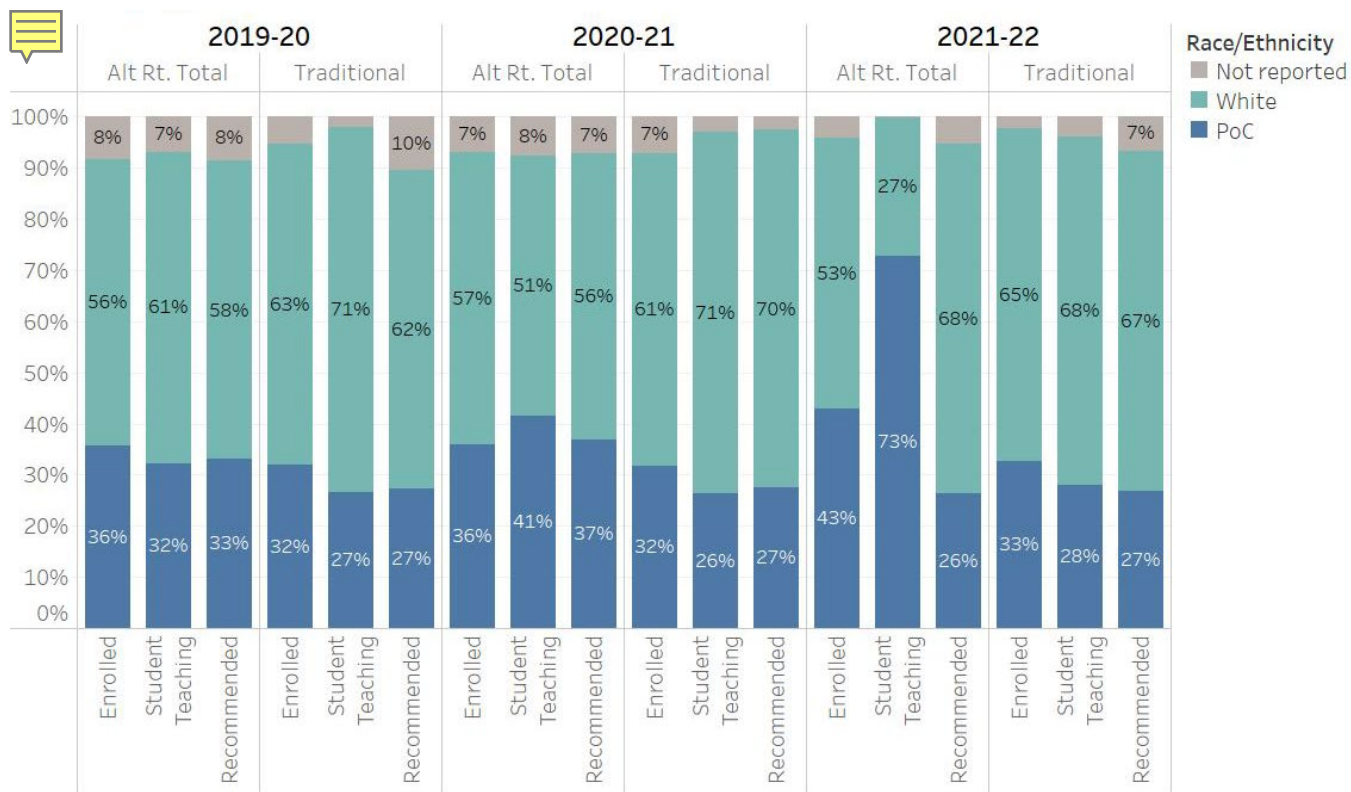
Method

To complete this analysis, we disaggregate the results of question one by the candidate group identifiers listed above.

As noted above, ERDC was not able to provide hiring data, as well as disaggregated data for all categories of underrepresented populations for this report request, but could provide the following information:

How many candidates are enrolled, complete student teaching, and are recommended for certification by race/ethnicity?

Reporting year	Program type	Race/Ethnicity	Enrolled	Student Teaching	Recommended
2019-20	Alt Rt. Total	PoC	217	42	43
		White	339	79	76
		Not reported	51	9	11
	Traditional	PoC	1,471	254	245
		White	2,884	678	561
		Not reported	247	20	94
2020-21	Alt Rt. Total	PoC	203	109	72
		White	323	134	109
		Not reported	39	20	14
	Traditional	PoC	1,032	259	183
		White	1,985	698	468
		Not reported	230	28	16
2021-22	Alt Rt. Total	PoC	172		
		White	212		
		Not reported	16		
	Traditional	PoC	929	179	85
		White	1,851	435	212
		Not reported	65	25	21



Data source: PESB/ERDC educator preparation program data
Date: November 2023

What are the three-year and five-year retention rates of these candidates in Washington P-12 public schools?

Definition

The three-year and five-year retention rates of alternative routes program completers who were subsequently hired by school districts.

Method

We will calculate this by comparing the beginning teachers hired in year one to their status in year two, year three, and year five. Teachers in year one will not be assumed to finish the entirety of their teaching in year one. If this is the case, then they are tracked into year two. A teacher who returns to teach in year two is considered one year persistent. A teacher who still teaches in year three is considered three years persistent. A teacher who still teaches in year five is considered five years persistent. Three-year and five-year persistent teachers are assumed to finish the entirety of their teaching that year.

It is important to note that when using S275 data as the “hired” source, the reporting cutoff is October 1; teachers hired after that date will not appear in that year’s S275 data.

What is the average time-to-hire for these candidates who have completed an alternative routes program?

Definition

The time taken by each candidate completing a program to be initially hired as a P-12 public school teacher after being recommended for certification.

Method

We will display the percentages of teachers hired by a P-12 public school at the milestones of one, three, and five years after being recommended for certification. It is important to note that when using S275 as the “hired” source, the reporting cutoff is October 1; teachers hired after that date will not appear in that year’s S275. These percentages will be placed in the context of candidates completing any approved preparation program.

What percentage of program completers are hired within the districts in which they completed student teaching experiences?

Definition

The percentage of alternative routes completers that were hired by the district in which they completed their alternative routes program residency.



Method

Using certificate numbers of mentor teachers of alternative routes completers, we will identify the districts in which a candidate's field experiences took place during the year the program recommended the candidate for certification. The districts in which mentor teachers were employed will be compared to the districts that the recommended alternative routes completer has worked in as a certificated teacher.

Professional Educator Standards Board

Mission

Leveraging educator voice through policy innovation, removing barriers, creating equitable access to opportunities, and fostering professional standards that prioritize advancement for each and every student.

Vision

Foster reflective educators who intentionally respond to the unique needs of each and every student and empower them to be engaged community members.

Contact us

Please contact us at pesb@k12.wa.us for questions about this report.