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ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION: AN INVESTIGATION TO  
DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ALTERNATIVE TEACHER  
CERTIFICATION IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA ACCORDING TO PRINCIPALS'  
PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) have been established in 47 states across the country, including Florida, to help alleviate the teacher shortage many public school districts have been experiencing during the last two decades. This teacher shortage has been reported to be more prevalent in areas where fully qualified and committed teachers are most needed. Current literature has identified areas such as inner-city schools, at-risk and minority students, bilingual education, math and physical sciences, and the special education field as the educational areas where the shortage is most significant.

Faced with this dilemma, states have instituted ACPs as unconventional ways to attract and recruit potential teacher candidates from professional fields outside the profession of education and assist them in becoming fully certified and highly qualified teachers. The objective of any ACP is to provide an alternate way for an interested professional to become a teacher without going back to a college or university. Therefore, any ACP functions as a supplement to traditional college education programs in preparing prospective teacher candidates.

The focus of this study is the Alternative Certification Programs established by the public school districts in the state of Florida as required by state statutes. It was designed to assess the effectiveness of such programs based on the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions that selected public school principals have on these programs and on alternatively certified teachers. These principals were identified and selected by their respective school districts. A questionnaire, created in part by the researcher, was

used to identify the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions public school principals have on ACPs and alternatively certified teachers.

Data on the different ACPs were collected directly from the different public school districts and from Internet Web sites established by the districts. The researcher contacted 67 Florida public school districts requesting information on their respective ACPs and asked them to select and identify three school principals who had experience with alternatively certified teachers to participate in a survey concerning their attitudes, perceptions, and perspectives about alternatively certified teachers and the alternative certification programs. The researcher asked that the three principals be selected one each from the grade levels of elementary, middle, and high school. Twenty-one districts responded to the researcher's request. Sixteen of these 21 school districts provided the names and addresses of 49 principals. Of these 49 principals, 22 participated in the study by completing and returning the questionnaire instrument.

Findings indicated that the alternative certification programs throughout the State of Florida are producing highly qualified teachers whose overall performance has been rated as equal to or better than that of newly hired traditionally certified teacher. These findings are based on the responses provided by the principals who completed and returned the 20-item questionnaire and on other existing literature and data on the state's alternative certification program. The overall impression from the principals' responses is that they are satisfied with the quality work and performance of their alternatively certified teachers.

This research is dedicated to  
all my relatives, principals, and educators  
who in one way or another inspired me, believed in me,  
and unfailingly supported me all these years.  
Most importantly, I dedicate this research to my father,  
Mr. Nelson Torres Medina,  
and  
my deceased mother, Mrs. Josefina Martinez de Torres,  
who inspired in me a love of learning and a love for education.

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During the ten years I have been in Orange County Public Schools as an educator, I have worked for several principals who were an inspiration and a source of encouragement. I want to recognize Dr. Deborah B. Brown, Dr. Margaret Osteen, Dr. Brenda Cunningham, Dr. Joseph Miller, Dr. George Taylor, and Mr. Drew Hawkins. Their opportune and steadfast guidance, support, and encouragement were most significant in my development as an educator. Their example as true educational leaders is worthy of emulation.

I would be remiss if I don't acknowledge the technical support I received from Ms. Rebecca Yost from the Office of Instructional Resources (OIR). Her patience, kindness and willingness to help me transform this dissertation to the technological standards established by the University of Central Florida were most valuable and reassuring.

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## CHAPTER 1 THE ISSUE AND DISCUSSION OF ITS DETAILS

### Introduction

The history of the United States is characterized by multiple periods of turbulence that have seriously shaken the nation's basic foundations and moral fabric proposed by the Founding Fathers and framed in the Constitution. During its emergence as a leading world power, the nation has faced several periods of depression, a dividing and devastating Civil War, numerous instances of military involvement throughout the world, and internal social disorder, radical agitation, racial unrest, and poverty. In his book *America's Public Schools From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind,"* William J. Reese (2005) referred to these difficult times as "devastating pendular swings." Amongst these challenging periods, Reese highlighted the different depressions and recessions this country experienced during the latter part of the nineteenth century and in the 1930s (p. 49). These periods of economic turmoil severely crippled the nation and created havoc in its development.

In spite of all this turmoil, the United States has managed to survive and maintain its leadership in the world. In his book, *Story of Our Schools: A Short Story of Public Education in the United States*, Robert A. Marshall (1962) observed that the country has outlived all the challenges it has faced due in great part to its influential system of government based on the constitution and individual freedoms (p. 3). In the last 200

years, the nation has become a world power in all respects. Transportation, communication, military might, and space exploration are just a few areas where this nation has proven its power.

In addition to the nation's governmental institution, education also has played a most significant role in helping the country withstand all the challenges that have overwhelmed its growth and development ever since the early settlers arrived at our shores and the Massachusetts Bay Colony made the first attempts to educate its children in New England (Leinwand, 1992, p.17). Eventually, these early attempts at educating the young led to modern education. In his book, *Public Education*, Gerald Leinwand (1992) indicated that the public school system in the United States was born in Massachusetts. Even though it was not its intention to be the nascent nation's leader in education, the Massachusetts Bay Colony set the standards other colonies followed when establishing their own education systems (p. 17). Therefore, it was in the New England colony of Massachusetts that the basic doctrine of what constitutes our educational system emerged. One of the main beliefs established in Massachusetts was a system of mandatory education for all supported by the public (Marshall, 1962, p. 8).

It is interesting to note that although education was seen as an indispensable part of the growing nation and at the center of improving individual life and consequently society as a whole (Reese, 2005, p. 2), the Founding Fathers did not make public education part of the constitution. In fact, there is no mention of education in the U.S. Constitution. However, the Tenth Amendment relegated to the states those powers not reserved for the federal government (Marshall, 1962, p. 9). Thus, the Tenth Amendment

made public education the responsibility of each individual state. Therefore, states took it upon themselves to approve laws providing for the establishment and control of their own educational system (Reese, p. 1)

Another fact worth mentioning on the origins of public education in the United States was its original religious purpose. The original purpose was to provide children, and eventually adults, with the opportunity to learn how to read and know the bible to bring them closer to God (Marshall, 1962, p. 5). The early settlers who came from European countries brought with them strong religious Protestant orientations emphasizing reading, interpreting and knowing the bible. These were indispensable for a person to be a devout member of the community (Leinwand 1992, p.17). For this particular reason, in 1647 the colony of Massachusetts adopted the “old Deluder Satan Act” (p. 17). This law, “enacted on November 11, 1647” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001) was intended

to thwart the plans of “ye ould deluder Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of ye scriptures’ and to make sure that ‘ye learning may not be buried in ye grave of our fathers and ye church and commonwealth.” (Leinwand, p.17)

Without probably realizing what this law would actually mean for the future of public education in the United States and focusing only on its Protestant religious orientation, the Massachusetts Bay Colony established the basic traditions of the American public education system. These traditions were that every community had the responsibility to establish a school system, these schools were to be controlled locally, and students would progress through different levels of schools (Leinwand, 1992, pp. 17–18). Moreover, it was these Massachusetts Bay Colony’s early attempts at public

education that set the tone for the growing nation to follow. In establishing their own public school systems, states across the nation adopted the beliefs born in Massachusetts (Leinwand, p.18).

As the nation grew, this religious orientation within the emerging education system eventually gave way to a more secular system with the decline of religious zeal. By the middle of the eighteenth century, its citizens began losing interest in the religious ideals that shaped the early educational attempts and turned to more worldly or material concerns such as commercial enterprises (Marshall, 1962, p. 9).

With the establishment of religious freedom in the Constitution, the public school system was free of religious influence. Quite frequently, this religious influence was characterized by contradictory and hostile religious interests that put public education in an educational quagmire (Marshall, p.10). These antagonistic religious interests were manifested by the growing number of Catholic immigrants and the controlling Protestants.

Societal changes brought about the birth of the common school championed by Horace Mann, who became Massachusetts' first secretary of education. Mann proposed the idea of a "common" school intended to serve all children, regardless of their parents' socio-economic status. The idea was for children from all walks of life to sit next to each other and learn together, in a "common" environment. Together, the children were to acquire all the useful knowledge needed for daily living and to be productive and faithful citizens of the republic (Leinwand, 1992, p. 20–21). Its mandates were academic, vocational, civic, and personal goals (p. 34).

Much has changed in our educational system since the early days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and the common school. Our educational system also has endured many challenges. At present another challenge is affecting the way education is conducted. The country-wide teacher shortage has been having an impact on the way classroom teachers are certified. Researchers are at odds over the effectiveness of programs such as Alternative Certification Programs (ACP) to deal with this new challenge.

During the last two decades, public education across the United States has been experiencing a teacher shortage. This teacher shortage has been more prevalent in areas where fully qualified and committed teachers are most needed. Inner-city schools, at-risk and minority students, bilingual education, math and physical sciences, and students requiring special education are some of the areas where teacher shortages are most prevalent (Feistritzer, 1994).

Faced with this dilemma and coupled with an ever increasing multi-cultural student population, states throughout the nation have instituted ACPs as unconventional ways to attract prospective teacher candidates from fields outside of education and assist them in the teacher certification process. These ACPs were established to supplement traditional college education programs (Feistritzer, 2001).

The term *alternative certification* has its own synonym: *alternative licensure*. These two terms are used interchangeably to identify non-traditional ways to obtain a teacher certification from any state (Ruckel, 2000). These nonstandard options take different forms and range from working adults attending night school, to college-based

education courses designed to complement on-the-job teacher training, to fast-track programs that quickly prepare teachers in basic curriculum practices.

ACPs across the nation enlist or recruit degree-bearing adults who, for some reason or another, are seeking a change or have been forced to seek other career alternatives. According to Berry (2001), over 80% of the states have instituted some sort of alternative certification program that provides future teachers with the opportunity to become certified without following the traditional certification path. He added that over 900 teacher colleges and universities throughout the nation have a special kind of teacher preparation program for professionals who want to change careers during their mid-lives (pp. 32-33).

Such is the case for thousands of military personnel who had to retire or were forced out of the U.S. Armed Forces as a result of the breakdown of the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s beginning with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the first Gulf War in 1993, and the consequent military downsizing. In 1994, David P. Keltner alluded to the fact that the military downsizing coincided with an elementary and secondary teacher shortage forecasted in 1986. To alleviate the teacher shortage and to transfer ex-military personnel and their families, the Departments of Defense and Education embarked on a joint venture to train and turn these former military people into classroom teachers (p. 182). The 1993 Defense Authorization Bill enacted the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program in 1994 to train and prepare these military professionals to become classroom teachers (Feistritzer, Hill, & Willet, 1998).



Recent research revealed that ACPs exist throughout the nation under a wide range of names. Since the 1984-85 school year, Los Angeles Unified School District has the Teacher Trainee Program. The state of New Jersey established the Provisional Teacher Program during the 1985-86 school year. Connecticut's alternate route program, the Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST), has been in operation since the 1987-88 school year (Zumwalt, 1991).

The Darden College of Education of Virginia's Old Dominion University established, in 1989, the Military Career Transition Program. The purpose of this program was to assist that state's large military population leaving the service to become teachers

(MacDonald, Manning, & Gable, 1994). In 1999, the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program funded the Teacher Recruitment and Induction Project (TRIP) as a joint effort between the College of Education, Science, and Liberal Arts of the Southwest Texas State University and several school districts (Resta, Huling, & Rainwater, 2001). In Florida, Chapter 1012, Title XLVIII K-20 Education Code of the 2003 Florida Statutes established the Transition to Teaching Program to encourage mid-career professionals who want to become teachers. In Kentucky, administrative regulation 16 KAR 9:070 establishes Kentucky's Primary Alternative Certification Program. California has the California Teaching Internship Program (McKibbin, 1999).

These are just a few examples of the numerous Alternative Certification Programs that have been established throughout the United States in response to the teacher shortage. The widespread proliferation of ACPs nationwide renders an overall

assessment and evaluation of these programs an almost insurmountable task. Since each program responds to individual states' and local school districts' teaching needs, policies, and educational philosophies, it has to be evaluated and assessed based on its own merits, specific goals, objectives, strengths, weaknesses, and how effectively it accomplishes whatever it is designed to accomplish.

However, researchers in the field agree on a number of criteria or components that make any Alternative Certification Program effective. Dr. C. Emily Feistritzer (1999) is one of these researchers that identified indispensable components that render an ACP program an effective one. Among these components are: a program rich in education oriented training, a program where the teacher candidate is working in the classroom while attending the ACP training, a program that actively involves the participation of a teacher trainer or mentor and involvement as part of a group instead of individual participation. She added the joint collaboration of all stakeholders such as states' departments of education, local education colleges and universities, school, and participating school administrators (p. 2).

Resta et al. (2001) mentioned that an effective ACP should be tailored according to state and national education standards. They added that an ACP training program must include subjects such as human growth and development, instructional principles and strategies, discipline, curriculum, student progression monitoring and assessment, classroom technology and intensive classroom experience. They also highlighted the significance of peer and mentor support (p. 62).

Researchers also agree on the qualities and traits teachers, certified through an ACP, bring with them to the teaching career. Resta et al. (2001) maintained that teachers certified through an ACP in their mid-years are mature and excellent workers who join the teaching profession bringing with them a wealth of real life experiences (p. 61). A few years earlier, Feistritzer et al. (1998) referred to Troops to Teachers as a successful program by bringing highly enthusiastic, mature, and qualified ex-military personnel into the teaching career. They added that these individuals serve as excellent role models that helped in the growth and development of their students during times when the nation's youth lacked the influence of positive role models. Moreover, these researchers characterized the life experiences of these ex-military personnel as exceptional and valuable in any classroom environment (p.1). In 2000, Ruckel alluded to a richness of knowledge acquired through formal education and or real-life experiences that these second career seekers bring with them to the classroom environment (p. 3).

### Statement of the Problem

The problem is that there is very limited information addressing the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of Florida public school principals concerning alternatively certified teachers and the Alternative Certification Programs as ways of certifying teachers to ameliorate the shortage of teachers in the state. During the course of the

literature review, this researcher came across a Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida prepared by The Center for Educational Research and Policy Studies, College of Education, Florida State University. The Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Educator Certification, published this progress report in August 2003.

### Clarification of the Problem Statement

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the effectiveness of Florida's Alternative Certification Program (ACP) from the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes Florida school principals have on alternatively certified teachers as opposed to teachers who are traditionally certified. The study also considered the question of whether Florida's ACP is a fleeting attempt or a viable remedy to deal with the teacher shortage in the state. This study also investigated what forms of Alternative Certification Programs the state of Florida has instituted to deal with the teacher shortage. Moreover, it sought to identify and analyze the criteria and components needed for an effective ACP.

### Limitations and Delimitations

1. The data are delimited to that which could be obtained from information provided by individual public school districts and the individual principals who responded to a survey and to information provided in the Internet.
2. The demographic and personal data concerning individual teachers certified through an ACP were delimited to that information provided by public school principals who responded to a survey.
3. The assessment and evaluation of Florida's ACP effectiveness was limited only to how well the ACP conforms to the criteria or components identified by researchers as necessary for any ACP to be effective.
4. An analysis of the teaching performance of alternatively certified teachers was beyond the scope of this study.

### Definitions of Terms

1. Alternative Certification Program: Every program intended for degree-bearing adults who want to be certified as teachers without having to attend a traditional college education program. It ranges from simple emergency certification to well structured and highly developed and deliberate programs that provide all the necessary educational tools and training that the prospective teacher needs to properly function in a classroom environment (Feistritzer, 1999, p. 4).

2. Alternative Teacher Certification: A synonym for Alternative Certification Program.

3. Certification Process: The steps a teacher candidate must go through to get the teaching certification credentials from the state's Department of Education. The teacher candidate may go through the traditional certification process by attending a college or university or through an alternative certification program.

4. Certified Teacher: A teacher that has received the teaching credentials from the state's Department of Education after completing all requirements either through the traditional way or through alternative methods.

5. Common School: Early attempts to educate the children of the new country in a "common" educational setting where children, regardless of their socio-economic status, religion or country of origin, would receive the same type of education while learning together and from each other (Leinwand, 1992, p. 20).

6. Florida State Department of Education: The cabinet level department within the state of Florida that oversees the public education system within the state and has, as one of its functions, the licensing of teachers.

7. Qualified Instructional Personnel: The Florida State Board of Education Administrative Rule 6A-1.0503 “definition of Qualified Instructional Personnel” identifies a qualified instructional person as a teacher who has been granted a Florida educator’s certificate in an area specified in the Course Code Directory. It also specifies that a teacher could be issue an out-of-field certificate to teach in an area when an appropriately certified teacher is not available to cover that particular vacancy.

8. Out-Of-Field Teacher: The Certification Office, Division of Human Resources, Orange County Public Schools System (2006), in an article entitled “Out-of-Field Assignments,” defines an out-of-field teacher as an instructional staff member who is teaching a subject matter for which he or she is not appropriately certified as specified in the Course Code Directory. Even if one subject matter does not agree with the subject areas specified in the teacher’s Florida’s Educator Certificate, that teacher is considered to be out-of-field (p.1).

9. Teacher Candidates: Individuals seeking alternative certification. Ruckel (2000) identified three categories of teacher candidates: professional individuals who are seeking a second career, recent college graduates who after graduation or late in their college education decide to enter the teaching profession, and new college graduates who have partly completed their teacher education program (p. 3).

10. Title 1: In 1965, the U.S. Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (ESAA). Its purpose was to provide additional funding support to school districts and individual schools that service students in need of extra academic help and students that come from a large concentration of low socio-economic status families.

Title I was originally known as Chapter I (School District of Escambia County, Title I, 2006, p. 1).

In 1994, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Congress enacted and President Clinton signed into law H.R. 6, Improving America's Schools Act amending the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. H.R. 6 is also known as Title 1— Helping Disadvantage Children Meet High Standards. Its Statement of Policy, as stated in paragraph (a) (1) of Section 1001, specifies that it is the policy and an ethical obligation of the United States to provide fair and equal high-quality educational opportunities to all persons for the good of society and for the improvement of everyone's life, since the quality of every individual's life depends directly on the quality of life of all the others. Specifically, H.R. 6 focuses on closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and other children; recognizes that the educational improvement of children that come from a large number of low-income families is of the utmost urgency (Sec 1001, (b) (3)); and identifies those student sub-groups whose educational needs are of great importance as high-risk children in highly poor schools, limited English proficiency students, children of seasonal workers who frequently move, children with mental and or physical disabilities, Native-American children, delinquent and abused and neglected children, and children whose parents are illiterate (Sec 1001, (b) (3)).



11. Traditional Certification Methods: The conventional four-year college or university education program designed to prepare students to become certified teachers.

12. Universities/Colleges: Private or state-supported institutions of higher learning that offer undergraduate education programs that prepare students to become certified teachers following traditional certification methods.

### Assumptions

1. It was assumed that there is a teacher shortage in the state of Florida.
2. It was assumed that Florida's colleges and universities are not graduating an adequate number of teachers to fill the shortages.
3. It was assumed that the state and individual school districts are recruiting teacher candidates with no formal courses in education.
4. It was assumed that the state is certifying teachers through alternative certification means, as recommended by individual public school districts, in an effort to alleviate the teacher shortage within each individual school district.

### Significance of the Study

A review of the current literature on ACP revealed numerous articles and studies (Baines, McDowell & Foulk, 2001; Chesley, Wood & Zepeda, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Dill & Stafford-Johnson, 2002; Feistritzer, 1994; Heyman, 2002; Jorissen, 2002; Legler, 2002; Lutz & Hutton, 1989) concerning the proliferation, importance, and popularity of Alternative Certification Programs to address the teacher shortage in the nation, but hardly any has focused on the principals' attitudes and perceptions on the ACP certified teachers that have been hired to teach. Additionally, few studies have examined the legal grounds for the establishment of ACPs.

While conducting the literature review, this researcher found two studies involving principals' perceptions, perspectives, and attitudes. One study, *Understanding the Job of a School Principal: A Study of Current Principal Practices, Principal Preparation, and Alternative Teacher Certification* was conducted by Dr. Ray Legler and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) in 2002.

The other study, entitled *Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida*, conducted by The Center for Educational Research and Policy Status of the College of Education, Florida State University, was published in August 2003 by the Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida Department of Education, addressed the Alternative Certification Program in Florida.

According to Feistritzer (1999, p. 2), 41 states, including Florida, have adopted alternative methods to certify teachers in an attempt to satisfy the demands for teachers.

Even though universities and colleges in every state graduate thousands of students who must apply for certification to teach in their respective states each year, they alone cannot provide sufficient teachers to fill all available positions. The problem is magnified by the number of retiring teachers and by the number of those who decided to seek other higher paying careers. The demand for teachers is such that there is still a shortage of teachers throughout the nation and in Florida. Consequently, states have resorted to innovative alternate ways to attract non-education degree bearing adults to the teaching profession.

This study collected data on the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of Florida public school principals on ACP teachers and on the legal foundations for the establishment of ACPs in Florida. The analyzed data will serve to (a) identify the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions Florida principals have on ACP teachers; (b) identify individual ACP components; (c) evaluate if Florida's ACPs are effective based on already suggested criteria; (d) identify if there is a teacher shortage in the state and, if so, the severity of this shortage; and (e) identify the state's legal basis, if any, mandating or recommending the establishment of an ACP as an alternate way to certify teachers.

### Research Questions

Several questions guided the focus of this research. They include

1. What ACPs are available in the State of Florida?
2. Can every Florida public school district have its own ACP?
3. Does the state of Florida have an overarching ACP?

4. What are each ACP's components?
5. What does a teacher candidate have to do to be certified through an ACP in the State of Florida?
6. How many teachers have been certified through Florida's ACP within the last ten years?
7. How many teachers have been certified through the traditional certification method (education colleges or universities) during the same period of time?
8. What is the demographic profile of ACP teachers?
9. What are principals' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of ACP programs?

### Methodology

#### Population

The population for this study was selected public school principals who have alternatively certified teachers working in their respective schools. At least one school principal at the elementary, middle, and high school level was surveyed in each public school district as recommended by the respective districts.

## Data Collection Procedures

The researcher based the analysis of the data on information gathered from responses from the selected Florida public school principals who responded to a questionnaire. To collect the data from principals, the researcher used selected questions, adapted to the state, from Parts III and IV of the survey created by The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) under the leadership of Dr. Ray Legler, Senior Program Associate. The researcher previously acquired permission from Dr. Legler to use NCREL's survey for this study. A copy of this researcher's request to Dr. Legler, his response, and a copy of the entire NCREL survey are attached as Appendix A. The researcher used an asterisk to identify questions selected from the NCREL's survey. The initial point of contact for this study was individual school districts. The researcher asked each of the 67 Florida public school district to identify at least three principals to survey. The responses from the selected principals were the main source of data for the subsequent analysis.

Once each individual school district provided the researcher with the names and addresses of their selected principals to be surveyed, the researcher mailed a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the questionnaire, and a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope to ease the return of completed questionnaires. Some questions from the customized NCREL survey already mentioned were used to acquire data from the selected principals. The questionnaires were coded for verification purposes to identify which respondents returned the completed questionnaires. A copy of the proposed letter to the ACP representatives in each Florida public school district is

attached as Attachment B. The proposed cover letter and questionnaire intended for the principals are attached as Attachment C.

The researcher did the initial mailing in early-to-mid July 2006. A follow-up letter and second survey were mailed to those who did not respond by the end of July 2006 to encourage maximum participation. The researcher followed the survey mailing procedures outlined by Don A. Dillman (2000) in his book *Mail and Internet Surveys: The Tailored Method*.

Analysis of the data attempted to reveal (a) the severity of the teacher shortage in the state of Florida; (b) the percent of teachers certified through conventional means in the state; (c) the percent of teachers certified through non-conventional means; (d) how alternative teacher certification programs are used throughout the state as non-conventional ways of bringing non-education major adults into the teaching career; (d) how varied these programs are, ranging from emergency certification to well-designed and sophisticated programs; (e) the number of ACPs across the state; and (f) the perceptions, perspectives, and attitudes of principals concerning ACP teachers.

### Conceptual Framework

The considerable teacher-shortage predicament affects schools and communities throughout the United States, including in Florida. The most affected are those schools and communities where the need for qualified teachers is notably essential. Researchers such as Feistritzer (1994) identified inner-city schools, at-risk and minority students, bilingual education, math and physical sciences, and students requiring special education as areas where the need is most prevalent. Across the state, the teacher shortage presents

a serious dilemma for school administrators that are responsible for hiring good teachers.

The need for quality teachers has always been of paramount importance for all stakeholders such as parents, educators, and policymakers to the point that specific legislation has been approved at the federal level to oversee teacher preparation in the country (Roth & Swail, 2000) Emphasizing the need for qualified teachers, these researchers added that the need for highly qualified teachers to serve students in high-need communities is now much more prominent than before (p. 2).

A review of literature on the subject of teacher shortage indicates that the shortage crisis started in the early 1980s. Several factors are mentioned as having contributed to the teacher shortage across the nation. Resta et al. (2001) mentioned increasing teacher retirement coupled with an ever increasing student population (p. 60). Feistritzer (1999) also highlighted the high attrition rate, especially among new teachers. More specifically, she argued that one-third of college students who graduate “fully qualified to teach” leave the teaching profession within the first five years on the job. She added that 33% to 40% of college graduates who are “fully qualified to teach” delay their entrance into teaching or decide not to teach at all. An additional factor that impacts the teacher shortage is new legislation that requires smaller class size (Voke, 2002).

Recent federal mandates, such as President Bush’s *No Child Left Behind* and Florida Governor Bush’s *Reading by Nine* initiative, are exerting serious pressures on states, districts, and schools to hire fully qualified teachers. These legislative initiatives hold school systems responsible and accountable for student progress monitoring and

assessment to verify their academic achievement and proficiency in the core subject areas of math, reading, and science (Voke, 2002). It is interesting to note that these are the same areas previously mentioned where the teacher shortage is most serious and the same areas the yearly Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) intends to measure.

Recent educational policies and initiatives such as those mentioned above exacerbate the problems school districts and, ultimately, principals have in attracting, recruiting, and retaining top-quality teachers. For instance, Title I schools are required to have teachers certified in the areas they teach. The so-called *out-of-field* teachers cannot teach in a Title I school. Additionally, it is obvious that student academic achievement and learning depend in great part to the quality, skills, and professional knowledge of the teachers who teach them (Voke, 2002).

### Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 introduced the problem and outlined the limitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature relevant to the problem of the study. Chapter 3 describes the context for the study and the methodology used for the data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the data and its analysis. Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study, the implications for practice, the recommendations of the study, and the need for future research. Additionally, the majority of the data from the survey is analyzed with descriptive statistics.



## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Historical Overview

In our modern day world, the United States of America is considered a leading world power in many respects. Even though the country has its enemies, the majority of the world looks at the United States as a symbol of democracy, as a leader in economic and military power, as a land of wealth and opportunity, and as a place where everyone is afforded the same rights and protection under the law. The fact that thousands of immigrants, legal or illegal, continue to arrive at the United States every year looking for the opportunities of a better life with a higher standard of living and a brighter future for themselves and their families, much like the immigrants of several hundred years ago, attests to the standing our country has in the world.

However, the emergence of the country as a world leader and power was not an easy one and did not happen overnight. From the early days of its history, the basic ideals and moral framework proposed by the Founding Fathers and as framed in the Constitution were seriously shaken by multiple periods of instability, commotion and turmoil that, at times, divided the nation into opposing forces threatening the mere existence of the country as a “united” country.

During its development and growth, the United States faced serious periods of political, social, racial, economic, and military unrest. The dividing and devastating Civil War was perhaps the most serious threat the country has endured. It was one where the

existence of the nation as the United States was severely threatened. The Vietnam War was also a turbulent period where the nation was once again divided with people poised against each other. More often than not, the marked disagreements, the radical agitation, and the divisive factionalism between those supporting and opposing the war generated serious internal social and political disorders. Other instances of military involvement throughout the world have created, to a lesser extent, similar reactions among the nation's citizens.

The nation has also experienced severe times of internal social disorder and racial unrest such as the ones the country experienced in the decade of the 1960s with the growth of the civil rights movement. During this period, African Americans rallied under the leadership of prominent leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to demand the rights granted by the Constitution.

Economically, extreme poverty, especially in the former Southern slave states and a combination of several periods of depressions, inflation and recessions challenged the nation and its leaders. William J. Reese (2005) referred to these difficult times as “devastating pendulum swings.” More specifically, he highlighted several periods of depressions and recessions that inflicted a severe adverse punch on the nation's economic standing. He pointed to the depression that hit the nation between 1873 and 1877, the recession between 1884 and 1886, and another dreadful depression, “the most serious before the 1930s,” between 1893 and 1897 (p. 49).

In the face of all this turmoil, the United States has managed to survive and maintain its leadership in the world. Robert A. Marshall noticed (1962) that the nation

has come a long way surviving a long journey characterized by numerous risks, chaotic changes and serious dangers. The nation has changed from the old pony express and the horse-drawn carriage mode of transportation to one of interstates, jumbo jets, and space flight and exploration. He attributed the survival and emergence of the nation to its “constitutional form of government based on individual freedom and equality” (p.3).

Since his book was published in 1962, one feels compelled to modify it to include instant access to communication through cellular phones, electronic mail, satellites and modern space flight and add 50 more years to his 150.

The constitutional form of government referred by Marshall (1962) has not been the only institution that played a significant role in helping the country endure all the storms. The institution of education has been in the forefront since the early settlers arrived at our shores. The Massachusetts Bay Colony established the first programs for educating their children in New England. Eventually, these early attempts at educating the young led to modern education. In his book *Public Education*, Gerald Leinwand (1992) indicated, “Modern American public schools were, it is sometime said, ‘made in Massachusetts’” (p. 17). He further stated that

Although the Massachusetts Bay Colony did not set out to play a leadership role, some of its traditions and methods were adapted by other colonies. As the country evolved into the republic these traditions spread ahead across the whole nation.  
(p. 17)

So it was in the New England Colony of Massachusetts that the basic tenets of “universal, compulsory, and publicly-supported education that was to mean so much to the future course of the republic came into being” (Marshall, 1962, p. 8). These small beginnings led to

a vast movement ... [that] grew and resulted in public education for all the nation's children. The education of the young, at public expense, was important in the formation of the United States as a republic. The early leaders of this fledgling nation wanted to ensure that citizens would be prepared to make informed decisions about its governance. (Jackson, 2005, p. 192)

It is worth mentioning that although education was perceived, since the early 1800s, as an indispensable institution of the growing nation and that through education the lives of each individual would improve eventually leading to an overall improvement of society as a whole (Reese, 2005, p. 2), the Founding Fathers did not make public education part of the constitution as there is no mention of education in the U.S. Constitution. However, "under the Tenth Amendment powers not expressly claimed for the federal government thereby became reserved for the states" (Marshall, 1962, p. 9). This Constitutional reality made public education the responsibility of each individual state. William J. Reese indicated that "Historically, legally, and practically, public schools are in fact largely controlled by state laws and locally governed" (p. 1).

In their book *American Public School Law*, Alexander and Alexander (2001) mentioned

In the Constitutional Convention of 1787, the matter of education and a national university was advanced by several delegates, including Madison, but to no avail. The problem lay not in the delegates' general belief in the importance of education, but in the pressing concern that the sovereign states and not the federal government should be the proper repository of such power. The hesitancy to vest the power over education in the central government prevailed, and the state orientation of education became the pattern in the United States. Nevertheless, the interest in education at the federal level continued and stimulated educational progress throughout the states. (p. 63)

While each state is held responsible and accountable to educate all children within its borders and while the nation's Constitution does not mention public education, federal

involvement in public education has not gone unnoticed and has played a rather active and involved role in the education of all children. Jackson (2005) reminded us that

Through federal court decrees and Congressional acts, America has recommitted itself to public education due to its importance in individual success and national progress. The Goals Act of 1994 introduced the idea of curriculum standards as a key element of the reform movement. The Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 solidified the United States' commitment to the education of all children and championed the notion of whole school reform. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ushered in the current climate of high-stakes accountability. (p. 193)

Another fact worth mentioning is that religion was the cornerstone during the early attempts of educating the children and during the growth of public education in the United States. Moreover, education was perceived as being a part of religious indoctrination whose primary goal was to empower "the child to read and understand the Scriptures so that he could faithfully follow the commandments of God" (Marshall, 1962, p. 5). Leinwand (1992) explained that it was indispensable for any person to be able to read and understand the Bible if he or she were to become a devout and virtuous member of the society. The religious orientation of education followed the Protestant teachings of religious groups who migrated from European countries such as England, Scotland, and Holland. This religious passion fostered a desire for universal education where everyone must be able to read and understand the Bible (p.17). Leinwand further elucidated that for these reasons and "To encourage universal literacy, the colony of Massachusetts adopted the 'old Deluder Satan Act' in 1647" (p. 17). This law, "enacted on November 11, 1647" (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 28) was intended

to thwart the plans of "ye ould deluder Satan, to keepe men from the knowledge of ye scriptures" and to make sure that "ye learning may not be buried in ye grave of our fathers an ye church and commonwealth." (Leinwand, p. 17)

Alexander and Alexander also made reference to a 1642 Massachusetts statute “in which all parents were charged with seeing to the education of their children” (p.22). “If they were found lacking, the law provided that they could be fined” (Marshall, p. 7).

The so-called “Old Deluder Satan Act” of 1647 “required certain towns to appoint a teacher and permitted taxes for education” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 22). Specifically, “this act called upon each township of 50 families to engage a teacher to instruct children in reading and writing. Each township of 100 families was required to pay for a grammar (secondary) school to prepare children for college” (Leinwand, 1992, p.17). Aside from the fact that the Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted laws to provide for the education of their children, this education was not intended to include all children. “Children of poor and lower-class families received no education at all or were attached as apprentices to learn a trade and develop manual skills” (Alexander and Alexander, p. 22). Marshall (1962) also argued that “When the United States was born you would have to be a privileged person indeed to get anything resembling the education that is available to all today, rich and poor” (p.3).

Without probably realizing what their 1642 and 1647 laws would actually mean for the future of public education in the United States and focusing only on its Protestant religious orientation, the Massachusetts Bay Colony planted the roots of three traditions forming the basis of American public education. These traditions are the obligation of a community to establish schools; local control of schools; and the beginning of the “ladder” system of education, meaning that elementary and high schools were separated. (Leinwand, 1992, pp. 17-18)

Moreover, it was the Massachusetts Bay Colony’s early attempts at public education that set the tone for the growing nation to follow. “When public schools spread throughout

every state of the union, however, it was the Massachusetts model that was mainly adopted” (Leinwand, p. 18).

For example,

in 1650, Connecticut followed Massachusetts by enacting its own school law following the ‘old deluder, Satan, law’ in full and adding new elements whereby failure of ‘masters of families’ to educate their ‘children and servants’ could lead to compulsory removal to other masters until ages twenty-one for boys and eighteen for girls. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 22)

Even though “the roots of our modern educational system” and “the advances that eventually were to mean most to the course of education in this country came about in New England,” the educational arrangements in the various colonies responded to their individual needs and religious affiliations ( Marshall, 1962, pp. 5–6).

The religious orientations within the emerging education system eventually gave way to a more secular system with the decline of religious zeal.

By about 1750, the religious fervor that had done so much to shape colonial America was on the wane. Local governments lost their concern with religious matters. More and more, the people were becoming concerned with secular interests such as trade and business. (Marshall, 1962, p. 9)

Moreover, Marshall (1962) pointed to the Constitution as clearly establishing “the principle of religious freedom, thereby liberating the future school system from the claims of conflicting jealous and antagonistic religious interests” (p. 10). These antagonistic religious interests were manifested by the growing number of Catholic immigrants from German and Irish descent and the controlling Protestants.

Societal changes and the many financial woes, such as unemployment, misery, greed , fear, and confusion that plagued this emerging nation, coupled with the poor state of education (Morgan, 1936, p. vii) brought about the birth of the common school.

According to Morgan “schools were poor, teachers unprepared and underpaid” (p. vii). The state of education was in such a deplorable state that “the well-to-do were sending their sons and daughters to private schools. They felt little or no concern for the public schools which they thought only good enough for paupers” (p. vii).

It was during that depressing state of affairs that a man named Horace Mann stepped to the forefront as a leader and champion of free public education and the common school. Mann is known as the Father of American Public School for his tireless and dedicated contributions in the establishment of the common school (Morgan, 1936, p. 3). A promising lawyer, he accepted the invitation to become “the first secretary of education in Massachusetts. Horace Mann perceived the common school to be ‘the great equalizer of the condition of man’” (Leinwand, 1992, p. 20).

In writing about Horace Mann in his 1936 book entitled *Horace Mann: His Ideas and Ideals*, J. E. Morgan indicated

Horace Mann saw clearly that the American experiment at self-rule could not hope to succeed without universal education emphasizing the highest moral, civic, and cultural values. He saw that there could be no real equality or democracy unless people had the opportunity to develop their talents and their tastes. (pp. 4-5)

Moreover, Morgan added, “He saw the possibility of removing thru (sic) education some of the handicaps of character which brought people into the courts” (p. 12).

Even though Mann was the main figure in the battle for public education and the common school, he was not alone in these efforts. Morgan (1936) mentioned that

each state had its early leaders who shared in the great educational revival of the middle nineteenth century of which Horace Mann was the chief figure — James G. Carter in Massachusetts, Henry Bernard in Connecticut, Calvin H. Wiley and Joseph Caldwell of North Carolina, Caleb Mills of Indiana, Gideon Hawley of



New York, Samuel Lewis and Samuel Galloway of Ohio, Robert J. Breckinridge of Kentucky, and John Sweet of California. (p. 15-16)

These early educational leaders fought many battles in the war against “ignorance and bad teaching” (Morgan, 1936, p. 15). Both Robert A. Marshall (1962) and Joy Elmer Morgan quoted the leading historian Ellwood P. Cubberly. In their respective books, Marshall and Morgan referenced Cubberly’s seven strategic educational points.

Basically, these points were (1) the need for tax support; (2) elimination of the idea of pauper school and of aid to sectarian schools; (3) the need for schools to be entirely free; (4) the need for state supervision; (5) the elimination of sectarianism; (6) upward extension of the system; and (7) the need to establish state universities (Marshall, pp. 12-13; Morgan, p.15).

It is worth mentioning that these ideas were not new. They had been previously espoused some one hundred years before by none other than the author of the Declaration of Independence and the Father of the University of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson himself. The third President of the United States is considered an “educational innovator” who was way ahead of his time. Putting the highest value on education as a whole, he unsuccessfully argued for over forty years on behalf of his “educational ideal” of a Virginia where education was

for everyone irrespective of family wealth or status, and his educational plan was part and parcel of his revolutionary political thinking. He envisaged a commonwealth of Virginia as a model republic, socially and politically different from any society in the past. (Conant, 1963, pp. 2-3)

Jefferson highlighted the importance of education in the development of a free country and in securing its citizens’ freedoms. He perceived a distinct relationship and

correlation between freedom, public education, and the growth of the republic. Jefferson stated that

A nation cannot long remain ignorant and free. No political structure, however artfully devised, can inherently guarantee the rights and liberties of citizens, for freedom can be secure only as knowledge is widely distributed among the populace. Hence, universal popular education is the only foundation on which republican government can securely rest. (Cremin, 1957, p. 7)

To accomplish his goal, Thomas Jefferson introduced a bill of educational reform into the Virginia legislature in 1779. His plan consisted of four objectives.

First of all, free elementary schools were to be provided for all future citizens. Second, free education of a more advanced nature was to be provided for a selected group of poor boys through a series of residential grammar schools which were also to serve the well-to-do on a tuition basis. Third, a university education was to be provided at public expense for a selected few who would benefit from this education and who would, by virtue of this education, be ready to serve the state. Fourth, a true university was to be established in the state to accommodate this last group of students and others who were adequately prepared and could afford to pay. (Conant, p. 3)

Although he was successful in the establishment of the University of Virginia, his proposal of free education for all was not established during his lifetime. After introducing his first educational reform bill to the Virginia legislature in 1779, Jefferson tried in 1817 and again in 1826. “The crosscurrents of politics and differences of opinion among educational reformers resulted in little positive action by the Virginia legislature” (Conant, p. 16).

Notwithstanding the fact that his educational reform bills were overwhelmingly defeated and despite the total failure of Virginia’s legislature to establish free public education for all, “to many, Jefferson’s name was synonymous with universal free education” (Conant, 1963, pp.21, 32). It is worth noting that Virginia was a southern state

where slavery was part of the everyday life. No wonder the legislators were opposed to Jefferson's educational reform! Thus, Virginia lost an exceptional opportunity to lead the nation in the efforts of providing free public education for all as it "made no progress in developing free schools" (p. 37).

It was, once again, the state of Massachusetts that took the country's educational lead by providing free public education. "Nineteenth-century Massachusetts could boast a proud heritage of public education dating all the way back to the "old Deluder Satan Act of 1647" (Cremin, 1957, p. 6). Moreover, under the governorship of Edward Everett, the Massachusetts legislature enacted a bill authorizing a Board of Education.

Governor Edward Everett ... recommended to the legislative session of 1837 that a Board be created to further the cause of public education in the state. After failing initially to pass in the House, a bill authorizing such a Board was reconsidered and enacted on April 20, 1837. (Cremin, p. 6)

Thus, with the creation of the Massachusetts Board of Education, the road was paved for Horace Mann to emerge as the leader of public education in the United States. He dedicated twelve years of his life as the Board's first secretary. His tireless efforts in promoting universal public education through the establishment of the common school won him the title of the Father of American Public School. Ironically, "Jefferson's first objective—the establishment of schools publicly managed and free for all—which he seemed to have forsaken in his old age, thus became the accepted American doctrine fifty years after he was dead" (Conant, 1963, pp. 39–40).

Writing about the establishment of the Massachusetts Board of Education and Horace Mann's efforts in education, Conant (1963) stated

The Massachusetts law of 1837 provided only for a State of Board of Education with a secretary who was to collect information from the cities and towns in regard to education. Mann did two things of great importance ... He toured the state, collected information, and more or less shamed the localities into putting their local schools in order. He concerned himself with the appointment of teachers and, stimulated no doubt by the writings of a Massachusetts schoolmaster (James G. Carter) who served in the legislature, he established the first state school for training teachers. (p. 38)

As the secretary of the Massachusetts School Board of Education between 1837 and 1848, Mann wrote twelve annual reports covering a wide variety of topics ranging far

through the field of pedagogy, eloquently stating the case for the public school and insightfully discussing its problems. The cogency of their analysis is measured by their striking relevance today; to peruse them is to consider some of the most fundamental problems of contemporary American education. (Cremin, p.7)

It is appropriate to mention that Mann was a member of the Whig party whose “leadership and followers were mostly native born, middle class, Protestant and strongest in cities and in areas undergoing market development” (Reese, 2005, p. 21). Regardless of his Protestant upbringing and orientation, Mann implanted “the idea that education should be universal, non-sectarian, and free and that its aim should be social efficiency, civic virtue, and character rather than mere learning or the advancement of sectarian ends” (Marshall, 1962, p. 14). Additionally,

fearing the destructive possibilities of religious, political, and class discord, he sought a common value system which might undergird American republicanism and within which a healthy diversity might thrive. His effort was to use education to fashion a new American character out of a maze of conflicting cultural traditions. And his tool was the common school. (Cremin, p. 8)

The common school was to be ‘common’ in that it was designed for the children of the rich and the poor parents alike. All children would be taught in a common environment. Students of every social level, nationality and religion would have

the opportunity to sit together and learn from one another. (Leinwand, 1992, p. 20)

Cremin (1957) mentioned

Mann's school was to be common, not in the traditional European sense of a school for the common people, but in a new sense of a school common to all people. It was to be available and equal to all, part of the birthright of every American child. It was to be for rich and poor alike, not only free but the equivalent in quality of any comparable private institution. (p. 8)

Conant (1963) clarified that in the 1870s the doctrine of free public education for all applied only to elementary schools. He added that the struggle to provide free public education at higher levels, high school, so to speak, took place in the last decades of the nineteenth century between 1870 and 1890 (p. 41). Free public education at the elementary level took place in the common school. Definitely, there was a gap between elementary and higher level education. The need for public high schools to fill the gap was evident.

The first American high school had appeared in 1821 but by 1840 there were no more than 80 in the entire country, half of them in Massachusetts. By 1860, there were 246 colleges in the country. Only 17 of these, however, were state institutions, several of them little more than embryos, and only two or three others had tenuous state connections. The colleges that did exist were targets of widespread dissatisfaction, too. (Marshall, 1962, pp. 14-15)

Leinwand (1992) identified the purposes or mandates of the common school. He indicated that

the common school was to teach the three Rs, that is, the reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling essential for practical daily living. The common school would teach both morality—so knowledge would be put to proper use—and patriotism—so loyal citizens would be the products of education. (p.21)

Its mandates were academic, vocational, civic and personal goals (p. 34). Even though one of Mann's intended purposes for the common school was for it to be non-sectarian,

Reese (2005) wrote “The purpose of the common school remained the same: to teach Christian morality, discipline, and a handful of academic subjects, a process sometimes reinforced by the generous use of the rod” (p. 29).

### Involvement of the Federal Government in Education

Even though the Founding Fathers opted to make public education the responsibility of individual sovereign states, as previously mentioned in this study, since its formation, the federal government has been actively involved in educational matters through the enactment of numerous legislative actions. It is worth mentioning several of the earliest and most significant ones and their impact on the development of education in the country.

Perhaps the earliest attempts of the federal establishment at educational legislation were the Land Ordinances enacted by the Continental Congress in 1785 and 1787, even before the Constitution was adopted. These ordinances “provided impetus for creation of educational systems in all the states joining the union” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 63). Specifically,

The Land Ordinance of 1785 included a provision reserving the sixteenth section of every township ‘for the maintenance of public schools within the said township.’ The purpose of this provision was to make the purchase of land more attractive to persons with families who might venture west.

This ordinance became a positive force in the expansion of education (p. 63).

Two years after the enactment of the 1785 Land Ordinance, the Continental Congress approved the Land Ordinance of 1787. This ordinance became known as the Northwest Ordinance. The enactment of this ordinance was of utmost

importance as through it the Continental Congress established the requirements for a territory to become a state. Specifically, “this ordinance included in Article III, the now-famous provision, which stated “[r]eligion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be for ever encouraged” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p.63).

Therefore, through the Northwest Ordinance, the federal government required “each state to have an education provision in its basic law” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 63). The federal government also distributed monies, \$28 million to be exact, to the states’ governments through the Surplus Revenue Deposit Act of 1836. These monies were mostly used for educational purposes (p. 64). These early federal initiatives provided a much needed stimulus for states to take the leading function of educating the children within its borders. The federal role was an indirect one, although through its financial support it aided the development of educational systems and showed an interest in general mass education. The states had the direct responsibility of establishing their own educational policies and operation (p. 64).

The direct responsibility of the states to establish their own educational policies and oversee the entire education system within their respective boundaries is implied in the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This amendment specifically states “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 62). Since the U.S. Constitution does not mention that education is a federal

responsibility, it is then, by virtue of the Tenth Amendment, the responsibility of each individual state.

However, Alexander and Alexander (2001) mentioned that

the federal government can intervene only in a peripheral and oblique way. Federal authority to enter the education arena emanates from three sources: (1) acquiescence by states in accepting federal grants that are provided under the authority given the Congress by the general welfare clause; (2) standards and regulations that the Congress has authorized within the commerce clause; and (3) constrained actions by courts enforcing federal constitutional provisions protecting individual rights and freedoms. (p. 68)

With respect to the first source, that of the general welfare clause, the federal government can intervene in a state's educational program if the state has accepted federal monies and all conditions attached to the grant. The commerce clause allows the federal government to intervene in a state's educational affairs in safety, transportation and labor laws (p. 69).

Alexander and Alexander (2001) emphasized other federal government initiatives intended to handle educational issues of national interest. The initiatives they also highlighted are the different land grant acts and grants-in-aid that Congress approved. These were the Morrill Act of 1862, the Morrill Act of 1890, the Hatch Act of 1887, the Adams Act of 1906, and other similar type provisions. These particular acts were intended to establish a system of colleges throughout the states by providing them with land intended for college education. The Morrill Act of 1862 required that the grant of land

be sold, with the proceeds to be used for the "endowment, maintenance and support of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactics, to



teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and mechanic arts in such a manner as the legislatures of the states may respectively prescribe.” (p. 65)

The federal government has enacted other legislation during the twentieth century designed to improve public education by targeting specific educational issues of national interest. As mentioned by Alexander and Alexander (2001, pp. 65–66), these legislation include

- \* the Smith-Lever Act of 1914, which was quite specific in purpose, prescribing the expenditure of grant funds for, among other things, extension services by county agents for agriculture and homemaking and for training of teachers in these areas;

- \* the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided for funds for vocational education below college level;

- \* the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (the response to Sputnik 1) which instituted several types of programs at the elementary, secondary, and higher education levels to give impetus to scientific training and research;

- \* the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, which created financial assistance for construction at all levels of higher education;

- \* the Vocational Education Act of 1963, which substantially increased federal appropriations for vocational education;

- \* the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, the most important elementary and secondary program ever enacted by Congress, which provided funding primarily for the education of culturally disadvantage children.

- \* the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA) of 1982 replaced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The ECIA directed the

expansion of educational opportunities for children of low-income families and children with special needs, and of migrant parents, Indian children, and disabled, neglected, and delinquent children. In other words, this act was designed to provide educational opportunities for educationally deprived children.

\* the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, considered the second-most significant federal funding assistance act, provides for funding as well as an elaborate set of procedures for the identification and education of disabled children.

Moreover, the federal government, with the encouragement of then President Andrew Johnson, established in 1867 the U.S. Office of Education. “The purpose of the Office of Education, regulated by the Interior Department, was to collect data and disseminate information about the management of schools to individual school districts” (Leinwand, 1992, p. 27). Eventually, the Office of Education became part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (Marshall, 1962, p. 25). “It was not until 1979 that a separate, cabinet-level Department of Education was finally, but still reluctantly, established” (Leinwand, p. 27). When the Office of Education was originally established 1867, there was “widespread opposition to federal interference in education” (p. 27).

Henry Bernard became the first U.S. Commissioner of Education (Leinwand, p. 27). Bernard, much like Mann, was a lawyer and an active politician who improved education in his state of Connecticut. He “stood firmly for local schools, locally managed, and largely locally financed” (Conant, 1963, p. 38). Additionally, Bernard together with Mann “and other promoters of a gentler pedagogy had eagerly publicized

the romantic ideals emanating from Europe, which assailed memorization, textbooks, physical discipline, and the usual features of the neighborhood schools” (Reese, 2005, p. 86). The philosophies and philosophers that impacted our education system will be discussed more at length later in this literature review.

Based on the acts previously mentioned, the history of federal involvement in national educational issues has been very active. It is quite clear that, even though individual states are ultimately responsible for the establishment and control of education within their respective borders, the federal government will not hesitate in enacting legislation favoring educational opportunities for all children living in the country. Congress also reserved the right to federally supersede a state educational law when it is in direct conflict with a federal educational law.

In anticipation of such occurrences, the Founding Fathers in 1787 included in the new Constitution a provision that became known as the ‘supremacy clause’ whereby the central government of delegated powers could have a preeminent counterbalance against the strong sovereign powers of the states. This, of course, assumes that the federal law in question is enacted within the scope of appropriate constitutional authority. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 76)

Other legislation, such as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, will be discussed later in this literature review.

Not only has the federal government been an influential and active contributor in the development of our educational system, but so were many European as well as American philosophers with their respective ideals and philosophies on education.

As the common school movement spread, American educators continuously sought to learn more about how best to teach the nation’s children. In the work of a number of European philosophers, American educators found ideas they thought would be useful to the schools of the New World. (Leinwand, 1992, p. 30)

### European and American Philosophers' Impact on U.S. Education

Leinwand's 1992 book *Public Education* and Reese's 2005 *America's Public Schools From the Common School to "No Child Left Behind"* identified the most influential philosophers and succinctly described their respective philosophies. Leinwand and Reese mentioned the following philosophers:

\* Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827): a Swiss philosopher who "taught that more can be accomplished with kindness and by understanding some of the ways in which a child's natural curiosity could be tapped in the instructional process" (Leinwand, 1992, p. 30).

[He] extolled nature and elevated the spiritual and practical significance of womanhood and motherhood through his idealized views of peasant women. This was sweet music to some northern middle-class Americans in the nineteenth century, as cities and factories transformed the landscape. (Reese, 2005, p. 86).

\* Friedrich Froeble (1782-1852): the German philosopher considered the "father" of kindergarten who thought that "the best preparation for schooling was in the guided play of children" (Leinwand, 1992, p. 30). "Froebelian ideas and practices also inspired child-centered advocates ..." and much like Pestalozzi, Froeble

Heightened significance to motherhood, womanhood, and early education along natural lines. Inventing an elaborate, highly symbolic, graduated series of classroom lessons, Froeble cast the kindergarten in the red hot glow of Christian pantheism. Froeble's kindergarten, melding the sweet sounds of nature, human goodness, social harmony, holiness, and maternalism into a pedagogical symphony, soon proved as appealing and flexible in America as Pestalozzi's broader educational philosophy. (Reese, 2005, p. 89)

\* Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776-1841): a German psychologist as well as philosopher who "insisted that the ultimate goal of education was the development of good character and moral behavior. He believed good character could best be taught by

drawing on the interests of students while developing their intellect” (Leinwand, 1992, p. 30). To this day, his focus on character development is an integral part of many lesson plans in our schools.

American philosophers of education came to the forefront as the education system continued to grow in the United States. They also offered their own ideas on how best to teach our children. Among the American philosophers who made an impact on education, Leinwand (1992) and Reese (2005) mentioned the following:

\* Francis W. Parker (1837-1902):

A former teacher and principal who became school superintendent in Quincy, Massachusetts, in the 1870s, ... and become (sic) a nationally prominent champion of the new education. He was widely quoted for condemning parrot-like teaching and the emotional slaughter of the innocents in the classroom. (Reese, 2005, pp. 91-92)

His work helped Americans to shift the focus of education to the child rather than the subject. While a child must be taught reading, writing, history and other subjects, Parker suggested that to teach these subjects we must know a great deal about how the child learns and thinks. In that way, the child’s imagination can best be captured. (Leinwand, 1992, pp. 30-31)

\* Robert Hutchins (1899-1977) and Mortimer Adler (1902- 2001):

Hutchins former president of the University of Chicago and Adler, a philosopher, were advocates of the philosophy known as perennialism. This philosophy proposed the thought or belief that “children and young adults should be taught only everlasting or enduring truths” (Leinwand, 1992, p. 76).

[After studying] the great works of the past, Hutchins and Adler believed that young people would become acquainted with the eternal concerns of humankind through the ages. These concerns include acting justly, living peaceably, pursuing truth, understanding beauty, living honorably, acting courageously and governing fairly. (p. 77)

The perennialists, then, believe in the study of the great masters and philosophers such as Plato, Socrates and Aristotle as well as other classical Greek and Roman writings. They also believe in studying “the literacy and philosophical works of the European Middle Ages (approximately 500-1400) and the Renaissance (approximately 1500-1700)” (p. 77). Also, based on their proposed study of the classics, perennialists could be called elitists because it would be the aristocracy who would undertake the study of such classical works. A review of Jeffersonian thoughts and ideas on education would lead one to believe that Jefferson was also an elitist. Thomas Jefferson “viewed school as a place where the ‘natural aristocracy’ of talent was identified” (p. 78).

\*William C. Bagley (1874-1946) and Herman C. Horne (1874-1946):

Bagley and Horne were twentieth-century advocates of essentialism. The essentialists believed that

the function of the school is to transmit the essential cultural heritage to learners by whatever means are available to educators. The essentials of any education are based upon traditional academic disciplines such as history, geography, math and science. To the essentialist, mastery of basic knowledge and skills is a must. Moreover, essentialists believe schools must encourage devotion to the nation, the acceptance of its traditions and a reverence for its past. To the essentialist, knowledge does not change very much, at least in terms of the essentials needed to succeed in life. (Leinwand, 1992, pp. 78-79)

\* Joseph Mayer Rice (1857-1934) and John Dewey (1859-1952): Both

Rice and Dewey were the proponents of progressivism, which dates back to the 1890s.

This educational philosophy became

the dominant philosophy of American education at least since the end of World War II in 1945. Progressive education was rooted on what historians called the Progressive Era of American history, roughly from 1890 to 1914. Progressive educators encouraged schools to take on the task of turning boys and girls into better men and women. In the attempt to improve individual lives, schools were

encouraged to become concerned with the health of a child, the family and the community in which he or she lived—and the manner in which he or she might eventually make a living. (Leinwand, 1992, pp.81-84)

This progressive philosophy of education is also called the “new education.” Writing about this so called progressive or “new education,” Reese (2005) highlighted that

Progressive education, which emphasized child-centered pedagogy and curricular experimentation, became part of a larger assault on tradition and revolt against the formalism of the schools. Various defined, progressive education still has its champions and critics, the latter blaming it for low economic productivity, immorality among the young, and the decline of academic standards. (p. 79)

The hodgepodge of conflicting educational philosophies brought with it disagreements or “pedagogical wars” among the country’s educators as well as the people of the growing cities as to the best ways or approaches to teach the children of the nation. For instance,

advocates of the new education disparaged the traditional common school curriculum, accused its defenders of mental cruelty to children, and berated familiar practices such as the mastery of textbooks, the use of corporal punishment, and the emphasis upon memorization, recitation, and written tests. (Reese, pp. 92-93)

Reese added,

America’s leading advocates of the new education assumed that they were on the cusp of a pedagogical and curricular revolution. In addition to promoting object teaching and kindergartens, they endorsed manual training, industrial education, and related reforms to tie schools more closely to the so called real world. (p. 99)

One contentious issue was the establishment of kindergartens, an idea born in Germany, and at what age should children enter school. According to Hewes (1989), the belief that children should enter school at about age seven was born during the colonial period (p. 7). However, during the first one hundred and fifty years of our nation as an

independent country, school age was not important. Parents would allow older children to attend school during the winter months so they could work on the farms or family plots during the spring, summer, and fall. Younger children were sent during the warmer seasons (p. 4). By the late nineteenth century, “most states restricted school admissions to children six years or older” (Reese, 2005, p. 95).

William T. Harris, a superintendent of schools in St. Louis, established the nation’s first kindergarten in St. Louis in 1873. He strongly believed that kindergartens were the solution to what he perceived was the breakdown of family and community values. He considered that the family and community had ceased to be the premiere institutions of education and socialization. More specifically, “kindergartens would help rescue the poor from crime, vice, and vicious parents, reaffirming part of the familiar mission of the urban schools” (Reese, 2005, pp. 95-96).

Thus, the first kindergartens were opened in the poorest areas of St. Louis. They were run and operated by charitable organizations that catered to the poor. Others were private schools for the rich. So, there was much resistance and apathy to the idea of kindergartens. In spite of this, kindergartens had been established throughout St. Louis with about 8,000 children in attendance in 1880. This was an extraordinary accomplishment that forever put St. Louis in the forefront of early childhood education (Reese, 2005, p. 97).

Another field of education that started developing and gaining ground in the 1870s and 1880s was that of manual training and industrial education, or what is commonly known as vocational schools. With the growth of industry and the increasing



integration of freed southern slaves into the mainstream of society, manual training, industrial education or vocational training became a cure for the ills society was experiencing. Proponents believed that this form of education “would teach the work ethics, end vagrancy, tame the labor force, reconnect the mind and body, make schools practical, and rescue listless children from boring textbooks” (Reese, 2005, p. 105). Notwithstanding its growing popularity and noble intentions, this style of education also faced the opposition of numerous educators and citizens (p. 107).

Reese (2005) remarkably synthesized the hodgepodge of educational theories and philosophies at the turn of the century. Specifically, he stated, “By the 1890s, the defenders of the old and partisans of the new had spent at least a generation fighting over the nature of the curriculum, the culture of teaching and the place of schools in an industrial society” (p. 108). Elsewhere, he pointed that

debates had long raged about what schools should teach, how teachers should motivate, instruct, and evaluate children, and how best to educate and socialize children for the future. As in the past, educators still believed that schools should produce literate, law abiding, morally upright citizens, pieties heard on all sides of every debate about schools. Critics in the late nineteenth century frequently complained that schools were not as rigorous as when they had attended school. Employers often said that prospective workers were lazy, could not spell, and wrote illegible, garbled prose. (p. 110)

It seems that were still hearing these same criticisms and debates in the halls of legislative buildings and school districts across the nation.

The establishment and growth of high schools across the nation was another educational issue that brought with it controversies and disagreements. According to Reese (2005), ever since “the first high school opened in Boston in 1821, public secondary schools have been a controversial and contested part of the American school

system. Debates over the nature and purpose have never disappeared” (p. 180). Reese furthered explained that these educational controversies were based on what was the meaning of “democracy and social efficiency,” how to balance “equal opportunities and individual differences,” worries about the “quality of students and teachers,” and “curriculum and pedagogy” (pp.180-182). Despite these controversial issues, the growth and development of high schools continued at an accelerated pace to the point that between 1890 and 1920, “Americans built an average of one new high school per day” (p. 181). This growth is an indication that the demand for education was increasing throughout the nation and student enrollment was on the rise. By 1890, approximately 7% of all 14- to 17-year olds were enrolled in high school. This total rose to 38% by 1920 and 65% by 1936 (p. 182). Reese mentioned several reasons responsible for this tremendous increase in high school enrollments. Specifically, he mentioned the displacement of teen laborers by technological breakthroughs, the strengthening of child labor laws, rising parental expectations, and, simply, the youth had no place to go (p. 182).

Perhaps the most controversial issue surrounding high schools was the emphasis on academics. Critics and parents alike claimed that colleges and universities were exerting pressure on high schools to focus on academics in preparation for higher education at college levels and as a way to recruit future students. Critics argued that colleges were interfering in high school affairs as they, the colleges, became high school accrediting institutions and were responsible for the creation of the College Entrance Examination Board in 1900 and the Scholastic Aptitude Test in the 1920s. Reese (2005)

mentioned that for the critics the most notorious example of outside interference was the report written by the Committee of Ten and published by the National Education Association in 1892. The fact that many of its members were employed at different colleges added fuel to the fire. The committee studied the curriculum taught at high schools and made recommendations. The members also suggested that since few secondary school students continued their education by attending college, high schools should not differentiate between students. Regardless, for critics, “academics for the few, not practical education for the many, seemed to be in the driver’s seat” (Reese, 2005, p. 185).

As a side note, in his 2001 open briefing for President Bush, James Sutton criticized President Clinton for relying too heavily on university people to help formulate his public education policy. He warned President Bush not to make the same mistake, advising him that K-12 educators have the experience needed. Specifically, Sutton told the President that

Having university folk determine K-12 policy has been a rage since the 1930s, when the Carnegie Corporation imposed its will on schools. University folk structured teacher licensure to correspond exactly with colleges of liberal arts. It’s still that way in 50 states. Such a practice maximizes credit hours in liberal arts, and university presidents are funny about the economies of credit hours. (p. 112)

Back in 1918, a consensus emerged among professional educators concerning the main purposes of high schools. These purposes appeared as a report by the National Education Association, which the U.S. Bureau of Education distributed widely. The report known as the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* or the Kingsley report, for its main author Clarence Kingsley, became a highly regarded guide by school

administrators and educators on the social purposes of high school education. They used it as the standard to measure and assess their schools' accomplishment and effectiveness. The report highlighted the main problems and criticisms of high school education and stated that "to serve society and as well as the individual" were the two goals of secondary education (Reese, 2005, p. 191).

Specifically, "in a few pages, the report thus presented the leading criticisms of high schools: their isolation from life, bookish nature, failure to recognize human differences, and resistance to change" (Reese, 2005, p. 192). Reese also mentioned the American high school's seven main objectives as enumerated by the *Cardinal Principles*. These were

students' health, "their command of fundamental processes" (i.e., basic literacy), "worthy home membership," vocational training, civic education, "worthy use of leisure time," and moral training. The *Cardinal Principles* went on to discourage traditional teaching methods; it favored group projects and problem solving over memorization and recitation and endorsed more practical and vocational subjects. (p. 192)

According to Reese (2005), "Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, critics of public education asserted that high schools were isolated from life, taught an irrelevant curriculum, and failed to adopt the latest pedagogical methods" (p. 193). However, he continued,

It was not that high schools had not changed at all during their boom years. Educators added more vocational courses, modified some aspects of the curriculum, and pressure teachers to consider new teaching practices. But secondary teachers and parents were routinely accused of favoring academics instead of making classrooms more student friendly and socially efficient. (pp. 193-194)

It is quite evident that the criticisms against high schools continued in earnest.

Alexander and Alexander (2001) wrote “The high school was an extension of the common elementary school, making it from the beginning, a higher common school” (p. 44). They further added, opposition to the high school as an extension of the common school generally came from the taxpayers who did not want to bear the increase financial burden, as well as from those advocates of the academies and private sectarian schools who thought the creation of high schools would further diminish the public’s reliance on their respective schools (p. 44).

#### Impact of Selected Legal Decisions on Education in the United States

It was this opposition to an increase in the financial burden that brought about one of the first most important landmark judicial decisions affecting public schools. The 1873 Kalamazoo, Michigan, case “is generally regarded as marking the turning point in the development of the public high school” (Conant, 1963, p. 46). This case made it to the Michigan Supreme Court “where Judge Thomas M. Cooley rendered a landmark decision” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 44). Basically, the case revolved around a group of taxpayers in Kalamazoo, Michigan, who were opposed to paying taxes in support of the Kalamazoo College, a high school. The opposition group filed a suit in a lower court to prevent the school board from using taxpayers’ monies to support this particular high school. After being dismissed by the lower court, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court of the state of Michigan. This Court, through Judge Cooley’s opinion, agreed with and affirmed the lower court’s decision (Alexander & Alexander, p. 44; Conant, pp. 46-47).

The Kalamazoo case has not been the only judicial action that has made an impact on our public education system. The 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* case glorified the “separate but equal” doctrine that permeated racial affairs specially in the South where the post-Civil War Jim Crow laws stood against any change that would have improved the African American condition.

The Jim Crow laws began in Florida in 1887 to continue with the subjugation of African Americans in the old Confederate States. For many years African Americans were considered a lower class group and did not receive the same treatment as their white counterparts. Segregation and racial inequality were the order of business in all aspects of African American daily life, including education.

Because education is one of the most elemental and foundational aspects of any society, the problems inherent in racial inequality were most visible in the schools. Those who sought to maintain white racial superiority infected the schools with legally contrived discriminating measures designed to bring about segregation. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 498)

One of the first judicial attempts to deal with the issue of segregation and, perhaps, one of the most significant, was the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. This case had nothing to do with education but was a case involving railroad transportation of passengers in the state of Louisiana. In this case,

the Supreme Court maintained that an 1890 Louisiana law entitled ‘An Act to Promote the Comfort of Passengers’ ... was not unconstitutional because states have wide discretion in promoting public peace and good order, and such actions will be upheld so long as they are reasonable. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 500)

This case involved the transportation of passengers by the Louisiana railway companies in their coach cars. The companies were providing equal but separate accommodations

for white and African American passengers. With its ruling, the Supreme Court embedded the separate-but-equal justification as a national norm. The *Plessy* ruling on the separation of the races was transferred to the field of education (p. 500).

The separate-but-equal rationale was a pre-1850 ruling involving a five-year old girl by name of Sarah Roberts in Boston, Massachusetts. Sarah was forced to walk through the streets of Boston, passing five elementary schools for white children before she could get to her school. Smith Grammar School, which was built for blacks in 1820, was far from her house and in poor condition. Her father tried repeatedly to have his daughter enrolled in a nearby white school but to no avail. He hired Charles Summer, a lawyer, a civil-rights enthusiast, and later a U.S. Senator, to represent his child in a challenge to the unequal treatment. The court in Massachusetts ruled against Mr. Roberts and in the process the infamous “separate-but-equal” doctrine was born (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 500).

Alexander and Alexander (2001) referenced other legal actions that further strengthened and extended the “separate-but-equal” ruling. In *Cumming v. Board of Education of Richmond County, Georgia*, a black high school was turned into a black elementary school to accommodate the growing number of black elementary students and the high school students were told to enroll in schools run by churches. In *Berea College v. Kentucky*, “the Supreme Court upheld a state law that forbade any institution as a corporation to provide instruction to both races at the same time unless the classes were conducted at least twenty-five miles apart” (pp. 500-501).

Other legal cases cited by Alexander and Alexander (2001) were *Gong Lum v Rice* in 1927, *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* in 1938, and the *Sweatt* case involving a student seeking admission to the University of Texas Law School in 1950. In the *Sweatt* case, the Supreme Court ordered that the student be admitted to the school as the University of Texas could not provide a black law school equal to the white law school (pp. 501-502).

Although these cases served to expose the weaknesses and problems with the “separate-but-equal” doctrine, African American children were denied equality.

With *Cumming* as the precedent, the black children attended school in ramshackle facilities, had poor instructors, and in most cases attended schools that were in session for only a minor portion of the year. This circumstance could not be corrected so long as the separate-but-equal doctrine stood. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 502)

It was not until 1954 that the separate-but-equal doctrine was challenged head-on, shaken, and toppled. In *Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the U.S. Supreme Court “declared segregated schools inherently inferior and laws segregating school by race unconstitutional” (Leinwand, 1992, p. 59). In this case,

the plaintiffs were black children of elementary age residing in Topeka. They brought action to enjoin a state statute that permitted, but did not require, cities in Kansas of more than 15,000 people to maintain separate facilities for black and white students. (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 502)

This ruling was the most significant decision in the history of the school system and education in the United States. Up to that moment, schools in the north and the south were segregated but in different ways. In the north, students were required to attend the schools in their neighborhood or the one close to where they lived. In the south, the schools were legally segregated as a result of legislative actions through the already



mentioned Jim Crow laws. These laws made it illegal for children of both races to attend and be taught in the same schools (Leinwand, 1992, p. 59). For many years, these laws, which were the way of life in the south, were shrouded under the law and sustained by longstanding traditions and violence against blacks.

The *Brown* decision “was not only a watershed in American education, but also one of the most significant decisions ever rendered by the Supreme Court. For sheer impact on society, it undoubtedly had the most far-reaching impact” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p. 504). According to Reese (2005), “the legal victory of 1954 and the civil rights movement heavily shaped the larger history of postwar school reform” (p. 227).

Even though the Supreme Court ruling declared segregated schools unconstitutional, the south resisted any desegregation.

In 1955, the Supreme Court issued *Brown II*, a ruling that schools must desegregate “with all deliberate speed.” Without any timetable for desegregation or agreed-upon definition of integration, decisions now fell on the shoulders of federal districts court, whose judges mostly supported Jim Crow. (Reese, 2005, p. 229)

By leaving implementation to local agencies, the Court assured that each community would determine for itself the “deliberate speed” with which it would act to end racially segregated schools. Some districts dragged their feet. (Leinwand, 1992, p. 60)

For example, by 1964 less than 2% of black students attended white schools within the 11 states in the south (p. 60).

In the early 1960s, the federal government took a more active role in dealing with the complex issue of race consciousness in the country. In 1964, President Johnson signed into law the Civil Rights Act and the Economic Opportunity Act. The Elementary

and Secondary Education Act followed in 1965 (Leinwand, 1992, p. 60). In 1968 Congress

approved the Bilingual Education Act which was “largely aimed to help disadvantaged children better learn English to improve their school performance” (Reese, 2005, p. 239). According to Reese, the main objective of this act was not necessarily to improve school performance of disadvantaged children but for the Democrats to win the Hispanic votes (p. 239).

Despite the Supreme Court’s 1954 decision on the *Brown* case, the plight of African Americans remained bleak, especially in the area of education. So, ten years later, as the civil rights movement was taking shape in America, the federal government once again took action to address the tense racial situation and turmoil that permeated the social and political atmosphere in many communities across the nation. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act to deal with the racial unrest.

Among its many sweeping provisions, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbade racial discrimination in public schools and empowered the Justice Department to sue districts that failed to comply more rapidly and effectively with court orders to integrate. It also gave authority to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to press for more compliance, which led its administrators to set numerical quotas to measure whether a school was integrated. (Reese, 2005, p. 245)

The preferred course of action taken in many cities to integrate students, especially in the South, was court-ordered busing. According to Reese,

Different communities experienced varying degrees of racial tension, violence, and unhappiness with court-approved plans for integrating the system. Black students were typically forced to travel longer on buses and for more years of their schooling. Numerous black teachers and administrators lost their jobs once formally segregated schools disappeared, but the number of black elementary and secondary teachers increased dramatically. (pp. 245-246)

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was not the only action taken by President Johnson as an effort to improve the education system. In the same year, the Head Start program was established as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. "Head Start is a preschool program of compensatory education for underprivileged children that tries to address the nutritional and health needs and enhance the educational and social skills of the underprivileged" (Reese, 2005, p. 243). After years of struggles, "by the early 1970s, southern schools were actually more integrated than those in the North. In a single generation after *Brown*, black attendance in high schools across the nation soared" (p. 246). Despite the low academic achievement, increased suspensions and expulsions rates, and inferior graduation rates among African American students, a new beginning was in the making (p. 246).

#### The No Child Left Behind Act

Perhaps the next major educational intervention of the federal government is President George W. Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) of January 2002. This federal legislation was the result of a joint effort between Republicans and many Democrats to improve schools. "It represented not simply the triumph of Republican politics but a popular faith in using schools as a lever of social progress, a familiar theme in American history reinforced by the rising expectations of the post-World War II era" (Reese, 2005, p. 322). According to Alain Jehlen in the April 2006 edition of *NEA Today*, the NCLB "has one of the most attractive names ever given to a law. It passed amid high bipartisan hopes of closing the wide achievement gaps that divide American children. And at four years old, it now has a track record" (p. 24).

President Bush's NCLB is the new representation of the 40-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that President Johnson signed into law in 1965.

The original ESEA specified federal requirements for the country's public schools. This latest legislation affects virtually every public school in the nation, introducing

major changes in the federal government's role in education. The new law increases testing, reporting, and other requirements for schools. Key programs include Title I, the flagship teaching and learning program that reaches 12.5 million students in the high-poverty schools. Other ESEA programs provide funds to improve teacher training, student literacy, school technology, and school safety. (NEA, 2006, p. 1)

A look at the NCLB Act's Table of Contents reveals that it is a rather extensive piece of legislation that addresses numerous educational issues, making it almost impossible to consider in this literature review. However, several of the issues that have generated serious controversies across the nation are worth mentioning. The following topics are highlighted in the National Education Association (NEA) web page:

**\* Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):**

The Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) provisions are among the more complex new requirements and have lead to absurd results in some places. AYP refers to the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year as they progress toward the ESEA goal of having all students reaching the proficient level on state tests by 2014.

**\* Testing and Assessments:**

For the first time in ESEA's history, the Bush administration and Congress have set a federal requirement that all students be tested in math and reading — annually in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12.

The law specifically mandates that testing and assessments of students in these grades must begin “with the 2005-06 school year.” The testing and assessment of students

include “the requirement that special education children meet the same standards as children with no disabilities. More schools fail to meet AYP because of low scores for special education students than any other group” (Jehlen, 2006, p. 27).

In the state of Florida, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is the measuring instrument. Each individual third-grade student test result in Reading is a determinant factor on promoting or retaining the student. Specifically, in a memorandum released to all elementary school principals in Orange County on April 16, 2006, V. P. Lane, Director of Curriculum Projects, Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), stated

Florida Statute 1008.25 defines requirements for student progression and mandates that any student at the end of third grade who does not perform above a Level One on the FCAT Reading assessment is to be retained. The law also defines a limited set of good cause exemptions that may be applied.

There are six possible good-cause exemptions. These exemptions basically apply to Language Enriched Pupils (LEP); students with disabilities (ESE); students, to include ESE, who have been previously retained for two or more years in kindergarten through third grade; documented evidence placed in a portfolio demonstrating that the student is reading on grade level or at an FCAT Level 2; and students who have scored at an FCAT Level 2 or higher (51 percentile) in an alternative assessment such as FCAT Norm Reference Test (NRT) or SAT-9. Any request for exemption must be accompanied by specific documentation substantiating the exemption. The final decision is made by the Superintendent of schools. The superintendent could decide to administratively promote the student with good cause or to retain the student.

In May 2003, The School Board of Orange County extended the state's statute of possible retention based on the FCAT Reading score to fourth- and fifth-grade students.

The Retention and Student Promotion paragraph of the Board's Student Progression Procedures Policy specifically states

If a student's performance shows substantial deficiency, it is recommended that retention in grades 3-5 who score below FCAT Reading Level 2 (or whose performance on other grade level work shows non-proficiency) must be retained to have extra time to develop reading skills and mastery unless they are able to demonstrate reading performance equivalent to FCAT Level 2. (Orange County Public Schools, 2003, p. 2)

The School Board adopted similar good cause exemptions that apply to third grade. They also added other alternative test measures such as OCPS Benchmark Test, Degree of Reading Power (DRP) scores and Reading Program Assessments results, such as Houghton Mifflin Theme Skills Test, Corrective Reading, Read 180, Success Maker, and Open Court. These exemptions are outlined in OCPS's Grades 4 and 5 Retention/Promotion Documentation form.

\* Teacher and Paraprofessional Quality:

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) has new provisions that will have a dramatic impact on the work of teachers and education support professionals. Under the new law, virtually all public school teachers will have to be "highly qualified," which includes being fully licensed or certified under state law, by the end of the 2005-06 school year." Paraprofessionals who have instructional duties, such as a teacher's classroom aide, must have "two years of college or pass a rigorous state competency examination by January 2006." This provision has created much controversy among experienced teachers and paraprofessionals who have been forced to either take additional tests or provide additional documentation to prove that they meet the requirements for consideration as 'highly qualified.'

\* School Improvement:

The reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) makes significant changes to raise academic standards, increase student testing and provide information to parents and communities. But the law imposes new sanctions on schools based on how students perform on state tests. These sanctions include assistance to schools that fall behind, but many of them involve transferring students, funding private tutoring programs, and shifting control of local schools to the district, state, or private contractors.

President Bush's NCLB has caused serious controversy throughout the nation. In its April 2006 edition of *NEA Today*, the NEA published (Jehlen, 2006, pp. 25-31) a timeline highlighting a number of actions taken by states and individual school districts seeking relief from NCLB mandates. Some of the headlined actions are:

- \* August 2002: “*USA Today* finds 18 exemplary schools that won the coveted U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon but are also subject to federal punishment for failing to make ‘adequate yearly progress’ (AYP).”

- \* September 2003: “The Orleans Southwest district in Vermont decides not to apply for the Title I money for secondary grades to avoid expensive punitive measures for a high school that didn’t make AYP. Two other districts follow suit, along with three in Connecticut.

- \* January 2004: Virginia House of Delegates votes 98-1 to ask Congress to exempt their state from the rules of NCLB. Idaho Senate votes unanimously to ask Congress to change NCLB. ‘Idahoans have sensitivity to federal intrusion,’ says the education committee chair. *Time* magazine says 20 states are rebelling against NCLB.”

- \* February 2005: “Texas Education Commissioner Shirley Neeley defies the federal rule requiring most special education students to meet the same standards on

the same test as students with no disabilities, making Texas the first state to openly defy an NCLB mandate. Governor Rick Perry backs her up.”

\* May 2005: “Utah rebuffs federal threats and orders school officials to ignore NCLB when it conflicts with Utah’s own school accountability system.”

\* June 2005: “Two Illinois school districts pass up Title I funding rather than submit to NCLB sanctions. Massachusetts becomes the seventh state to project how many schools will fail AYP by 2014. The predictions range from 74 to 99 percent. ”

Moreover, NCLB mandates serious corrective measures when schools fail to meet the established standards. Failure to meet these standards is often a reflection of the social problems that negatively impact students’ academic achievement and tests scores. Students are expected to pass standardized mandated tests whether they live a privileged life or one full of despair. Educators are usually the ones to be blame for social problems they cannot control and that are reflected on a daily basis in any school across the nation.

These problems are extremely serious and difficult. Racism, poverty, drugs, sexual pressures, crime, lack of discipline and parental controls, and gang influence are some of the difficulties educators must deal with on a day-to-day basis while trying to educate and prepare their students for the future. “But educators know the outside world is always in their classrooms, sitting with each student” and they “cannot shove America’s deep social problems ... right out of the classroom door” (Jehlen, 2006, p. 27).

Reese (2005) stated,

Schools cannot fix most of the problems they did not create, but, if historical precedent matters, that will not stop people from asking them to try.... Americans apparently expect schools to create a level playing field in a social order where



inequality—in income, wealth, and consumer goods—mocks democratic values and ensures that children come to school unequally prepared to learn. (p. 332)

It appears that the more educators and schools do, the more people want. Reese (2005) made reference to a 1990 Gallup poll where respondents were asked what they want from the school system. The results revealed the top priority issues:

[Ninety] percent of respondents favored *requiring* drug abuse education, 84 percent favored requiring alcohol abuse education, 77 percent education about AIDS, 72 percent sex education, 66 percent education about environmental issues, and over 57 percent more “character education.” Nearly half wanted the schools to teach parenting skills. When provided in the early 1990s with a list of values and asked which should or should not be taught by public schools, 97 percent wanted the schools to teach honesty and over 90 percent also favored teaching democracy, tolerance, patriotism, “caring for friends and family members,” “moral courage,” and the “golden rule.” (p. 327)

These results clearly indicate that parents want the schools to do their jobs.

During his first presidential term, President Clinton also got in the act of educational initiatives. As Arkansas governor, he required that the state’s teachers be tested to ensure their competence. This initiative eventually evolved into America 2000 and later Goals 2000. Congress approved this legislation in 1994. As Reese (2005) put it,

By the turn of the century, American educators were supposed to reach a kind of promised land: guaranteeing the readiness of children entering school, world leadership in math and science, better graduation rates, full adult literacy, and safe and drug-free school. (p. 325)

NCLB brought with it higher expectations on teacher professional preparation and training. It precisely defined what constitutes a highly qualified teacher and specified what is a successful school based on test scores and annual yearly progress. In Florida, the school grade system awards money to “A” rated schools. The higher expectations

imposed by the NCLB Act make the hiring of teachers a most challenging and demanding undertaking that cannot be taken lightly.

Each school year public education across the United States experiences this most serious challenge. It involves placing a teacher in every public school classroom across the nation. Moreover, the demand to put a teacher in every classroom is strengthened by President Bush's 2001 *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). This act, which the President signed into law in January 2002, specifically states that

Every child deserves highly qualified teachers. The *No Child Left Behind Act* requires States to have a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. For example, all new teachers will have to be licensed or certified by the state, hold at least a bachelor's degree, and pass a rigorous state test on subject knowledge and teaching skills. Existing teachers will also have to meet similar criteria. (Executive Office of the President, 2002, p. 3)

On the surface, placing a highly qualified teacher in every public school classroom seems to be an easy objective to meet. However, it is a rather delicate matter that requires judicious and thoughtful consideration on the part of school administrators responsible for hiring the teachers required to fill each vacancy. The hiring decision can lead to success or to devastating consequences for the education system as a whole and, most important, to the students.

Intensifying the hiring process is the considerable teacher shortage quagmire affecting schools and communities throughout the United States, including in Florida. The most affected are those schools and communities where the need for highly qualified teachers is notably essential. Researchers like Feistritzer (1994) identified inner-city schools, at-risk and minority students, bilingual education, math and physical sciences, and students requiring special education as areas where the need is most acute. The

teacher shortage poses a serious dilemma for school administrators across the state who are responsible for hiring certified teachers. Finn and Madigan (2001) asserted that “At a time when public education suffers from a dual crisis of quantity and quality in its teaching ranks, bold action is needed” (p.29).

The need for highly qualified and certified teachers “has long been an important issue for parents, educators, and policymakers, to the extent that new legislation was ... enacted by Congress to watchdog teacher preparation across the nation” (Roth & Swail, 2000, p. 1) Emphasizing the need for qualified teachers, these researchers added, “The need to recruit qualified teachers to serve the neediest communities and schools of the United States ... has never been more pronounced” (p. 2).

### Teacher Shortage

A review of literature on the subject of teacher shortage indicates that this crisis started in the early 1980s. Several factors are mentioned as having contributed to the teacher shortage across the nation. Resta et al. (2001) mentioned “rising student enrollment and accelerating teacher retirements” (p. 60). Feistritzer (1999) also highlighted the high attrition rate, especially among new teachers. Specifically, she argued that one-third of college students who graduate “fully qualified to teach” leave the teaching profession within the first five years on the job. She added “One-third to forty percent of people who graduate from college ‘fully qualified to teach’ do not go into teaching—at least not right away” (1999). An additional factor that impacts the teacher shortage is new legislation that requires smaller class size (Voke, 2002, p.1).

Recent federal mandates such as NCLB and Florida's Governor Bush's *Reading by Nine* initiative are exerting serious pressure on states, districts, and schools to hire fully qualified teachers. These legislative initiatives hold school systems "accountable for providing evidence that all students have achieved proficiency in core subject areas such as math, reading, and science" (Voke, 2002, p. 3). It is interesting to note that these are the same areas previously mentioned where the teacher shortage is most serious.

Recent educational policies and initiatives, such as those mentioned above, aggravate the problems school districts and, ultimately, principals have in attracting, recruiting, and retaining top quality teachers. For instance, Title I schools are required to have teachers certified in the areas they teach. The so-called *out-of-field* teachers cannot teach in a Title I school. Additionally, it is obvious that student academic achievement and learning depend in great part on the quality, skills, and professional knowledge of the teachers who teach them (Voke, 2002, p. 3).

Teacher shortages in urban and inner-city schools pose a most urgent problem as it is in these schools where the need for high qualified teachers is most critical. Roth and Swail (2000) stated that

the need to recruit qualified teachers to serve the neediest communities and schools of the United States ... has never been more pronounced. Regardless of geographic location ... the most needy children and their schools are historically those who have suffered most from the tyranny of low expectations and paltry resources. (p. 2)

Ilmer, Elliott, Snyder, Nahan, and Colombo (2005) indicated that "Among the nation's urban school districts, the demand to recruit and retain qualified teachers has reached levels of unprecedented challenge" (p. 3). Recruiting and retaining highly qualified

teachers is central to student academic achievement. If a principal hires people “who *don’t* know how to teach, student will learn less. This will harm students, maybe permanently” (Sutton, 2001, p. 114). Quoting Linda Darling-Hammond, Sutton added “The most important factor in student learning is ‘what teachers know and are able to do’” (p. 113).

Jennifer C. Ng (2003) stated that “Quality teachers have an impact on improving student learning and performance, but teacher shortages remain a significant problem for urban schools” (p. 380). She went on to say that “... preservice teachers are reluctant to accept the challenges of working with predominantly minority, low-income children” (p. 381). Her research identified several reasons responsible for this situation, the main one being the “traditional approaches to teachers’ education through university based certification programs” (p. 381).

Making reference to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1987) and a 1993 article by C. E. Sleeter, Ng (2003) wrote, “Data indicate that most preservice teachers trained in traditional, university based programs are young, White, middle-class females who grew up in small towns within 100 miles of their college and anticipated teaching in a small town or suburban school” (pp. 382-383). She further identified two notable causes of this condition where preservice teachers trained in traditional, university based programs are reticent to teach in urban or inner-city schools. “First, these students typically lack interaction with people different from themselves prior to entering their certification program” and second, “... their lack of

understanding—both personal and academic—about racially and culturally different individuals is oftentimes substituted by stereotypes and pre-or misconceptions” (p. 383).

Writing about leadership in urban schools, Jackson(2005) indicated “urban schools are forced to deal with issues related to race and class-assimilating immigrants, teaching students whose first language is not standard English, desegregated schools, and the effects of poverty” (p. 195). She added, “Urban schools are plagued by low expectations for student learning, lack of focus on learning, lack of challenging curriculum, discouraged teachers, wary parents, and inadequate resources” (p. 195). Cuban (2001) stated that those who lead in urban school districts are forced to deal with “racial isolation, ethnic conflict, and economic disparities as they affect academic achievement both in the schools and the city itself” (p. 5).

Another field of education that has been experiencing a teacher shortage is that of special education. It appears that the shortage of qualified teachers in this highly demanding, stressful, and challenging area of teaching has been going on for many years. Rosenberg and Sindelar (2005) explicitly stated “For decades, there have not been enough qualified teachers to address the educational needs of the growing numbers of students with disabilities” (p. 117). These two authors claimed that

the rapid growth of alternative paths to special education teacher certification could be viewed as a legitimate and justified response to market conditions. Moreover, the traditional source of supply for special education classrooms, freshly minted graduates of college or university degree programs, has not met the growing demands for teachers. (p. 117)

Rosenberg and Sindelar(2005) identified three major contributing factors to the rapid growth of Alternative Certification Programs in the area of special education. They

specifically mentioned: “(a) the persistent shortage of qualified teachers, (b) the acute need for teachers who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD), and (c) dissatisfaction with the educational establishment’s hold on entry and teaching, as expressed in policy by NCLB” (p. 118). Alluding to 2002-2003 statistics from the U.S. Department of Education, Rosenberg and Sindelar reported that in that year 53,000 special education teachers were needed throughout the country, to include its territories, as replacements of less than fully certified teachers. They continued to argue that the shortage is more acute in special education, requiring, as it does, teachers who are culturally and linguistically diverse (p. 118).

Even though the review of current literature point to a shortage of teachers throughout the nation, some researchers question the validity of that assertion. One such researcher and author is Heather Voke. In her 2002 article *Understanding and Responding to the Teacher Shortage*, Voke made reference to researchers Wayne (2000) and Baker and Smith (1997) who concluded that “recent data, which allow a more accurate assessment of trends, indicate that this shortage may not be as dramatic as earlier reports predicted” (p. 1). The initial projections made in the 1980s and 1990s indicated that the country would need as many as two million teachers in the next ten years (p.1).

Voke (2002) claimed that “The shortage lies in the *distribution* of teachers: there are not enough teachers who are both qualified and willing to teach in urban and rural schools, particularly in those schools serving low-income students or students of color” (p. 1). In her article, she also referenced a 1998 article published by The National

Association of States Boards of Education (NASBE) and a 1999 article written by A. Bradley stating “there is a shortage in certain geographic regions in the country, and there are not enough qualified individuals in particular specialties such as special education, bilingual education, and the sciences” (p. 1).

It is obvious that the shortage of fully qualified teachers has very serious financial and academic consequences. States and school districts across the nation host job fairs in an attempt to hire teachers. The state of Florida, for instance, has hosted “Teach-In,” a teacher job fair where the majority of the school districts send representatives who compete against each other in offering teaching opportunities to potential candidates. The Orange County Public Schools system based in Orlando, Florida, has sent representatives from its personnel office to Puerto Rico in efforts to hire bilingual teachers to help deal with the ever increasing Hispanic population in this county. All these initiatives are time consuming and financially costly.

According to Voke (2002),

The most obvious consequence of the shortage is that states, districts, and schools must invest considerable resources attracting potential candidates to fill positions. Additionally, however, the shortage has important consequences for the quality of education that children receive. Research shows overwhelmingly that students in low-wealth communities are more likely to be taught by teachers with deficient qualifications. (p. 2)

Richard Ingersoll is another author who has written about the consequences of teacher shortages. In his 1997 article “Teacher Turnover and Teacher Quality: The Recurring Myth of Teacher Shortages,” he explained that principals who face problems in hiring fully qualified teachers “most commonly do three things: hire less-qualified



teachers, assign teachers trained in another field or grade level to teach in the understaffed area, and make extensive use of substitute teachers” (p. 42).

Thus, states and districts are left in a compel and uncomfortable situation: faced with a shortage, there is a temptation to reduce requirements for entry into the profession and assign teachers to classes that they are not qualified to teach. At the same time, however, states must ensure that all teachers have the knowledge and skills necessary to bring about improvements in student learning. (Voke, 2002, p. 3)

### Alternative Certification Program

Faced with this dilemma and coupled with an ever increasing multi-cultural student population, states throughout the nation have instituted Alternative Certification Programs (ACPs) as unconventional ways to attract prospective teacher candidates from fields outside of education and assist them in the teacher certification process. These ACPs have been established to supplement traditional college education programs (Feistritzer, 2001). Harris, Camp and Adkinson (2003) stated in their paper “New Structures and Approaches for Teacher Preparation: Do They Make a Difference in Teacher Retention?”, which was presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education conducted in New Orleans, “In response to the growing shortage problem, exacerbated by low initial employment numbers and new teacher attrition, policy makers have authorized new approaches for preparing new teachers” (pp. 1-2). McKibbin (2001) argued “In the past few years alternative routes to certification have expanded rapidly in many states” ( p. 133).

The term *alternative certification* has its own synonym. Ruckel (2002) referred to it as *alternative licensure* (p.1). These two terms are used interchangeably to define “a variety of nonstandard options for obtaining the state credentials required to teach in a public school” (p.1). These nonstandard options take different forms and range from working adults attending night school, college-based education courses designed to complement on-the-job teacher training to fast-track programs that quickly prepare teachers in basic curriculum practices. Wright (2001) referred to the alternative route to certification as

Accreditation programs designed to allow individuals with a significant subject-area background to complete their teacher preparation education while teaching full time in a particular school district. Rather to give up employment to go back to school full time, teacher interns draw a full salary during even their first year in the program. This eliminates a major obstacle for people wishing to receive a teaching license and makes teaching more attractive to career-changers or others re-entering the workforce. (p. 24)

ACPs across the nation enlist or recruit degree-bearing adults who, for some reason or another, are seeking a change or have been forced to seek other career alternatives. In his 2001 article, “No Shortcuts To Preparing Good Teachers,” Barnett Berry wrote,

[Forty-one] states now have some type of alternative that replaces the need for prospective teachers to go back to college for a major in education.... Two-thirds of the 1,354 colleges and universities that prepare teachers have at least one graduate teaching program for midcareer professionals. (pp. 32-33)

Such is the case of thousands of military personnel who had to retire or were forced out of the U.S. Armed Forces as a result of the breakdown of the former Soviet Union, the end of the first Gulf War, and the consequent military downsizing. In 1994, David P. Keltner wrote,

In 1986, a projected shortage of elementary and secondary school teachers in the United States coincided with a military liquidation; this resulted in a joint project between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Education (DoED) whose intent was to solve the shortage by relocating former military personnel and training them to become teachers. (p. 182)

The 1993 Defense Authorization Bill enacted the Troops to Teachers (TTT) program in 1994 as a “program ... designed to assist former military personnel enter public education as teachers” (Feistritzer et al., 1998, p.1).

A 2001 General Accounting Office (GAO) report authored by Marnie E. Shaul and titled *Troops to Teachers: Program Helped Address Teacher Shortages. Report to Congressional Requestors* identified the TTT program, which is administered by DoD’s Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), as

A federal program that began in 1994 with two goals: (1) to help military personnel affected by downsizing become teachers and (2) to ease the teacher shortage especially in math and science and in areas with concentration of children from low-income families.... Through fiscal year 2000, 23 states had received funds from the TTT program. (p. 4)

According to Shaul’s 2001 report, “17,459 people applied to the program from fiscal years 1994 through 2000 and, of these, 13,756 were accepted into the program. Of these participants, 3,821, or 28%, became teachers” (p. 7). The author further cited reasons why 8,554 applicants accepted into the program withdrew without becoming teachers. Several of the reasons cited were “Some military personnel said they had found a better paying job, some realized that they would not like teaching, and others thought the cost and time of the alternative certification program was onerous” (pp. 7-8).

Recent research revealed that ACPs exist throughout the nation under a wide range of names. Since the 1984-85 school year, the Los Angeles Unified School District

has the Teacher Trainee Program. The state of New Jersey established the Provisional Teacher Program during the 1985-86 school year. In Connecticut, the alternate route program, the Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST), has been in operation since the 1987-88 school year (Zumwalt, 1991).

“In 1989, the Darden College of Education at Old Dominion University established the Military Career Transition Program (MCTP)” (MacDonald et al., 1994, p. 19). In 1999, the Teacher Quality Enhancement Program funded the Teacher Recruitment and Induction Project (TRIP) as “a collaborative endeavor of the Southwest Texas State University College of Education, Science, and Liberal Arts, and seven school districts” (Resta et al., 2001, p. 61). In Kentucky, administrative regulation 16 KAR 9:070 established Kentucky’s Primary Alternative Certification Program. California has the California Teaching Internship Program (McKibbin, 1999). In 1990, Colorado State University started its Project Promise, a ten-month intensive alternative certification program that has produced 150 teachers, 80% of which have remained in the system as educators (Delisio, 2002, p.1).

As stated earlier, research of current literature in this subject matter revealed that there exist numerous models of ACPs throughout the country. Even though they all do not look alike, they can be grouped into three main categories of programs. Dill and Stafford-Johnson (2002) have identified three main models. These common models are: “university-based programs, regional service center programs and school district programs” (p. 45).

In the university model, the teacher candidate takes courses at the local college or university before beginning to teach just like a traditional student. However, the beginning teacher does not do student teaching, but, rather, a paid internship for a year. During this period, a university faculty and a district mentor guide or advises the candidate. The regional service center program functions as a committee with members from the local cooperating universities, master teachers from the cooperating districts, and specialists in teacher education from the state. This committee builds a competency-based teacher education program based on the needs and requirements of the local community. The participant receives training and instruction from the service center, district and university. In the school district model candidates must be hired by a school principal and are taught almost exclusively by district employees and individual consultants (Dill & Stafford-Johnson, 2002, p. 45).

Based on the existing literature, it is quite evident that alternative certification programs have become very popular throughout the nation as a means to attract candidates to the teaching profession in an effort to curb the problem of teacher shortages. Regardless of the model each individual program falls into,

across the board, alternative certification programs have similar content knowledge expectations of their teacher candidates but widely diverse pedagogical approaches. All seek, ultimately, to produce teachers of the highest possible quality, who meet standards comparable to those required of traditional trained teachers. (Ruckel, 2000, p. 3)

In order to accomplish the goal of producing “highly qualified” teachers, researchers in the field agree on a number of criteria or components that make any

Alternative Certification Program effective. Dr. C. Emily Feistritzer (1999) listed a number of these components:

A strong academic course component; field-based program, meaning that individuals get into classrooms early in their training; candidates work with a qualified mentor teacher; candidates usually go through the program in cohorts, not as isolated individuals; and, these programs are collaborative efforts among state departments of education whose responsibility is to license teachers, colleges and universities that historically have had the responsibility for educating and training teachers, and school districts who actually hire teachers. ( p. 2)

Resta et al. (2001) also identified similar components:

Strong content preparation aligned with state and national standards; rigorous curriculum in human growth and development, principles of teaching and learning, classroom management, instructional strategies, curriculum development and integration, assessment of student learning, technology applications, and content pedagogy; substantial amount of structured fieldwork and intensive clinical experiences; support from peers and mentors throughout the induction program. (p. 62)

Heyman (2002) likewise underscored common elements that highlight successful alternative certification programs. He mentioned:

- \* Teamwork as the “collaborative effort among the stakeholders, that is, the teacher educators, the experienced K-12 teachers, and the teachers in training.”
- \* Learning-on-the-job as “trial-by-fire” requiring “instantaneous integration of theory and practice ... utilizing modeling, coaching, direct teaching, seminars and experiential learning approaches.”
- \* Support from mentors, cohort group and seminars.
- \* Pre-internship programs which “offer a more compressed version of

pedagogical preparation” in contrast to traditional programs that “offer six to ten teacher education courses prior to student teaching” (pp. 4-5).

These three sets of elements coincide in describing what constitutes an effective alternative certification program. Osgood and Self (2002) highlighted the importance of one of these elements: the role local mentors play in the development of new teachers. Specifically, they described this role as considerably significant. They argued that “A mentor’s function is to advise, counsel, and guide the new teacher through the problems that may arise in the novice’s professional life. They also assist protégés in defining and reaching goals” (p. 11). These two authors further alluded to a previous study conducted by Osgood where

mentors perceived their roles as a teacher and sometimes alarm ringer of school culture, structure, and procedure, as a communicator, as a coach, and as an observer/evaluator. The study revealed that mentors felt fairly comfortable in their roles, except in the role of observer/evaluator which tended to produce many feelings of inadequacy. (p. 11)

Jorissen (2002) conducted a study to examine key factors that lead urban teachers, certified through alternative certification programs, to remain in the teaching profession. Her sample was 13 teachers in the Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, metropolitan areas. Her findings in the area of mentoring revealed that “mentoring played a central role in the field experiences of the participants in ... the program” (p.12). During interviews, the program participants agreed that

mentoring served multiple purposes” and that “among the outcomes of mentoring, improvement of teaching performance, the facilitation of transfer of knowledge from teacher educators, the promotion of personal and professional well-being, and socialization to the institutional culture occurred for the participants. (p. 12)

Among the comments made by the participants referring to their mentors were “that their mentors were approachable, knowledgeable about educational theory and practice, respected by parents, energetic, concerned about diversity, innovative, organized, and, most importantly, skilled and caring in working with students” (pp. 12-13).

All beginning teachers know that the support they receive, especially during their first year of teaching, is of crucial importance. Not only is support from mentors indispensable, but so is support from the education system as a whole to include administrators and fellow beginning teachers. Michael D. McKibbin (2001), administrator for teacher development with the Professional Services Division of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing in Sacramento, California, declared

Interviews with project directors and interns almost unanimously identify the support that they receive from project personnel, support providers, and their fellow interns as the most powerful and important aspect of the program. It is important that support be site based and that it occurs from the beginning of the intern’s first day of classroom responsibility. (p. 141)

He also echoed the comments made by interns on “the importance of proceeding through a program as a cohort.” The cohort was perceived as a source of help, as a forum for exchanging ideas, and as a source of moral support (p. 141).

Osgood and Self (2002) underscored the consequences of the lack of quality and timely support as that described above. They referenced a study conducted by Crawford-Self in 2001 on the reasons why new alternatively certified trade and industrial teachers in a Midwestern state were dissatisfied and left their teaching careers. Of eleven reasons for dissatisfaction, lack of support and recognition ranked number one with 31.6% of



respondents identifying this reason as the main cause for leaving the profession. “Lack of support was described as an uncertainty about the job’s responsibilities, lack of interest exhibited by administrators, and administration’s unwillingness to provide technical support or disciplinary backup when dealing with student problems.” They further asserted that “lack of support is one of the main reasons that teachers leave their professions” (p. 4). Joerger (2002) highlighted little support from administration as a key reason why “new teachers become dissatisfied as they make the rocky transition into teaching and decide to leave the profession” (as cited by Osgood & Self, 2002, p. 3).

The decision to hire an alternatively certified teacher instead of a traditionally certified one often rests entirely on the shoulders of the school principal. The principal’s role in the hiring process is extremely critical as the hired teacher will definitely impact students’ achievement and development. Moreover, the principals’ duties of recruitment and hiring are most crucial in helping the nation achieve the goal of a highly qualified teacher in every classroom by the end of the 2005-2006 school year as specified in President Bush’s NCLB Act (Executive Office of the President, 2002, p. 3).

Salyer (2003) highlighted this principals’ function when looking for teachers who possess the knowledge, skills, and commitment to teach children well. Salyer indicated “When interviewing prospective teachers, principals attempt to determine whether interviewees have the appropriate knowledge, skills, and commitment to be effective teachers for students in their schools” (p. 16). Salyer further added

Principals also play a major role in determining the nature of the induction process for new teachers and the nature of ongoing professional development in their schools. The extent and quality of these processes may strengthen teachers’ knowledge, skills, and commitments or may have little effect. (p.16)

Several variables work in unison to complicate the principals' role of not only recruiting and hiring new teachers but also in retaining "highly qualified" teachers. Together, these variables challenge the principals with what seems to be an overwhelming task. These variables are: teachers' shortages in specialized subject areas and in certain geographical areas; increasing student enrollment; a constantly growing ethnically diverse student population; and, increasing teacher retirements. Principals are also faced with the requirements of ethnically balancing their respective school staffs.

Dr. Legler (2002) conducted a study of a random sample of 2,600 school principals in the seven states region of Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin to ascertain the perspectives and attitudes of school principals who have hired alternatively certified teachers. The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) published Dr. Legler's findings in his article "The Impact of Alternative Certification in the Midwest Policy Issues."

Legler's 2002 findings highlighted several key issues based on premises and assertions on alternative certification. Among his results, Dr. Legler mentioned "that alternative certification programs can increase the number of male teachers since the majority of teachers are women" (p.11). However, as far as racial diversity is concerned, he found alternative certification "less promising" and that it "has had little impact" in the hiring of African American and Hispanic teachers (p. 11). Another finding was that "alternative certification programs are bringing candidates with life experiences into teaching" as these candidates are older and more mature than regular college graduates (p. 11). There is abundant literature that defines and describes who are these teachers that

receive their teaching credentials through alternative certification. Ruckel (2000) classified the candidates into three main groups or categories. The first group she mentioned is the “second-career seekers.” These candidates “have retired, are casualties of corporate downsizing, or are seeking a career change, or have the yearning to teach.” The second group is the “late decision-makers.” These candidates who seek alternative certifications are “recent college graduates who have made the decision to enter teaching too late in their college programs to switch majors.” The third group is the “partly finished.” They are new graduates who have only completed part of a teacher education program” (p. 5).

These three different groups arrive at alternative certification programs bringing with them diverse educational background and work experiences. The second-career seekers are the ones that usually arrive with the most work experience and strong content knowledge. In fact, most programs are designed with this group in mind (Ruckel, 2000, p. 5).

Researchers agree on the qualities and traits teachers, certified through an ACP, bring with them to the teaching career. Resta et al. (2001) maintained “Midcareer individuals bring many strengths to teaching, including maturity, life experience, and good work habits” (p. 61). Feistritzer et al. (1998) referred to Troops to Teachers as

a huge success in bringing dedicated, mature and experienced individuals into classrooms who have proven not only to be effective teachers but also excellent role models for students. These military personnel ... bring unique and valuable life experiences to the classroom in a critical time in the development of the nation’s youth.. (p. 1)

Ruckel (2000) maintained that “second career seekers ... come to teaching with strong content knowledge, whether from a college degree or career experience” (p. 3).

Between 1993 and 1994, Shen (1998) conducted a survey and collected data using the Schools and Staffing Survey 1993-1994 (SASS93) to inquire “into the link between alternative certification, minority teachers, and urban education,” and compared the characteristics of alternatively certified (AC) minority teachers and those of traditionally certified (TC) and AC White teachers. The survey’s population was teachers certified between 1983 and 1984. Of the 14,719 respondents, 13,601 were TC teachers and 1,118 were AC teachers (p. 32). According to Shen, “this sample is a nationally representative sample of public school teachers certified in the 10 years prior to the 1993-1994 survey” (p. 32). Based on the sample of his study, Shen’s survey revealed the following:

- AC recruits a significantly higher percentage of minority teachers than does TC as 87% of the TC teachers are White and 13% are minorities. In contrast, among AC teachers, 79% are White and 21% are minority.
- A very high percentage of minority teachers, and particularly AC minority teachers, work in urban schools. Sixty-seven percent of TC minority teachers and 87% of AC minority teachers work in urban schools whereas the corresponding percentage for White teachers is about 40%. TC minority teachers and particularly AC minority teachers are much less likely to work in suburban and rural areas than their White counterparts.
- Sixty-seven percent of TC minority teachers and 89% of AC minority teachers work in schools where minority students make up 50% and 100% of the

student body. In contrast, only 21% and 25% of the TC and AC White teachers, respectively, work in school where 50% to 100% of the student body is minority. Thus, AC recruits a significantly higher percentage of minority teachers into schools where minority students are the majority.

- There is a higher percentage of females among AC minority teachers than among all three other groups. AC does not appear to recruit a higher percentage of minority males into teaching, but it attracts a higher percentage of White males.
- In comparison to TC, AC attracts a higher percentage of White teachers who are younger than 30 years old (36%), but a higher percentage of minority teachers who are between 40 and 49 years old (35%).
- AC policies recruit a higher percentage of those who have work experience outside of teaching and education; this is particularly true for AC minority teachers. The percentages of those who have experience in business or military service is 10%, 16%, 21%, and 28% for TC White, TC minority, AC White, and AC minority, respectively.
- Three percent of both AC White and AC minority teachers do not possess a bachelor's degree whereas the corresponding figure for TC White and TC minority teachers is 0%. Ten percent of AC minority teachers have educational attainment above the master's degree, the highest among all four groups. The data indicate that the percentage of those having above a master's

degree is higher among AC minority teachers than among any other group of teachers.

- AC recruits more math and science teachers. A higher percentage of AC White (15%) and AC minority teachers (14%) teach math and science than do TC White (11%) and TC minority teachers (9%).
- A higher percentage of AC minority teachers (60%) than AC White teachers (45%) teach at the elementary level. The percentage of AC minority teachers who work at the secondary level is the lowest among all groups (Shen, 1998, pp. 32-37).

Numerous researchers tend to corroborate the results of Shen's 1993-1994 survey.

For example, in their 1997 study of beginning alternatively certified teachers in

Oklahoma, Chesley et al. examined the characteristics of these AC teachers. Their study revealed that

When compared to other new teachers in Oklahoma, alternatively certified teachers in the study included a higher percentage of males (52%) and ethnic minorities (17%), with most working in secondary schools. As a group, they were older, with 42 percent over age 35. Most (81%) had worked in other fields before entering teaching. (p. 29)

The only difference between the results of this study and that of Shen (1998) is the percentages of AC minority teachers working in secondary schools. While Shen's study revealed that the percent of AC minority teachers who worked in secondary schools ranked lowest among the four groups in his study, the Chesley et al. study (1997) yielded opposite results.

Two other researchers that looked into the characteristics of AC certified teachers were Lutz and Hutton (1989). Their research was based on AC teachers only, with no comparisons between AC and TC teachers such as what Shen did in his study. Their research on the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) revealed that

Of the 110 interns selected by DISD, 85 were women and 25 men, ranging in age from 21 years, 10 months to 58 years, 10 months. The average age was 31 years, 4 months. Forty-two of the intern recruits were White (38%), 37 Black (34%), 28 Hispanics (25%), 2 Asian (2%), and 1 American Indian (1%). (p. 242)

They also found that all the interns had college degrees and prior work experiences in areas such as business and office, public services, and marketing and distribution (p. 242).

This literature review suggests that alternative certification programs across the nation have distinct advantages as far as the characteristics of AC teachers are concerned. AC teachers are more prone to work in rural and inner-city poor schools where the need for teachers is marked. There is more diversity among AC teachers. These tend to be men, older adults, minorities, and retired military personnel. Additionally, individuals with prior credentials in mathematics and science majors who want to become teachers do so through alternative means rather than going back to college.

It is important to recognize why these AC teachers decide to remain in the teaching field once they are certified. Referenced was already made in this paper to Jorissen's (2002) study on the factors that contributed to AC teachers' persistence in remaining in the teaching field. Mentoring, already mentioned earlier, was a key factor. However, Jorissen's study also highlighted the following factors: (1) Pre-Internship Course Work consisting of formal classes in education; (2) Internship Course Work

considered as “relevant, well-taught, applicable”; (3) Transfer of Training From Course Work Into Classrooms; (4) Classroom Practicum “under the supervision of an internship team”; (5) Internship Teaching; and (6) Influence and Impact of the Cohort in “minimizing feelings of isolation, fostering trust, and developing collegial patterns of behavior and occupational identity” (pp. 8-22).

So far, this literature review has focused on the positive features of alternative certification programs. However, the course of this literature review also has revealed criticisms against alternative certification as a means of certifying and producing highly qualified teachers.

One of the most outspoken opponents to alternative certification is Linda Darling-Hammond (2000). She claimed that TC teachers have “greater knowledge of teaching and learning *and* are more highly rated and are more effective with students, especially at tasks requiring higher order thinking and problem solving” (p. 167). She also added,

Studies of teachers admitted with less than full preparation find that recruits tend to be less satisfied with their training and have greater difficulties planning curriculum, teaching, managing the classroom, and diagnosing students’ learning needs. They are less able to adapt their instruction to promote student learning and less likely to see it as their job to do so, blaming students if their teaching is not effective. Principals and colleague rate these teachers less highly on their instructional skills, and they leave teaching at higher-than average rates. (p. 167)

Darling-Hammond (2002) further criticized alternative teacher certification programs for their “lack of traditional coursework and student teaching.” The AC programs try to compensate this deficiency by providing “intensive mentoring and supervision in the initial months of full-time teaching” (p. 168).

Whiting and Klotz (1999) argued that



Alternative certification cannot become a Band-Aid for education, resulting in people, who are trained in a content area yet have no pedagogical experience, being thrust into educational environments in our schools where they must begin to haphazardly attempt to transfer “knowledge” of certain subjects to groups of students. (p. 5)

Writing about special education teachers, Shepherd and Brown (2003) indicated

It is clear that study in a particular field is not training in the field of teaching. Although a degree in a particular area could prepare someone to perform professionally in the area, such a degree does not guarantee that the person will be able to teach the subject matter. (p. 27)

They also added, “Allowing nontraditional teachers in special education classrooms is a contradiction to the No Child Left Behind Law of 2001. Special education becomes a trade instead of a profession” (p. 29).

Laczko-Kerr and Berliner (2003) argued that their particular research suggested:

- Teachers in alternative routes to certification have higher dropout rates from both training and teaching
- Recruits for alternative certification in mathematics and science have lower grade-point averages than do recruits in traditional programs.
- Teachers from alternative programs report more problems with their preparation programs.
- Those prepared in traditional programs have more self-confidence.
- Alternatively certified teachers tend to have a limited view of curriculum; lack understanding of student ability and motivation; experience difficulty translating content knowledge into meaningful information for students to understand; plan instruction less effectively; and tend not to learn about teaching through their experiences (p. 37).

Baines et al. (2001) were very critical of the alternative certification programs in Georgia, Texas, and Florida. They argued that to be a teacher in any of these three states the candidates just need only “a bachelor’s degree and a 2.5 overall grade-point average. No previous experience with children or demonstrated expertise teaching is necessary” (p. 32). They added that

Alternative certification in Georgia, Florida, and Texas gives complete control over children’s education to individuals with no previous experience in the classroom. Not only are alternatively certified teachers elevated to positions equivalent to those of university-educated teachers with three or more years’ experience and twice as much education, but the law mandates that they receive equal salaries and benefits. (p. 36)

Furthermore they equate the medical term “*iatrogenic*, an illness or injury that has been caused by the treatment itself” to “placing an inexperienced alternatively certified teacher in a classroom *to* solve momentary staffing needs in a school clamoring for a warm body, but the iatrogenic consequence of this quick-fix mentality is that student morale and achievement may suffer” (p. 36).

### Florida’s Alternative Certification Program

Chapter 1012, Title XLVIII K-20 Education Code of the 2003 Florida Statutes established the Transition to Teaching Program to encourage midcareer professionals who want to become teachers. Section 231.17 (7)(a) of the Florida Statutes required the Department of Education to develop and each school district to provide by July 1, 2002,

a cohesive competency-based professional preparation alternative certification program by which members of the school district’s instructional staff may satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements specified in this subsection and rules of the State Board of Education. Participants

must hold a state-issued temporary certificate. A school district shall provide a competency-based alternative certification preparation program developed by the Department of Education or developed by the district and approved by the Department of Education. (Lake County Public Schools, 2006-2007)

Based on this statute, each district has the option of implementing the Department of Education–developed alternative certification program or its own program. Each district then can develop its own program based on the district’s needs, resources, culture, and professional development philosophy (Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida Department of Education, 2004).

In January 2004, the Bureau of Educator Certification of the Florida Department of Education published a paper submitted by The Center for Educational Research and Policies Studies titled *Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida, Formative Evaluation of the Florida Alternative Certification Program*. This publication specifically stated that district must base its alternative certification program on the twelve Florida Educator Accomplished Practices considered to be Florida’s standards for all teachers. These twelve Educator Accomplished Practices are

- Assessment
- Communication
- Continuous Improvement
- Critical Thinking
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Human Development & Learning
- Knowledge of Subject Matter

- Learning Environments
- Planning
- Role of the Teacher
- Technology

In addition to the successful accomplishment and demonstration of these twelve Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, an ACP candidate teacher must also receive passing grades on the three tests given by the Florida Department of Education. These tests are: The General Knowledge Test, the Florida Professional Educator Exam and the Florida Subject Area Exam (Volusia County Schools, 2006).

A review of the literature on alternative certification programs in the public school districts or counties of Brevard, Hillsborough, Lake, Orange, Palm Beach, Pasco, Volusia and Wakulla revealed that they all have similar components, as identified by researchers such as Feistritzer (1999, p. 75), Resta et al. (2001, p. 76), and Heyman (2002, p.76), as being basic to an effective alternative certification program. In a nutshell, the components that these districts share in common are

1. Requirement that ACP teacher candidates to have a valid two- or three-year temporary teaching certificate from the Florida Department of Education.
2. Requirement that ACP teacher candidates hold at least a bachelor's degree.
3. Survival training consisting of after-school workshops and support staff assistance.

4. Seminars designed to provide assistance skills and knowledge development that lead to effective teaching behaviors. Among the seminars offered by these counties are Computer Literacy for Teachers, Cooperative Learning, Crisis Intervention for Educators, Harry Wong's New Teacher Induction, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Independent Reading Course, and Professionalism Through Integrity—Code of Ethics.

5. Online curriculum support.

6. Support teams consisting of school administrators, mentors, and evaluators to coordinate and support the teacher candidate's professional development. Many of the mentors and evaluators are National Board Certified Teachers. In the case of Palm Beach County, ACP participants also have online mentors that help guide the participants in a web-based ACP.

7. Submission of a portfolio together with programmatic and continuous assessments.

8. Completion of the Florida Online Reads—Professional Development (FOR-PD).

Brevard Public Schools (BPS) has a very detailed and comprehensive Alternative Certification Program. The BPS program consists of a combination of in-house training seminars and workshops and professional preparation seminars conducted at Brevard Community College (BCC). Teacher candidates going through BPS's program can attend Introduction to Education, Teaching Diverse Population, and Technology for Educators at BCC. The in-house training seminars and workshops include an Introduction to

Education Seminar, a 3 Day New Teacher Academy or Mini New Teacher Academy, the twelve Ruby Payne Frameworks of Poverty Training Modules, the Creating Independence Through Student-Owned Strategies (CRISS), Building Community with Parents and Students, Cooperative Learning, Reading Face to Face, Classroom Management Strategies, and Technology for Educators Seminar.

These Florida public school districts follow the school district model of alternative certification program as described by Dill and Stafford-Johnson (2002, p. 72). This “district-by-district implementation demonstrates flexibility within a standards-based framework” (Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida Department of Education, January, 2004). Pasco County Schools follows an “online program which is aligned with the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices” (Pasco County Schools, 2006). Some smaller school districts such as Flagler County opted to use the state’s established program rather than create and support its own because they lack adequate resources and personnel (NEFEC, 2006b).

As a member of Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), this researcher took a closer look this county’s Alternative Certification Program. OCPS ACP is a three-part program which participants must complete within 180 days. During this period of time, “participants must complete pre-planning, post-planning and a minimum of 180 days of teaching under the supervision of a Florida Performance Measurement System (FPMS) trained and Clinical Educator trained administrator and ACP mentor teacher” (OCPS, 2004–2005a, p. 2). Participants who do not complete the program within the 180 days may continue for an additional 360 days with approval of the school principal and the

Support Team (p. 5). OCPS ACP participants must also participate in a series of professional development courses and workshops intended to provide them with quality training opportunities. The topics discussed in these courses and workshops, usually conducted at night and or during weekends, are Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, The Student and the Classroom, Florida Performance Management System (FPMS), Classroom Management and Instructional Strategies, Instructional Technology, and the Role of the K-12 Educator. Of significant importance is the demonstration of the Preprofessional Benchmark Level of the Accomplished Practices for Educators of the Twenty-First Century (p.1).

The ACP participant can apply for a State of Florida Professional Certificate after completing all state education and legal requirements. Specifically, the participant must meet requirements for a three-year certificate, successfully complete OCPS ACP, pass the General Knowledge Test, pass the Florida Professional Educator Examination, and pass the Florida Subject Area Examination (OCPS, p. 5).

According to Nora Gledich, OCPS ACP Coordinator within the Professional Development Services, the program has graduated a total of 218 participants (12 in Elementary Schools, 108 in Middle Schools and 98 in High Schools). There is a 90% retention rate. Currently, there are 381 participants (79 in Elementary Schools, 149 in Middle Schools and 151 in High Schools) (Nora Gledich, personal communication, November 8, 2004).

The Washington, D.C.–based National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC) published a state-by-state report in 2004 outlining specific data on individual

states' Alternative Certification Programs. The reported data were based on a survey conducted at the different states' Department of Education. The data correspond to the years of 1985 to 2003. Even though the report consists of data in twelve different areas, no data were provided on the State of Florida in six of those twelve areas. Data reported on the State of Florida were as follows:

- Number of Teaching Certificates Issued to Persons Who Completed an Alternative Route During the Period of 1985-2004: 697. This total is further broken down by year starting in 1999. The breakdown is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Teaching Certificates by Alternate Route: 1999–2003

Year	Number of certificates
1999–2000	62
2000–2001	87
2001–2002	180
2002–2003	368

- Age of Alternative Teacher Certification Candidates in 2003-2004: The average age in Florida was reported as 35. The breakdown is shown in Table 2.



Table 2

Age of Alternative Teacher Certification Candidates: 2003–2004

Age of candidates	Percentage of total
18–26	24
27–35	34
36 and older	42

- Employment and Cost of Alternative Teacher Certification Program: In Florida, individuals participating in the alternative route program were employed full-time or part-time while participating in the program. The cost varied from district to district from \$0 to \$2,000, with some districts absorbing the cost while others shared the cost with the teacher candidate.
- Numbers of Newly Hired Teachers: In Florida, from 1993 to 2004, a total of 121,913 new teachers were hired. The breakdown per year is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Newly Hired Teachers in Florida: 1993–2004

Year	Number of new hires
1993–1994	9,236
1994–1995	9,265
1995–1996	7,833
1996–1997	9,385
1997–1998	10,689
1998–1999	11,169
1999–2000	12,108
2000–2001	12,291
2001–2002	11,409
2002–2003	12,317
2003–2004	16,211

- Number of Persons Who Completed an Approved College Teacher

Preparation Program: In Florida, from 1985 to 1991, a total of 5,000 persons per year completed an approved college teacher preparation program. No data were provided from 1991 to 1998. Data provided for the period of 1998 to 2002 are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Teacher Preparation Program Graduates (1998–2002)

Year	Number of persons
1998–1999	5,588
1999–2000	5,475
2000–2001	5,580
2001–2002	5,790

On the average, then, the State of Florida graduated approximately 5,608 persons from an approved college teacher preparation program between 1998 and 2002. However, during this same period of time, the state issued an average of 14,506 temporary or other teaching licenses per year.

The data provided in the NCAC report clearly revealed that the State of Florida was experiencing a teacher shortage and that teacher colleges in the state could not meet the demand. Consequently, the state was forced to issue a large number of temporary licenses.

In August 2003, the Bureau of Educator Certification of the Florida Department of Education published a Progress Report on Alternative Certification in Florida. This Progress Report was prepared and submitted by The Center for Educational Research and Policy Studies of the College of Education, Florida State University. Among the many findings found in pages 4 through 24, this progress Report revealed the following data:

- \* Over 50% of teachers participating in alternative certification programs in Florida are over 30 (p. 4).

- \* Most of the teachers participating in Florida ACPs majored in the sciences, social sciences, business, English, and Language Arts (p. 5).

- \* The most common previous experience reported by teachers currently participating in ACPs are education related, business, and the sciences (p. 5).

- \* Approximately 50% of teachers participating in Florida ACPs reported that they are teaching in the areas of math, sciences, and special education (p. 6).

\* The majority of teachers participating in Florida ACPs are reported that they are seeking fulfillment in the classroom (100%), plan to continue teaching next year (97%), have received survival training (83%), have been given a pre-assessment on the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP) (69%), and have been assigned a mentor (96%) (pp. 7-8).

\* Assigned mentors reported having more than 10 years of teaching experience (80%), have undergone mentor training (98%), specialize in the same subject area as the alternative certification teacher to whom they are assigned (49%), are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (24%) (pp. 9, 11).

The researchers of this Progress Report (Bureau of Educator Certification, 2003) also surveyed principals on how well Florida's ACPs are preparing new teachers based on the 12 Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. The findings show that "Alternative certification programs in Florida are preparing new teachers who perform as well or better than regular first-year teachers" (p. 12). When asked to evaluate if ACP teachers perform as well or better than regular first-year teachers using the 12 FEAP, high percentages of surveyed principals reported in the affirmative, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Principals' Report of ACP Teacher Performance

Area	Percentage
Assessment	98.6
Communication	97.2
Critical thinking	98.6
Use of technology	100
Diversity	100
Teacher ethics	98.6
Learning environment	95.8
Planning for instruction	97.2
Human development and learning	100
Knowledge of subject matter	100
Continuous improvement	100
Understanding the professional role of teachers	100

Based on the literature review, data, and information provided in this section on Florida's Alternative Certification Program, it is evident that this state's programs, as established by the Department of Education and individual public school districts, are on track and are effective.

Florida's Alternative Certification Programs represent just a few examples of the numerous Alternative Certification Programs that have been established throughout the United States in response to the teacher shortage. The widespread proliferation of ACPs nationwide makes rendering an overall assessment and evaluation of these programs as a whole an almost insurmountable task. Since each program responds to individual states and local school districts teaching needs, policies, and educational philosophies, it has to be evaluated and assessed based on its own merits, specific goals, objectives, strengths,

and weaknesses, and how effectively it accomplishes whatever it is designed to accomplish.

The purpose of this chapter was to review existing literature on the subject of alternative certification. There is an abundance of research and writings about this subject ever since alternative certification programs were established. Just about every state in the nation has some sort of program to alternatively certify teachers. The main reason for their existence is the teacher shortages, especially in inner-city poor schools and in subject areas such as science and mathematics.

Researchers in the field seem at odds over the strengths and weaknesses of AC programs and whether or not these programs are effective in preparing “highly qualified” teachers. Their arguments in favor and against these programs are rather compelling. Regardless of their particular orientations, the truth of the matter is that ACPs are not going to go away anytime soon. They are here to stay and their goal of facilitating entry into the teaching profession for those wanting to become educators is a noble one.

### CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

The present study was initiated during the spring of 2006 with permission obtained from numerous Florida public school districts and counties. The state of Florida has as many counties as public school districts. So, for the purpose of this study the words counties and districts refer to the same entity and are used interchangeably.

The study was conducted by sending a 20-item questionnaire to three public school principals identified and selected by their respective school districts. The researchers asked school districts to identify or select three of their principals to participate in the study. These three principals, one each at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, were selected because they had experience with hiring alternatively certified teachers or had alternatively certified teachers on their respective school staffs. Not all of Florida's 67 public school districts participated in this study.

Once the individual participating district provided the researcher with the names and addresses of their three selected principals, the researcher mailed a questionnaire for the principals to complete, together with the Informed Consent Form. The final analysis of data, conclusions, and recommendations were presented in November 2006. This chapter reviews the problem statement and describes the population, materials, data collection, and data analysis used in the conduct of this study.

### Problem Statement

As stated in Chapter 1 of this study, the problem is there is very limited to no information addressing the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of Florida public school principals concerning alternatively certified teachers. Additionally, there is also very limited to no information on the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of Florida public school principals concerning the Alternative Certification Program as a way of certifying teachers to ameliorate the shortage of teachers in the state.

The main purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the effectiveness of Florida's Alternative Certification Program (ACP) from the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes of Florida school principals on alternatively certified teachers as opposed to traditionally certified teachers. The study also considered the question of whether or not Florida's ACP is an effective way to deal with the teacher shortage in the state. Specifically, this study investigated what forms of Alternative Certification Programs the state of Florida has instituted to deal with the teacher shortage. Moreover, it identified and analyzed the criteria and components needed for an effective ACP.

### Population

The researcher contacted, via the U.S. Postal Service, 67 public school districts throughout the state of Florida. More specifically, the researcher contacted Directors of Human Resources, Directors of Teacher Recruitment and Teacher Development, and Alternative Certification Program Coordinators.

Of the 67 public school districts contacted, a total of 21 responded for a 31% response rate. Of the 21 school districts that responded to the researcher's request, 16



accepted the invitation to participate in the study and provided the names and addresses of at least three principals they wanted to participate in the study's survey, for a response rate of 76%. Several districts provided names and addresses of four principals. For their own particular reasons, a total of five of the 21 districts that responded to the researcher did not want to participate in the study (24%). Although the researcher attempted to contact them on several occasions, a total of 46 school districts did not respond at all to the researcher's request, for a 69% non-response rate.

### Materials

Dillman's Tailored Design Method was used in the study. The questionnaires, as well as the extra envelope provided, were coded to ease identification of responding and non-responding participating districts and principals. The codes used were a combination of the districts' abbreviations and the grade level of the principal's school. For example, the elementary school selected for Orange County Public Schools received the code of "OCPSES." In case of districts having the same abbreviations, the researcher added an additional letter to differentiate the school district. Therefore, the researcher assigned the code of OSCPS to Osceola County Public Schools, which has the same abbreviation (OCPS) as Orange County Public Schools. For confidentiality, the researcher was the only one who was able to match a school code with the name of the principal and the school's address.

After two weeks of non-responses, the researcher sent an additional mailing containing a copy of the same documents mailed in the first mailing to the non-respondents. A third mailing was not used.

The researcher developed the questionnaire using a combination of researcher-created questions and questions taken from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's (NCREL) survey titled "Understanding the Job of a School Principal: A Study of Current Principal Practices, Principal Preparation, and Alternative Teacher Certification." Previous authorization to use this survey had been granted via e-mail by Dr. Ray Legler, NCREL's Senior Program Associate (See Appendix A). An asterisk (\*) was used to identify the questions taken from NCREL's survey. The survey instrument consisted of 20 questions, 9 of which were created by the researcher and the remaining 11 were taken from NCREL's survey.

The Principals' Survey Instrument was divided in two main parts. Part I, consisting of questions 1 through 5, addressed Background Information. Part II, consisting of questions 6 through 20, specifically addressed the Alternative Certification Program. Table 6 provides basic background information provided by school principals in response to questions 1 through 5 in Part I, Background Information.

Table 6

## Background Information

Item number	Item	Number	Percent of total
Grade level			
1A	Elementary (K–5)	7	32
1B	Middle (6–8)	7	32
1C	High school (9–12)	7	32
1D	Elementary and middle (K–8)	0	0
1E	Middle and high school (6–12)	1	4
Type of community			
2A	Urban	3	13
2B	Rural	6	26
2C	Suburban	3	13
2D	Small town	11	48
School enrollment			
3A	Under 100	0	0
3B	101–300	0	0
3C	301–500	0	0
3D	501–700	5	22
3E	701–900	4	17
3F	901–1,100	4	17
3G	1101–1400	5	22
3H	1401–1700	2	9
3I	1701 +	3	13
4	Number of teachers	1718	
5	Number of Alternative Certificate teachers	72	4

Data Collection

The researcher sent a cover letter (See Appendix B) together with a copy of the Principal's Survey Instrument (See Appendix C) to points of contact at each school

district. The researcher mailed a similar packet addressed to principals selected by their respective school districts. This packet included a cover letter (See Appendix C), two copies of the Informed Consent Form, and one Principals' Questionnaire Instrument. The principals were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it together with a copy of the Informed Consent Form in a self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by the researcher.

The principals' questionnaire packets were not mailed to any principal until after the researcher received authorization from school districts. The school districts that responded to the researcher's request did so via U.S. Postal Service or e-mail messages. The school districts that decided to have principals participate in the study provided the names and addresses of a combined total of 49 principals. Of the 49 principals contacted, 22 responded to the researcher's request by completing and returning the questionnaire instrument, for a response rate of 45%. Twenty-seven principals did not complete or return the questionnaire, for a non-response rate of 55%. The principals responding to the survey did so on a voluntary basis.

As the completed principals' questionnaires were received, the researcher used a frequency distribution to record each principal's individual response per question for future analysis. As the responses of the completed questionnaire were tallied, a pattern of the principals' perceptions, perspectives, and attitudes toward alternatively certified teachers and the ACP as a whole emerged.

### Variables

The analysis of the data was based on the responses received from principals. These responses, in turn, were dependent on the years of experience each responding principal has had as principal and on their experiences and knowledge with alternatively certified teacher and or with the ACP itself.

The variable of timing could have probably played a major role on the 31% response rate from districts, on the number (49) of principal's names and addresses submitted to the researcher and on the 45 % response rate for principals who returned a completed questionnaire. The packets to the districts were mailed towards the latter half of the month of June 2006, and the packets to the principals were mailed as names and addresses were received. The mailings to the principals took place during the months of July and August 2006. It just happened that these two months are the busiest months of a year as school districts and principals throughout the state were preparing for the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year.

Another variable that impacted the districts' response rate of 31% is size. This is a variable that merits mentioning. A number of the non-responding school districts are small in size and belong to what is known as the North East Florida Educational Consortium or NEFEC. As this name implies, NEFEC's member districts are in the North East part of the state. NEFEC's 15 member districts are: Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau, Putnam, Suwannee, Union, P. K. Yonge DRS, and Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. According to NEFEC's Internet website,

The Consortium is a regional non-profit, educational service agency established to provide cooperative services to member districts. It exercises no control over its clients, is non-regulatory, and has no taxing authority. Participation in programs and services through the Consortium is completely voluntary. Therefore, the Consortium is designed to be sensitive and responsive to the needs and desires of the school districts being served. (NEFEC, 2006).

NEFEC's Internet website explains the Consortium's mission as seeking "to help member districts cooperatively meet their educational goals and objectives by providing programs and services that individual districts would not be able to provide as effectively or as economically when acting alone" (NEFEC, 2006b). Among the services NEFEC provides its district members are Instructional and General Services to include Teacher Recruitment.

Some counties, such as Baker, Gadsden and Monroe, reported that they had no teacher completing the ACP or no teachers enrolled in the program; that they only had a maximum of two alternatively certified teachers; and that ACP teachers or principals with experience with alternatively certified teachers were no longer working in the county.

The breakdown of the grade levels reported in Item 1 by the 22 responding principals is rather interesting. An equal number of principals, seven, reported being a principal at a grade level of elementary, middle, and high school for a total of 21

principals or 95%. One principal (5%) reported being a principal of a middle and high school combination.

Of the 23 principals who responded to Item 2, three (13%) reported being principals of schools serving an urban population and three (13%) of schools serving a suburban population. Six principals (26%) reported being principals serving a rural population. The majority of the responding principals, 11 (48%), reported being principals serving a small town population.

It is important to explain the discrepancy of one between Item 1 and Item 2. Item 1 reflects a total of 22 respondents. Item 2 reflects a total of 23 respondents. The difference of one is the result of one respondent reporting that his school serves a rural population in a small town. This particular principal then selected choices B and D when answering Item 2. Therefore there was a discrepancy of one.

There is also a discrepancy of one between Item 1 and Item 3. Item 1 reflects a total of 22 respondents. Item 3 reflects a total of 23 respondents. The difference of one is the result of one respondent who answered Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 13 only. This respondent answered “NA” to the remaining survey items.

In these two cases, the researcher opted to report the respondents’ responses as reflected by the respective questionnaire. After the researcher received completed questionnaires, the researcher tallied the responses for analysis.

## CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS

### Description of Program

Alternative Certification Programs (ACP) surfaced in several states of the country during the decade of the 80's in response to a reported teacher shortage. From these beginnings, ACPs have spread to virtually every state of the nation as reported by numerous researchers (Berry, 2001; Feistritzer, 2001; Harris et al., 2003; McKibbin, 2001; Rosenberg & Sindelar, 2005). In an effort to deal with the teacher shortage, states and public school districts across the nation started to develop and implement alternative ways to certify professionals as teachers without requiring them to attend the traditional university or college path of teacher certification. This ACP idea still has as its purpose bringing professionals from other career fields into the teaching profession through alternate means.

Researchers in the fields of education and more specifically alternative teacher certification have highlighted several of the main causes of the teacher shortage. Resta et al. (2001) mentioned “rising student enrollment and accelerating teacher retirements” (p. 60). Feistritzer (1999) emphasized the high attrition rate, especially among new teachers. Voke (2002) identified new legislation requiring smaller class sizes and new federal mandates, such as NCLB.

The areas where this teacher shortage is most prevalent are mathematics, reading, science, special education, and inner-city schools. Teacher shortages in urban and inner-



city schools pose a most urgent problem, as it is in these schools that the need for high qualified teachers is most critical. Roth and Swail (2000) stated that

the need to recruit qualified teachers to serve the neediest communities and schools of the United States ... has never been more pronounced. Regardless of geographic location ... the most needy children and their schools are historically those who have suffered most from the tyranny of low expectations and paltry resources. (p. 2)

Ilmer et al. (2005) indicated that “Among the nation’s urban school districts, the demand to recruit and retain qualified teachers has reached levels of unprecedented challenge” (p. 3). Recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers is central to student academic achievement.

The State of Florida is one where Alternative Certification Programs have been in effect since 2002, when the state’s Department of Education mandated that all school districts implement their own ACP or adopt the state-developed one. These ACPs are an important way of providing highly qualified teachers to meet increasing demands.

The review of the literature on alternative certification programs in the public school districts or counties of Brevard, Hillsborough, Lake, Orange, Palm Beach, Pasco, Volusia, and Wakulla revealed that they all have similar components, as identified by researchers such as Feistritz (1999, p. 75), Resta et al. (2001, p. 76) and Heyman (2002, p.76), as being basic to an effective alternative certification program. Therefore, based on the components identified by these researchers and outlined in the districts’ ACP, these programs can be considered to be highly effective programs. However, completion of one of these ACPs is not a guarantee that an alternatively certified teacher will be an effective teacher.

The principals play an important role in determining how effective these teachers are. After all, these principals are the direct supervisors and supporters of ACP teachers while they go through the program. Moreover, these principals are the ones that hire them. Consequently, it is important to know what the principals' perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes are towards alternatively certified teachers and ACP as a whole.

### Questionnaire Responses

In the questionnaire's Part II, Alternative Certification Program, principals were asked to respond to questions 6 through 20 concerning the ACP in their district and alternatively certified teachers they have hired or have working on their respective staffs. The following is a question-by-question analysis of the principals' responses.

Item 6: In the last five years, how many teachers have you hired who were certified through an alternative route to traditional preparation?  
Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 6 are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

AC Teachers Hired in Previous 10 Years (Item 6)

Number of teachers	Number of responses
A. 0	2
B. 1–2	9
C. 3–4	6
D. 5–6	2
E. 7–8	1
F. 9–10	0
G. More than 10	2

The 22 principals who returned a completed questionnaire reported hiring anywhere from one to over 10 AC teachers. The majority of the responding principals, 15 (68%), reported hiring from one to four AC teachers. Two principals, 9%, reported hiring over 10 AC teachers. One principal, 5%, reported hiring seven to eight AC teachers. Two principals, 9%, reported that they have not hired any AC teacher, but that they have some in their teaching staffs. Therefore, the responding principals have some experiences supervising AC teachers.

Item 7 Compared to traditionally prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of classroom management? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 7 are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Performance of AC Teachers in Classroom Management (Item 7)

Performance of AC teachers	Number of responses
A. Well above that of traditionally prepared new hires	0
B. Above that of traditionally prepared new hires	2
C. Equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires	12
D. Well below that of traditionally prepared new hires	7

Fourteen (67%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to this question rated the over-all performance of their AC teachers as above or equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires in the area of classroom management. However, seven (33%) rated their AC teachers as being below their traditionally prepared counterparts in the area of classroom management.

The area of classroom management can be compared to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices of Learning Environment and Planning for Instruction. According to the 2003 Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida, examples of Learning Environment are identified as “establishes smooth and efficient routines; establishes standards for behavior; arranges and manages the physical environment; uses learning time effectively; provides clear instructions” (p.20). Page 21 of this report identifies examples of Planning for Instruction as “plans and conducts lesson with specific student outcomes; promotes high standards; promotes study skills and test-taking strategies; demonstrates instructional flexibility; develops a resource file for use in planning activities.”

The data provided by this report indicate that “almost all ACP participants (95.8%) are evaluated as performing similar to or better than regular first-year teachers in the area on learning environment” (p. 20) and “... 97.2% ... in the area of planning for instruction” (p. 21). These percentages and the 67% reported in page 116 of this study indicate that the majority of public school principals are very much satisfied with the performance AC teachers demonstrate in the area of classroom management. Perhaps, the relatively small number of respondents in this study could account for the large discrepancy between the percentages reported by the 2003 Progress Report and this study.

- Item 8. Compared to traditionally prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of leadership? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 8 are shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Performance of AC Teachers in Leadership Areas (Item 8)

Performance of AC teachers	Number of responses
A. Well above that of traditionally prepared new hires	0
B. Above that of traditionally prepared new hires	2
C. Equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires	16
D. Well below that of traditionally prepared new hires	3

Not all principals responded to this question. Eighteen (86%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to this question rated the over-all performance of their AC

teachers as above or equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires in the area of leadership. Only three (14%) rated their AC teachers as being below their traditionally prepared counterparts in this area of leadership.

Since communication is a main component of leadership, the area of leadership can be compared to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices of Communication. According to the 2003 Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida, examples of Communication are identified as “communicates to students high expectations for learning; practices strategies that support individual and group activities; provides constructive feedback to students; varies communication depending on student needs; communicates with colleagues, families, administrators, etc.” (p.13).

The data provided by this report indicate that “almost all ACP participants (97.2%) are evaluated as performing similar to or better than regular first-year teachers in the area of communication” (p. 20). This percentage and the 86% reported above compare favorably and indicate that the majority of public school principals are very satisfied with the performance of AC teachers in the area of leadership.

- Item 9. Compared to traditionally prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of subject or content area knowledge? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 9 are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Performance of AC Teachers in Subject Knowledge (Item 9)

Performance of AC teachers	Number of responses
A. Well above that of traditionally prepared new hires	0
B. Above that of traditionally prepared new hires	3
C. Equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires	16
D. Well below that of traditionally prepared new hires	2

Not all principals responded to this question. Nineteen (90%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to this question rated the over-all performance of their AC teachers as above or equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires in the area of subject or content-area knowledge. Only two (10%) rated their AC teachers as being below their traditionally prepared counterparts in this area of subject or content-area knowledge.

The area of subject or content-area knowledge is similar to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices of Knowledge of Subject Matter. According to the 2003 Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida (Bureau of Educator Certification), examples of Knowledge of Subject Matter are identified as “uses knowledge of subject matter to enable students to learn; increases subject matter knowledge; uses materials and technologies of subject matter to integrate learning activities; acquires currency in subject field” (p.19).

The data provided by this report indicate that “all ACP participants (100%) are evaluated as performing similar to or better than regular first-year teachers in the area of Knowledge of Subject Matter” (Bureau of Educator Certification, 2003, p. 20). This

percentage and the 90% reported above compare favorably and indicate that the majority of public school principals are very satisfied with the performance AC teachers demonstrate in the area of subject or content-area knowledge.

Item 10. Compared to traditionally prepared new teachers, how have AC teacher(s) fit to the school's culture? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 10 are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

AC Teachers' Fit With School Culture (Item 10)

Fit with school culture	Number of responses
A. Well above that of traditionally prepared new hires	0
B. Above that of traditionally prepared new hires	2
C. Equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires	18
D. Well below that of traditionally prepared new hires	1

Twenty (95%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to this question on how well AC teachers fit to the school's culture rated them as above or equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires. Only one (5%) rated the AC teachers as being below their traditionally prepared counterparts in this area of how well they fit to the school culture.

The area of school culture can be compared to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices of Continuous Improvement. According to the 2003 Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida, examples of Continuous



Improvement are identified as “uses his/her experiences to design a professional development plan; participates or supports the overall school improvement process; participates in training and other professional development activities” (p.14).

However, school culture involves more than those examples mentioned above. Fitting to the school culture involves fostering the esprit-de-corps and the active participation in after-school sponsored activities. Fitting to the school culture also involves the teacher’s active participation in school committees and organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), School Advisory Council (SAC), Parents Leadership Council (PLC), or other teacher committees that support academic efforts and student achievement.

The data provided by the 2003 Progress report indicate that “ all ACP participants (100%) are evaluated as performing similar to or better than regular first-year teachers in the area of Continuous Improvement” (p. 14). This percentage and the 90% reported by the principals who reported to this study compare favorably and indicate that the majority of public school principals are very satisfied with how well AC teachers fit to the school culture.

Item 11. Compared to traditionally prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of relationship with parents? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 11 are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

### Relationship of AC Teachers to Parents (Item 11)

Relationship of AC teachers to parents	Number of responses
A. Well above that of traditionally prepared new hires	0
B. Above that of traditionally prepared new hires	2
C. Equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires	16
D. Well below that of traditionally prepared new hires	3

Eighteen (86%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to this question rated the over-all performance of their AC teachers as above or equal to that of traditionally prepared new hires in the area of relationship with parents. Only three (14%) rated their AC teachers as being below their traditionally prepared counterparts in this area of relationship with parents.

The area of relationship with parents can be compared to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices of Communication and Understanding the Professional Role of Teachers. According to the 2003 Progress Report on Alternative Teacher Certification in Florida, among the listed examples of Communication and Understanding the Professional Role of Teachers are “communicates with colleagues, families, administrators, etc” (p. 13) and “provides feedback on student progress to students and families ...” (p. 22).

The data provided by this report indicate that “all ACP participants (100%) are evaluated as performing similar to or better than regular first-year teachers in the area of

Understanding the Role of Teachers” (p. 22). This percentage and the 86% reported above compare favorably and indicate that the majority of public school principals are very much satisfied with the performance AC teachers demonstrate in the area of relationship with parents.

- \* Item 12. Have the AC teachers whom you have hired stayed at your school at rates equal to those traditionally prepared newly hired teachers? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 12 are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Retention History of AC Teachers (Item 12)

Retention history	Number of responses
A. AC teachers have stayed at the school about as long as other newly hired teachers	16
B. AC teachers have left sooner than other newly hired teachers	4
C. AC teachers have stayed longer than other newly hired teachers	1

Seventeen (81%) of the twenty-one principals who responded to Item 12 reported that their AC teachers have stayed as long as or longer than traditionally prepared new hires. Only four (19%) reported that their AC teachers left sooner than other newly hired teachers. The fact that 81% of the responding principals reported that their AC teachers have stayed as long as or longer than traditionally prepared new hires speaks highly of the AC teachers’ loyalty to the institution that hired them. None of the twelve Florida

Educators Accomplished Practices (Bureau of Educator Certification, 2003) can equate to this area of permanency.

Of the 16 principals who reported that their AC teachers have stayed at the school about as long as other newly hired teachers, seven (44%) serve a small-town population, five (31%) serve an urban population, and two each (25%) serve a rural or suburban population. Of the four principals who reported that their AC teachers have left sooner than other newly hired teachers, two serve a rural population and two serve a suburban population. The one principal reporting that their AC teachers have stayed longer than other newly hired teachers serves a suburban population. Two principals provided no answer to Item 12.

Based on the above data, it can be argued that AC teachers working in schools serving a small town population and schools serving an urban population tend to stay about as long or longer at their schools as other newly hired teachers. AC teachers working in school servicing rural and suburban populations tend to stay about as long or leave sooner than other newly hired teachers at about the same rate.

\*Item 13. To what extent has the hiring of AC teachers helped solve the problem of finding enough qualified teachers to fully staff your school? Circle the letter of the best answer.

Results for Item 13 are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

## Importance of AC Teachers to Maintaining Full Staffing (Item 13)

Staffing situation	Number of responses
A. We have not had any problems finding enough qualified teachers	3
B. We have had some problems finding enough teachers, but AC programs have not had a significant impact on the problem.	4
C. We have had some problems finding enough teachers, and AC programs have been somewhat helpful in addressing our need for teachers.	10
D. We have had some problems finding enough teachers, and AC programs have been very helpful in addressing our need for teachers.	6

Sixteen (70%) of the twenty-three principals who responded to Item 13 reported that they have had some problems finding enough teachers, and AC programs have been somewhat or very helpful in addressing their needs for teachers. Three principals (13%) reported that they have not had any problems finding enough qualified teachers. Four principals (17%) reported that they have had some problems finding enough teachers, but AC programs have not had a significant impact on the problem.

The majority of the responding principals, 16 (70%), reported that AC programs have been somewhat or very helpful in addressing their needs for teachers. Of these 16 principals, six (37.5%) reported servicing rural population; six (37.5%) reported

servicing a small town population; two (12.5%) reported servicing an urban population; and two others (12.5%) reported servicing a suburban population.

These data compare well in part with what researchers in the field of alternative teacher certification have stated about teacher shortages. For example, these data compare favorably with part of Voke's (2002) assertion that "there are not enough teachers who are both qualified and willing to teach in urban and rural schools" (p.1). On the other hand, researchers such as Feistritzer (1994) and Roth and Swail (2000) have argued that teacher shortages are most prevalent in urban and inner-city schools settings.

\*Item 14.      In what subject areas are the AC teachers whom you have hired teaching?  
Circle all letters of all the answers that apply.

Results for Item 14 are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

AC Teachers Subject Areas (Item 14)

Subject areas	Number of responses
A. Multiple subjects	7
B. Mathematics	9
C. English/Language arts	4
D. Special education	7
E. Elementary education	7
F. Bilingual education/ESOL	1
G. Science	6
H. Other	5

The participating principals were asked to choose all the answers that apply when responding to Item 14. It is interesting to highlight that when responding to this item the majority of the principals selected areas where the teacher shortage is most severe. Some principals selected more than one item. As mentioned previously, Feistritzer (1994) identified Bilingual Education, Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Special Education; Rosenberg and Sindelar (2005) highlighted Special Education; and, Voke (2002) identified the areas of Mathematics, Reading, and Science as core areas where student proficiency is closely monitored by states' Departments of Education. Florida has the annual FCAT as the assessment tool to monitor student proficiency in these core areas.

The data shown in Table 11 reveal that the majority of AC teachers hired to teach in Florida are teaching in the areas where the need for highly qualified teachers is most critical. Nine principals identified Mathematics, seven identified Special Education and six selected Science. In the choice of Others, principals mentioned Social Studies, Music, and Technology as areas where AC teachers are teaching.

These data also parallel the data provided in the already mentioned 2003 Progress Report. The report found that “nearly half the teachers participating in alternative certification programs in Florida are teaching in math, sciences, and special education” (p. 6). Additionally, the report found that “the alternative certification policy in Florida is succeeding in attracting individuals with credentials in critical need areas” (p. 6).

\*Item 15      What is the average age of the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs?

Results for Item 15 are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

AC Teachers Average Age (Item 15)

Average age	Number of responses
A. 20–30	12
B. 30–40	6
C. 40–50	3
D. over 50	0

Of the twenty-one principals responding to Item 15, the majority, 12 or 57%, reported the average age of AC teachers they have hired as being between 20 and 30 years old. Six principals (29%) reported the average age as been between 30 and 40 years old. Only three (14%) principals reported an average age of between 40 and 50. No principals reported hiring an AC teacher whose age was over 50. Therefore, the average age of AC teachers hired by the responding principals is between 20 and 40 years old.

These data parallel what Lutz and Hutton (1989) reported in their research of the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) where the average age of AC interns was 31 years and 4 months old. However, the data in Table 16 stand in contrast to that reported by the 2003 Progress Report. The Report's findings indicate that "Over 50% of teachers participating in alternative certification programs in Florida are over 30," (p. 4) while the data in Table 16 indicates that, according to six principals (29%) the average age of AC teachers they have hired is between 30 and 40.

\*Item 16. Have the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs been mostly men, mostly women, or roughly equal numbers of both?



Results for Item 16 are shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Gender Distribution of AC Teachers (Item 16)

Gender distribution	Number of responses
A. Mostly men	1
B. Mostly women	11
C. Roughly equal numbers of both	9

Twenty (95%) of the 21 principals who responded to Item 16 reported that they have hired mostly women or roughly an equal number of males and females. Only one principal (5%) reported hiring mostly men. These data parallels findings by other researchers in the field. Lutz and Hutton (1989) reported that their study of AC teachers involved 85 women and 25 men (see pp. 81-82 of this study). However, it also stands in contrast to other researchers like Chesley et al. (1997), Legler (2002), and Shen (1998). Chesley, Wood and Cepeda reported 52% of their study subjects as being males in the state of Oklahoma. In his research, Dr. Legler found “that alternative certification programs can increase the number of male teachers since the majority of teachers are women” (p. 11). Shen’s survey revealed that “AC recruits a significantly higher percentage of minority teachers” (p.32).

\*Item 17 To what extent has hiring AC teachers affected the diversity of your teaching staff? Circle the letter of the best answer that apply.

Results for Item 17 are shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Effects of Teaching Staff on Diversity (Item 17)

Diversity situations	Number of responses
A. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of African American teachers.	0
B. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of Hispanic teachers.	1
C. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of other minorities on our staff.	0
D. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of more than one of the above groups.	3
E. Hiring AC teachers has not increased the percentage of minority teachers in our school.	17

Seventeen (81%) of the principals responding to Item 17 reported that hiring AC teachers did not increase the percentage of minority teachers in their schools. Three principals (14%) reported that hiring AC teachers has allowed them to increase the percentage of more than one minority group in their schools. Only one principal (5%) reported that hiring AC teachers increased the percentage of Hispanic teachers in his or her school. No principals reported that hiring AC teachers increased the percentage of

African American teachers in their schools and that hiring AC teachers has not allowed them to increase the percentage of other minorities on their staff.

The data presented in Table 19 stand in sharp contrast to what researchers in alternative teacher certification claim to be one of the main strengths of alternative certification. ACPs are seen as a source of minority teachers. However, as far as racial diversity is concerned, Legler (2002) found alternative certification “less promising” and that it “has had little impact” in the hiring of African American and Hispanic teachers (p. 11). Another of Legler’s findings was that “alternative certification programs are bringing candidates with life experiences into teaching,” as these candidates are older and more mature than regular college graduates (p. 11).

\* Item 18      From which backgrounds are the AC teachers whom you have hired?

Results for Item 18 are shown in Table 19.

Table 19

## Employment Backgrounds of AC Teachers (Item 18)

Employment backgrounds	Number of responses
A. Most are from business or industry	12
B. Most are from the military	1
C. Most are from the field of education (e.g., former teachers, former support staff)	0
D. Most are recent college graduates—non-education majors	8
E. Other	1

Twelve (57%) of the 22 principals responding to Item 18 reported that the AC teachers they hired came from a business or industry background. Eight (38%) reported that most of their AC hires were recent college graduates—non-education majors. One (5%) reported an AC teacher with military background and one (5%) reported that the AC teachers came from other backgrounds, namely, one from public relations, one from music therapy, and one from criminology. No principals reported that their AC teachers had previous education background.

The findings of the 2003 Progress Report revealed that among the “previous work experience of teachers currently participating in Alternative Certification Programs” the most common are “education-related, business, and the sciences” (p. 5). The Report identified education-related backgrounds as “private school teachers, substitute teachers, preschool teachers, human resource development, etc” (p. 5). The Report found that 47%

of AC teacher came from education-related background, 24% from business, 9% from sciences, 2% each from military and no previous jobs, and 16% from others.

The data presented in Table 20 compare somewhat favorably with the 2003 Progress Report in the areas of business and military backgrounds. The data reflected by Table 20 on business or industry background is the highest percentage, but in the Progress Report it is second. Military background is one of the lowest in both sets of data. It is important to note that the data in this study are based on principals' responses, while the 2003 Report's data are based on AC teachers' responses.

The background addressed in Item 18 and in the 2003 Report falls into one of the three main groups identified by Ruckel (2000) and mentioned earlier in the present work. The first group she mentioned is the "second-career seekers." These candidates "have retired, are casualties of corporate downsizing, or are seeking a career change, or have the yearning to teach." The second group is the "late decision-makers." These candidates who seek alternative certification are "recent college graduates who have made the decision to enter teaching too late in their college programs to switch majors." The third group is the "partly finished." They are new graduates who have completed only part of a teacher education program" (p. 5). The data provided by the majority of the responding principals place the AC teachers in the groups of second "career-seekers" and "late decision-makers."

Item 19.       What qualities or strengths characterize the AC teachers whom you have hired? Circle all answers that apply from the following list.

Results for Item 19 are shown in Table 20.

Table 20

## Qualities and Strengths of AC Teachers (Item 19)

AC teacher characteristics	Number of responses
A. Maturity	9
B. Real life experiences	10
C. Knowledge of subject matter	5
D. Genuine interest in children	11
E. Excellent work habits	12
F. Dedication	8
G. Other (specify)	1

In Item 19, principals were asked to identify all answers that apply from the list of choices as the qualities or strengths that characterize the AC teachers whom they have hired. Some principals selected more than one item. The data in Table 21 show that 12 principals selected the choice of excellent work habits as their top choices; 11 selected genuine interest in children; 10 selected real life experiences; nine selected maturity; eight selected dedication; five selected knowledge of subject matter; and one selected the category of other and identified it as the need to work.

The data displayed in Table 21 parallel the 2003 Progress Report data. The Report found that AC teachers in Florida are “individuals who express enthusiasm and commitment to teaching” (p. 7). The majority of AC teachers surveyed in the Report identified their two top reasons for entering the teaching career as “to teach and work with children” (60%) and “to help students in various ways” (20%). To a lesser degree,

other reasons AC teachers mentioned were “to start a new career” (16%) and “to contribute to society” (4%) (p. 7).

The data displayed in Table 21 also corroborate what other researchers have found as the top characteristics and traits AC teachers bring with them as they enter the teaching career. According to Ruckel (2000), AC teachers bring with them diverse educational background and work experiences. The “second-career seekers” are the ones that usually arrive with the most work experience and strong content knowledge. In fact, most programs are designed with this group in mind (p. 5). Ruckel also maintained that “second career seekers ... come to teaching with strong content knowledge, whether from a college degree or career experience” (p. 3).

Other researchers such as Resta et al. (2001) stated that “Midcareer individuals bring many strengths to teaching, including maturity, life experience, and good work habits” (p. 61). Feistritzer et al. (1998) referred to programs such as Troops to Teachers as

a huge success in bringing dedicated, mature and experienced individuals into classrooms who have proven not only to be effective teachers but also excellent role models for students, .. bringing with them unique and valuable life experiences to the classroom in a critical time in the development of the nation’s youth. (p.1)

Item 20            Of the qualities or strengths mentioned in Question 19, which do you think is the most influential one?

Results for Item 20 are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Most Influential Quality of AC Teachers (Item 20)

Most influential quality	Number of responses
A. Maturity	2
B. Real life experiences	3
C. Knowledge of subject matter	3
D. Genuine interest in children	10
E. Excellent work habits	2
F. Dedication	1
G. Other (specify)	0

In responding to this Item, some principals selected more than one item. Ten (48%) of the 21 responding principals selected Choice D, Genuine Interest in Children, as the top quality or strength that characterizes AC teachers. The other choices came in a distant second, third, or fourth. This result is quite revealing, as having a genuine interest in children is one of the main qualities anyone must have before stepping into any classroom. The other qualities or strengths are important, but this finding is paramount.

Several of the responding principals provide their own unsolicited comments when completing the questionnaire. This researcher decided to include these comments as they were written. The comments appear below.

Comment 1: I have only hired 1 AC teacher. Her college major was in the field of Juvenile Justice. She was hired as the School Age Child Care Coordinator for the school and fulfilled that role for several years.



I encouraged her to pursue a teaching career after observing her in that role. She is now a dedicated successful 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade teacher starting her third year with me.

Comment 2: Mr. Torres, I did want to let you know the reason I marked “equal” on several responses. I have hired 2 AC teachers. One is outstanding, superb. The other is average—this is a job. It’s not the AC program. It’s the person!

Comment 3: We have been very successful at hiring computer/data analysis teachers through the AC program. These teachers are always well versed in their respective fields.

Comment 4: It is difficult to generalize about ACP, but I believe that most ACP teachers will not be as effective as traditionally certified teachers.

The principal who provided Comment 3 does not have any ACP certified teacher in his or her teaching staff and has not hired any himself or herself. This principal also wrote an additional comment on the ACP teacher candidates. The comment: Some are currently planning to use ACP in order to get a 5 year Professional Certificate. These have a 3 year Temporary Certificate.

Chapter 5 presents a summary and conclusions of the study. It also discusses implications and recommendations for all Alternative Certification stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reviews the problem statement, describes the population, materials and describes the data analysis. The chapter also provides a summary and discussion of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for all personnel associated with the Alternative Certification Programs in the state and for future research.

#### Statement of the Problem

During the last 20 years, the public school system in the United States has been experiencing a teacher shortage. This shortage has forced states to develop and implement alternative routes to certify persons interested in becoming teachers without going through the traditional certification route of going to a university or college. Moreover, states have used alternative certification programs to supplement the traditional methods of teacher certification. Simply stated, colleges and universities are not producing enough teachers to fill the growing need.

Researchers in the field agree that the teacher shortage is most critical in areas where highly qualified teachers are most needed. They have identified areas such as inner-city schools, at-risk students, mathematics, science, and bilingual and special education as areas where the shortage is most severe. The teacher shortage predicament is magnified by the ever-growing and changing student population in our nation's public

school system. This student population arrives at our school system from diverse cultures, backgrounds, countries, and socioeconomic statuses and speaks different languages. Moreover, recent government legislative actions at both the federal and state levels, as is the case of Florida, have added increased pressures on school districts to recruit “highly qualified” teachers.

The teacher shortages across the nation have forced Departments of Education to seek alternative ways to certify teachers in order to alleviate the problem. There is an abundant wealth of information and current literature concerning alternative certification and alternatively certified teachers. However, there is very little information addressing the perspectives, attitudes, and perceptions of Florida public school principals concerning alternatively certified teachers and the Alternative Certification Programs as a ways of certifying teachers to ease the need for teachers in the state and increase the pool of “highly qualified” teachers.

The main purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the effectiveness of Florida’s Alternative Certification Program (ACP) from the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes Florida public school principals have on alternatively certified teachers as opposed to teachers traditionally certified. The study also considered the question of whether or not Florida’s ACP is a viable alternative to deal with the teacher shortage in the state. More specifically, this study investigated what forms of Alternative Certification Programs the state of Florida has instituted to deal with the teacher shortage. Moreover, it identified and analyzed the criteria and components needed for an effective ACP.

### Population

The population of this study consisted of three principals per school district, identified and selected by their respective school districts to participate in the study. The researcher contacted 67 public school districts throughout the state of Florida. Specifically, the researcher contacted Directors of Human Resources, Directors of Teacher Recruitment and Teacher Development, and Alternative Certification Program Coordinators. A total of 21 school districts responded for a 31% response rate.

Of the 21 school districts that responded to the researcher's request, 16 accepted the invitation to participate in the study and provided the names and addresses of at least three principals they wanted to participate in the study, for a response rate of 76%. Several districts provided names and addresses of four principals. For their own particular reasons, a total of five of the 21 districts that responded to the researcher did not want to participate in the study, for a refused-response rate of 24%. Although the researcher attempted to contact them on several occasions, a total of 49 school districts did not respond at all to the researcher's request, for a 69% non-response rate.

The school districts that decided to have principals participate in the study provided the names and addresses of a combined total of 49 principals. Of the total of 49 principals contacted, 22 responded to the researcher's request by completing and

returning a questionnaire, for a response rate of 45%. Twenty-seven principals did not complete or return the survey, for a non-response rate of 55%. The principals responding to the survey did so on a voluntary basis.

It is important to emphasize that the principals' questionnaire packets were not mailed to any principal until after the researcher received authorization from the appropriate points of contacts at each school district or county.

### Materials

Dillman's Tailored Design Method was used. The questionnaires, as well as a stamped, self-addressed envelope provided, were coded to ease identification of responding and non-responding participating districts and principals. The codes used were a combination of the districts' abbreviations and the grade level of the principal's school. For example, the elementary school selected for Orange County Public Schools received the code of "OCPSES." In case of districts having the same abbreviations, the researcher added an additional letter to differentiate between school districts. Therefore, the researcher assigned the code of OSCPS to Osceola County Public Schools which has the same abbreviation (OCPS) as Orange County Public Schools. The researcher was the only one who was able to match a school code with the name of the principal and the school's address.

The researcher developed the questionnaire using a combination of researcher-created questions and questions taken from the North Central Regional Educational

Laboratory's (NCREL) survey entitled "Understanding the Job of a School Principal: A Study of Current Principal Practices, Principal Preparation, and Alternative Teacher Certification." Previous authorization to use this survey had been granted via e-mail by Dr. Ray Legler, NCREL's Senior Program Associate (See Appendix A). An asterisk (\*) was used to identify the questions taken from NCREL's survey. The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions, 9 of which were created by the researcher and the remaining 11 of which taken from NCREL's survey.

The principals' questionnaire was divided in two main parts. Part I, consisting of questions 1 through 5, addressed Background Information. Part II, consisting of questions 6 through 20, specifically addressed the Alternative Certification Program and alternatively certified teachers.

### Data Collection

The principals' questionnaires were mailed once approval was received from individual public school districts and after districts provided the names and addresses of the principals they wanted to participate in the study. Selected principals were asked to sign and return a copy of the Informed Consent Form. The principals who completed and returned a questionnaire did so on a voluntary basis.

## Data Analysis

The perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives of Florida public school principals were measured based on the responses received from participating principals. Data generated by the NCREL study and the 2003 Progress Report were also considered and compared with data generated in this study. The data were reported as qualitative data.

## Summary and Discussion of Findings

### *Research Question 1*

What ACPs are available in the State of Florida?

Chapter 1012, Title XLVIII K-20 Education Code of the 2003 Florida Statutes established the Transition to Teaching Program “to encourage midcareer professionals who want to become teachers.” Section 231.17 (7)(a) of the Florida Statutes required the Department of Education to develop and each school district to provide by July 1, 2002,

A cohesive competency-based professional preparation alternative certification program by which members of the school district’s instructional staff may satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements specified in this subsection and rules of the State Board of Education. Participants must hold a state-issued temporary certificate. A school district shall provide a competency-based alternative certification preparation program developed by the Department of Education or developed by the district and approved by the Department of Education (Lake County Public Schools, 2006-2007).

Public school districts across the state mainly use a district-based ACP as described by Dill and Stafford-Johnson (2002, p. 72). This “district-by-district implementation demonstrates flexibility within a standards-based framework” (Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida Department of Education, January, 2004). Other districts like Pasco County Schools and Wakulla County follow an “on-line program which is aligned with the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices” (Pasco County Schools, 2006). Some smaller school districts such as Flagler County opted to use the state’s established program rather than create and support its own because they lack adequate resources and personnel (NEFEC, 2006). Moreover, smaller districts, such as the ones in northeastern part of the state receive their support from the North East Florida Education Consortium as discussed earlier.

### *Research Question 2*

Can every Florida public school district have its own ACP?

Florida’s public school districts have the option of using the state’s ACP or have the option of establishing their own ACP as directed by Florida Statutes mentioned in the response to Research Question 1. If school districts opt to establish their own ACP, they must meet state standards and have the program approved by the state’s Department of Education before its implementation.



### *Research Question 3*

Does the state of Florida have an overarching ACP?

The state does have an overarching ACP available to districts that prefer to go this route as opposed to establishing their own. As already mentioned, the Pasco School Districts uses the online program established by the state.

### *Research Question 4*

What are each ACP's components?

Based on a review of information of selected school districts' ACPs, the programs established throughout the state share similar components as required by the state. But, they also are tailored to meet district needs and demands. First of all, teacher candidates applying for participation in an ACP are required to have a valid two or three-year temporary teaching certificate from the Florida Department of Education, be an employee of the district where they want to be alternatively certified, and must hold at least a bachelor's degree.

Specifically, the components that these districts share in common are basically similar to those identified by researchers like Dr. C. Emily Feistritzer (1999), Resta, et al. (2001), Heyman (2002), and Osgood and Self (2002). These components are:

- \* Survival Training, consisting of after-school workshops and support staff assistance or an Educator Orientation and Induction Program.

- \* Seminars and workshops designed to provide assistance, skills, and knowledge. These seminars are characterized by strong academic content as directed by

state standards. These seminars and workshops include: human growth and development, principles of teaching and learning, classroom management, instructional strategies such as those oriented towards English as a Second Language (ESOL) and Special Learning Disabilities (SLD), curriculum development and integration, assessment of student learning, technology applications, and content pedagogy; and the Harry Wong and Ruby Payne training series.

\* A strong academic course component with ACP participants working in a “trial-by-fire” classroom environment. While working in the classroom, ACP participants receive direct support from their administrators and qualified mentor teachers in a collaborative “teamwork” environment. In Orange County, ACP participants participate in cohorts and very rarely as isolated individuals.

Some districts include other additional components not required in other districts. For example, Lake County Schools include the Florida Online Reads-Professional Development (FOR-PD) and the ED©Ventures Assessment System. Palm Beach also requires the ED©Ventures Assessment System.

### *Research Question 5*

What does a teacher candidate have to do to be certified through an ACP in the State of Florida?

An ACP teacher candidate must satisfy a number of requirements in order to receive a permanent teaching certificate from Florida’s Department of Education. These requirements are:

\* Successful completion of an approved ACP program within the district's specified time. This time ranges from one to three years depending on the districts' requirements. For example, Wakulla County requires one to three years as its program is on online. Orange County requires 18 months while Lake County requires one year. Regardless of the time it takes for an ACP teacher candidate, successful completion of the program requires school and district approval and verification.

\* Passing grade on the three state mandated tests of General Knowledge, Professional Education, and the Florida Subject Area Examination.

\* Successful demonstration of the Professional Education Competencies (PEC).

\* Successful completion of the Florida Online Reads-Professional Development (FOR-PD).

\* Meet other law requirements (fingerprinting and background check).

\* Completion of the required certification application and payment of the appropriate fee.

\* Satisfaction of items as required by DOE Statement of Eligibility.

### *Research Question 6*

How many teachers have been certified through Florida's ACP within the last ten years?

The availability of data to respond to this question is rather limited as Florida's ACP has been in existence for approximately four years. Florida Statutes required the

Department of Education to develop and each school district to provide an ACP by July 1, 2002. Since Florida's ACP is in its infancy, but growing, data are very limited.

The only data this researcher was able to obtain came from the 2004 state-by-state report published by the National Center for Alternative Certification (NCAC), which outlined specific data on individual states' Alternative Certification Program. According to NCAC, the number of teaching certificates issued to persons who completed an Alternative Route during the period of 1985-2004 was 697. As discussed in Chapter 2, the number of certificates increased during the last two years of available data. The number of certificates issued to alternatively certified teachers is expected to increase as the number of ACP participants increases.

#### *Research Question 7*

How many teachers have been certified through the traditional certification method during the same period of time?

According to the NCAC report, a total of 5,000 persons per year completed an approved college teacher preparation program in Florida from 1985 to 1991. No data were provided from 1991-1998. Data provided for the period of 1998 to 2002 were presented in Table 4.

On the average, then, the state of Florida graduated approximately 5,608 persons from an approved college teacher preparation program between 1998 and 2002. However, during this same period of time, the state issued an average of 14,506 temporary or other teaching licenses per year.

The data provided in the NCAC report clearly revealed that the State of Florida was experiencing a teacher shortage and teacher colleges in the state could not fill the demand. Consequently, the state was forced to issue a large number of temporary licenses.

#### *Research Question 8*

What is the demographic profile of ACP teachers?

The answer to this question is the result of the responses provided by principals to questions 15 through 19 of the questionnaire. According to the responding principals, the ACP teacher they have hired or have working in their schools are mostly women whose ages range from 20 to 40 years old. A number of principals reported that they have hired a combination of both males and females. No principals reported hiring or having an ACP teacher older than 50 years old.

The ACP teachers the responding principals have hired or have working in their schools are white. The principals reported that ACP programs have not made an impact on the number of African Americans, Hispanics or other ethnic groups they have in their schools.

The great majority of these ACP teachers come from a business or industry background and is what has been referred to as “second career seekers.” A second place group, as reported by the responding principals, is what is referred to as the “late-decision makers.” They have entered the teaching profession with excellent work habits,

a genuine interest in children, with real-life experiences, and dedication. These are the traits and qualities researchers in the field associate with ACP teachers.

#### *Research Question 9*

What are principals' perspectives concerning the effectiveness of ACP Programs?

The answer to this question is based on the information provided by Florida public school principals who responded to the questionnaire. Additionally, the answer is also based on the results of the 2003 Progress Report published by the Bureau of Educator Certification, Florida department of Education.

Overall, the perspective Florida public school principals have on the Alternative Certification Program and alternatively certified teachers is very favorable. Principals agree that ACPs are effective in certifying and producing highly qualified teachers. The responses provided to Item 13 revealed that sixteen of the twenty-three principals who responded to this item have had some problems finding enough teachers and that AC programs have been somewhat or very helpful in addressing their need for teachers.

Additionally, principals rated the overall performance of their alternatively certified teachers as being equal to or above that of traditionally-prepared new hires. Consequently, this assessment of alternatively certified teachers provide a positive perspective on the effectiveness of Alternative Certification Programs in Florida

Moreover, an analysis of the components of the ACPs established throughout the state discovered that these components correspond to those identified by researchers as essential or critical to the effectiveness of any Alternative Certification Program.

## Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, several conclusions on Florida's Alternative Certification Program can be made.

1. The Florida Alternative Certification Program has as its legal basis Chapter 1012, Title XLVIII K-20 Education Code of the 2003 Florida Statutes, specifically Section 231.17 (7)(a) of the Florida Statutes. All school districts are required to have their own ACP or use the state's established ACP.
2. The ACPs established by the state and individual school districts satisfy the different requirements and components researchers in the field of alternative teacher certification have identified as necessary for an ACP to be considered an effective program. Therefore, Florida's alternative certification programs are effective ways to provide teacher certification.
3. The State of Florida has a teacher shortage that universities and colleges alone cannot satisfy. Consequently the state has identified the need to provide alternate ways to get interested individuals certified without having them follow the traditional path to certification.
4. Florida's alternative certification programs are doing an excellent job in preparing teacher candidates to become "highly qualified" classroom teachers, as evidenced by the responses principals provided to the questionnaire.

5. Florida's ACPs are increasing the number of potential teachers in the state.

Principals have reported that ACPs have been somewhat to very helpful in addressing their needs for certified teachers.

6. The overall performance of Florida's alternatively certified teachers has been reported as equal to or above the performance of newly hired traditionally certified teachers in areas such as classroom management, leadership, subject or content area knowledge, relationship with parents, and ability to fit to the school's culture.

7. Alternatively certified teachers are being hired to work in critical need areas such as Math, Science, and Special Education. These are areas researchers have identified as critical need areas. It is evident that ACPs across the state are targeting these subject areas.

8. Florida public school principals are satisfied with the overall performance of the alternatively certified teachers they have hired or have working in their schools.

9. ACPs have had no impact on increasing the number of African American, Hispanics, or other minorities in schools of principals who responded to the questionnaire.

10. ACPs across the state are doing an excellent job in attracting teacher candidates who demonstrate a genuine interest in children and consequently in teaching. Additionally they are reported as being mature and dedicated and as having real-life experiences and content or subject-area knowledge.



11. The State Department of Education and the different public school districts across the state, especially the larger districts, have done an excellent job in creating Internet Web sites providing valuable and detail information to prospective ACP participants. This information is easily accessible by going to individual districts' Web sites.
12. In developing and implementing their respective Alternative Certification Programs, individual public school districts are following the basic guidelines and procedures dictated by the state. However, in the process, the school districts are tailoring their ACPs to meet and satisfy their own teacher professional development requirements. In other words, school districts can add to the state requirements but cannot take any requirement out.
13. In some cases, school districts have developed and implemented their ACPs with the support of local universities and colleges. Depending on the district, the ACP participant is required to take some training courses and or seminars at the local university and or college.

### Implications and Recommendations for Practice

The following are recommendations for ACP stakeholders.

1. The State Department of Education as well as the individual public school districts must continue their efforts in recruiting qualified individuals for their respective Alternative Certification Programs.

2. The State Department of Education as well as the individual public school districts must continue targeting the critical need areas while recruiting prospective ACP participants.
3. It is recommended that principals continue taking an active role in the professional development of their ACP teachers even after completion of the program. Active support by mentors must remain in place, as mentors play a critical role in the development of alternatively certified teacher.
4. It is recommended that mentors be “highly qualified” experienced teachers, and, if possible and if available, the mentors should be National Board Certified Teachers.
5. It is recommended that school districts review their respective ACPs on a regular basis, perhaps every three years, to ensure that the latest educational practices and research-based teaching strategies are being taught to their ACP participants and that courses, workshops, and seminars satisfy the districts’ teacher professional development needs.
6. It is recommended that, as much as possible, ACP participants participate in the program in a cohort group. Cohorts have proven to be effective sources of mutual support and of establishing camaraderie and professional contacts and are excellent forum for discussions and networking.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the research presented in this study, the following recommendations are made for future study.

1. This study focused on the perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives Florida public school principals have on alternatively certified teachers and the alternative certification program. It is recommended that similar studies be conducted, perhaps every three years, to continue assessing perceptions, attitudes and perspectives principals have on ACP and alternatively certified teachers.
2. Future studies should be conducted to ascertain how effective Florida's ACPs are in lessening the teacher shortage in the state, especially in critical areas, and how effective these programs are in satisfying or meeting the demands for "highly qualified" teachers.
3. Future studies, to include follow-up studies, should be conducted to compare and contrast the overall performance of alternatively certified teachers with that of their traditionally certified counterparts.
4. Future studies should be conducted to evaluate the overall performance of the students of ACP teachers in standardized state tests such as the FCAT. Additionally, future studies should be conducted to compare and contrast FCAT scores of these students with the FCAT scores of students of traditionally certified teachers.

5. Future studies should be conducted on the demographic profiles of ACP teachers to assess how effective the programs are in attracting minority teachers to the teaching profession.
6. Future studies should also include the perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives of alternatively certified teachers themselves and on the effectiveness of the ACPs.

APPENDIX A  
E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE WITH DR. RAY LEGLER  
AND  
THE NORTH CENTRAL REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY SURVEY  
INSTRUMENT

**Torres, Nelson**

**From:** Ray Legler [Ray.Legler@learningpt.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2004 11:47 AM  
**To:** Torres, Nelson  
**Subject:** RE: Help!

Hi,

Thanks for your message. I suggest that you check out our alternative certification web page - <http://www.ncrel.org/quality/cert.htm> . There is a longer review of the literature there as well as an evaluation template for AC programs.

I have attached the survey. I would appreciate it if you could reference it as well, if you decide to use any of it.

Legler, R. & Thompson, M. (2002). Principalship/alternative certification survey. Naperville, IL: Learning Point Associates.

Best of luck on your dissertation!

Ray

Ray Legler, Ph.D., Senior Program Associate  
Center for Educational Decision Support Systems, NCREL

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Learning Point Associates**

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Naperville, IL 60563  
630.649.6611  
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Learning Point Associates was founded as the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) in 1984. NCREL continues its research and development work as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Learning Point Associates.

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Torres, Nelson [mailto:torresn@ocps.k12.fl.us]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 03, 2004 10:32 AM  
**To:** Ray Legler  
**Cc:** Kenneth Murray

2/4/2004

**Subject:** Help!

Dear, Dr. Lagler,

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida (UCF), Orlando, Florida. I am getting very close to start working on my dissertation. The topic I have selected is: *Alternative Teacher Certification: A Fleeting Attempt or a Viable Remedy for Teacher Shortages in Florida: The Principals' Perspective*.

In doing research at the UCF library, I came across your article *The Impact of Alternative Certification in the Midwest. Policy Issues* which was published by NCREL November 2002. I read your article with a great deal of enthusiasm and have used some of the information on my prospectus. I will also site your work when I do my dissertation.

I will greatly appreciate if you can share other information on the topic of alternative certification. I have read just about all the references you used in your paper. I am building on the available literature on the topic for my literature review chapter of the dissertation.

I will also like to see the survey you used to survey all the principals. I would also like your permission to replicate your survey here in Florida.

Your input and guidance in this matter will be most beneficial. I look forward to hearing from you!  
Thanks!

Nelson Torres  
Assistant Principal  
Cheney Elementary School  
(407) 672-3120 Ext 235

-----  
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[References: Florida State Constitution I.24, Florida State Statutes Chapter 119, and OCPS Management Directive A-9.]  
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2/4/2004

# Understanding the Job of a School Principal: A Study of Current Principal Practices, Principal Preparation, and Alternative Teacher Certification

## Survey Instrument

The North Central Regional Educational Laboratory is interested in understanding the job of a school principal and the impact of alternative teacher certification. Your assistance is very important in clearly defining current principal practices. From your input, an understanding of what principals do on a daily basis will provide a perspective for rethinking the role of the principalship and examining principal preparation programs toward recruitment, training, and retention of new principal candidates. Please mark your answers on the scoring sheet that is included with this survey and return in the envelope provided. Thank you.

### Part I: Principal Practices

Within each of the categorical listings below are practices which have been identified as those of a school principal. By darkening in the appropriate circle on the answer sheet (separate scan sheet), please identify the average number of minutes you spend, on average, for each principal practice listed.

#### A. Instructional Leadership:

0	1-15	15-30	30-45	45-60	1-2	>2
min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	hr/day	hr/day

How much time do you average on:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

1. Classroom Observations
2. Staff Evaluation
3. Curriculum Development
4. Standardized Assessment
5. Performance Assessment
6. Staff Development
7. Technology Problems/Issues
8. Personnel Decisions/Hiring
9. Instructional Scheduling Design/Concerns
10. Long Range/Strategic Planning
11. Data Analysis

#### B. Communications:

0	1-15	15-30	30-45	45-60	1-2	>2
min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	hr/day	hr/day

How much time do you average on:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

12. Email Correspondence
13. Phone Correspondence
14. Meetings with staff as individuals or groups within the parameters of a student day
15. Meetings with staff as individuals or groups outside the parameters of a student day
16. Building Administrative Team Meetings
17. Communication with Parent Teacher Organization
18. Resolving Parent Issues/Concerns
19. Meetings/Communication with Central Office
20. Press/Media Communications
21. Building Committee Meetings
22. Personnel - Documentation/Reports



<b>C. School and Community Relations:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1-15</b>	<b>15-30</b>	<b>30-45</b>	<b>45-60</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>&gt;2</b>
	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	hr/day	hr/day
<u>How much time do you average on:</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
23. Meetings with Community Groups							
24. Civic/Social Organizations							
25. Maintaining Positive School Climate							
26. Staff Morale							
27. Fundraising							
28. Meetings with business representatives							
<b>D. Student Interaction:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1-15</b>	<b>15-30</b>	<b>30-45</b>	<b>45-60</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>&gt;2</b>
	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	hr/day	hr/day
<u>How much time do you average on:</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
29. Student Discipline							
30. Hall Supervision							
31. Case Conferences							
32. Remediation Development							
33. Non-Disciplinary Interaction with Students							
34. Lunch Supervision							
35. Co-Curricular/Student Activities							
<b>E. Management:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1-15</b>	<b>15-30</b>	<b>30-45</b>	<b>45-60</b>	<b>1-2</b>	<b>&gt;2</b>
	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	min/day	hr/day	hr/day
<u>How much time do you average on:</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
36. Budgetary Decisions							
37. Budgetary Paperwork							
38. Facilities Oversight/Issues							
39. State/Federal Reports							
40. Central Office Reports							
41. Transportation Issues							
42. School Safety Planning/Issues							

## **Part II: Principal Preparation**

For each of the principal practices listed below, darken in the appropriate circle indicating how well your principal preparation program prepared you for each responsibility:

<b>F. How well did your principal preparation</b>				
<b>program prepare you for:</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>
	A	B	C	D
43. Classroom Observations				
44. Staff Evaluation				
45. Curriculum Development				
46. Standardized Assessment				
47. Performance Assessment				
48. Staff Development				
49. Technology Problems/Issues				

(Continued)

How well did your principal preparation program prepare you for:	Not at All	Somewhat	Well	Very well
	A	B	C	D
50. Personnel Decisions/Hiring				
51. Instructional Scheduling Design/Concerns				
52. Long Range/Strategic Planning				
53. Resolving Parent Issues/Concerns				
54. Press/Media Communications				
55. Building Committee Meetings				
56. Personnel - Documentation/Reports				
57. Maintaining Positive School Climate				
58. Staff Morale				
59. Fundraising				
60. Student Discipline				
61. Case Conferences				
62. Remediation Development				
63. School Safety Planning/Issues				
64. Data analysis				

### **Part III: Background Information**

For each of the following questions, please select the appropriate single response.

65. Was your principal preparation a traditional training program with the only hands-on practical experience the final practicum?

- A. No (continue to question 66)      B. Yes (Skip to question 67)      C. No practicum at all (Skip to question 67)

66. How much practical, experiential training did your principal preparation provide?

- A. Little more than the practicum  
B. 1-2 field experiences in an actual school working with a principal  
C. 3 or more experiences in an actual school working with a principal

67. How many years have you been in your current position as principal?

- A. 0-2      B. 3-5      C. 6-10      D. 11-15      E. 16-20      F. 20+

68. How many total years have you been a principal?

- A. 0-2      B. 3-5      C. 6-10      D. 11-15      E. 16-20      F. 20 +

69. Darken in the circle indicating the state in which you are currently a principal.

- A. Illinois      B. Indiana      C. Iowa      D. Michigan  
E. Minnesota      F. Ohio      G. Wisconsin

70. What is your gender.

- A. Male      B. Female

**71. Indicate the grade level(s) of your school**

- A. Elementary
- B. Middle/Junior High
- C. High School
- D. Elementary and middle
- E. Middle and high school
- F. Elementary, middle, and high school

**72. Indicate the type of community your school serves.**

- A. Urban
- B. Rural
- C. Suburban
- D. Small town

**73. What is the enrollment of your school?**

- A. under 100
- B. 101 – 300
- C. 301 – 500
- D. 501 – 700
- E. 701 – 900
- F. 901 – 1100
- G. 1101 – 1400
- H. 1401 – 1700
- I. 1701 – 2000
- J. 2000 +

**74. How many individuals comprise your administrative team (for the purpose of this study, the administrative team is defined as the principal and assistant principal(s))?**

- A. 1 (principal only)
- B. 2
- C. 3
- D. 4 or more

**75. Indicate the approximate number of hours you work each day.**

- A. 7-8
- B. 9-10
- C. 11-12
- D. 13-14
- E. 15-16

#### Part IV - Alternative Teacher Certification

76. Have you hired any teachers in the last five years who obtained (or will obtain) their certification through an alternative route to a traditional college degree in education – alternative certification (AC)?
- A. YES (continue to question 77)  
B. NO (you are done with the survey – no need to answer the following questions. Thank you very much for your time. Please see the note at the end of this survey for more information on the results of the study.)
77. In the last five years, how many teachers have you hired who were certified through an alternative route to traditional preparation?
- A. 1-2      B. 3-4      C. 5-6      D. 7-8      E. 9-10      F. more than 10
78. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers whom you have hired in the last five years, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) whom you have hired?
- A. below that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
B. equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
C. above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
D. well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires
79. Have the AC teachers whom you have hired received support or mentoring to facilitate their transition into the classroom?
- A. YES      B. NO
80. Have the AC teachers whom you have hired in the last five years stayed at your school at rates equal to those of traditionally-prepared newly hired teachers?
- A. AC teachers have stayed at the school about as long as other newly-hired teachers  
B. AC teachers have left sooner than other newly-hired teachers  
C. AC teachers have stayed longer than other newly-hired teachers
81. To what extent has the hiring of AC teachers helped solve the problem of finding enough qualified teachers to fully staff your school?
- A. We have not had any problems finding enough qualified teachers  
B. We have had some problems finding enough teachers, but AC programs have not had a significant impact on the problem  
C. We have had some problems finding enough teachers and AC programs have been somewhat helpful in addressing our need for teachers  
D. We have had some problems finding enough teachers and AC programs have been very helpful in addressing our need for teachers
82. In what subject areas are the AC teachers whom you have hired teaching?
- A. multiple subjects      B. math      C. science      D. English/language arts      E. special education  
F. other

83. What is the average age of the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs?
- A. 20-30      B. 30-40      C. 40-50      D. over 50
84. Have the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs been:
- A. mostly men?      B. mostly women?      C. roughly equal numbers of both?
85. To what extent has hiring AC teachers affected the diversity of your teaching staff?
- A. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of African American teachers  
B. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of Hispanic teachers  
C. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of other minorities on our staff  
D. Hiring AC teachers has allowed us to increase the percentage of more than one of the above groups  
E. Hiring AC teachers has not increased the percentage of minority teachers in our school
86. From which backgrounds are the AC teachers whom you have hired?
- A. Most are from business or industry  
B. Most are from the military  
C. Most are from the field of education (e.g. former teachers, former support staff)  
D. Most are recent college graduates – non-education majors  
E. Other

We realize that your time is valuable - Thank you very much for taking a few minutes to tell us about your experiences in your preparation program and your school. As discussed in the cover letter, the results of this study will be posted on our web site by January 2003 – [www.ncrel.org](http://www.ncrel.org), and will be helpful to policy makers in the region as they examine the issues of principal preparation and alternative teacher certification.

**APPENDIX B**  
**SAMPLE OF COVER LETTER SENT TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Proposed Cover Letter to Individual Public School District's  
Alternative Certification Program Coordinator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

From: Mr. Nelson Torres  
2837 Sprague Dr.  
Orlando, FL 32826

To:

Dear Educator and ACP Coordinator:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida. As part of my doctoral coursework, I am conducting a research on Florida's Alternative Certification Program (ACP) and alternatively certified teachers. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes of Florida public school principals on the ACPs established throughout the state and on alternatively certified teachers.

However, I do need your assistance in helping me conduct my study.

My research consists of a survey I intend to mail to principals in your district that have alternatively certified teachers in their staffs. For this reason, I will appreciate that you identify at least three principals, one at each level — elementary, middle, and high school — and provide me their respective school addresses so that I can mail the survey to them. I will mail the surveys as soon as you provide me this information on the principals you want to have participate in the survey. The survey should take no more than an hour to complete. My intentions are to mail the surveys no later than 15 June.

Attached you will find copies of several documents I intend to mail to the principals you identify. First, you will find a copy of an Informed Consent Form which

provides specific information on the study. I will send two copies of this form requesting the principals participating in the survey to return one signed copy in an enclosed self-stamped, self-addressed envelope. The other copy is for their records. By signing this form, they are giving me permission to report or use their responses anonymously in the final manuscript to be submitted to my faculty advisor as part of my doctoral dissertation.

The second and third documents you will find, for your information, are copies of a cover letter and of a survey I will provide the school principals in your district that you identify and select for this purpose. I would also be most appreciative if you send me any information you have on your district's Alternative Certification Program.

I want to thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to respond to my letter and for providing me the information requested. For this purpose, I am enclosing a self-addressed, self-stamped envelope. Your support and responses will be extremely valuable as I study the Alternative Certification Program in Florida and analyze the perspectives, perceptions and attitudes of Florida school principals in this area.

Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance! You can reach me at my cellular (407) 579-7874 or at my home number (407) 724-3861. Again, thank you so much!

Respectfully,

Nelson Torres



APPENDIX C  
SAMPLE OF COVER LETTER TO PRINCIPALS  
AND  
PRINCIPALS' SURVEY INSTRUMENT

## Proposed Cover Letter to Accompany the Principals' Survey Instrument

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

From: Mr. Nelson Torres  
2837 Sprague Dr.  
Orlando, FL 32826

To:

Dear Principal and Educator:

I am a graduate student at the University of Central Florida. As part of my doctoral coursework, I am conducting a research on Florida's Alternative Certification Program (ACP) and alternatively certified teachers. The main purpose of this study is to analyze the perspectives, perceptions, and attitudes of Florida public school principals on the ACPs established throughout the state and on alternatively certified teachers. However, I do need your assistance in helping me conduct my study. Your district ACP Coordinator selected you to participate in this study. He/she provided me with your name and school address.

Attached you will find several documents. First, you will find two copies on an Informed Consent Form which provides specific information on the study. Please read the consent form carefully before you decide to participate in this study. You must be 18 years or older to participate. Please return one signed copy in the enclosed self-stamped, self-addressed envelope. The other copy is for your records. By signing this form, you give me permission to report or use your responses anonymously in the final manuscript to be submitted to my faculty advisor as part of my doctoral dissertation.

The second document is a copy of a questionnaire that I am asking you to complete and return, together with the consent form, in the envelope provided. Please return these documents as soon as possible, but not later than June 30, 2006. Completion of this instrument should take you no more than one hour.

I want to thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to complete this survey. Your support and responses will be extremely valuable as I study the Alternative Certification Program in Florida and analyze the perspectives, perceptions and attitudes of Florida school principals in this area. Do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance! You can reach me at my cellular (407) 579-7874 or at my home (407) 724-3861. Again, thank you so much!

Respectfully,

Nelson Torres

Alternative Teacher Certification: An Investigation to Determine the Effectiveness of  
Alternative Teacher Certification in the State of Florida According to the Principals'  
Perspective, Attitudes and Perceptions

Principals' Survey Instrument

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The researcher is interested in identifying the perspectives, attitudes and perceptions Florida public school principals have on alternatively certified teachers. Your assistance is very important in analyzing and identifying what principals like you feel and think about alternatively certified teachers. Additionally, it will help understand if the state's Alternative Certification Program is producing quality teachers. Completion and return of this survey, implies your consent to participate in the study. Please mark your answers directly on the survey instrument and return it in the envelope provided. Thank you for taking time of your busy schedule to respond to this survey! Please return the survey by August 30, 2006.

---

Part 1: Background Information

Please provide your answer to each of the following questions by circling or entering the appropriate response.

\*1. Indicate the grade level(s) of your school?

- A. Elementary (K - 5)
- B. Middle (6 - 8)
- C. High School (9 - 12)
- D. Elementary and Middle (K - 8)
- E. Middle and High School (6 - 12)

\*2. Indicate the type of community your school serves.

- A. Urban
- B. Rural
- C. Suburban
- D. Small Town

\*3. What is your school enrollment?

- A. under 100
- B. 101-300
- C. 301-500
- D. 501-700
- E. 701-900
- F. 901-1100
- G. 1101-1400
- H. 1401-1700
- I. 1701 +

4. How many of your staff members are teachers? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many of your teachers received their certification through an Alternative Certification Program? \_\_\_\_\_

## Part II: Alternative Certification Program

\*6. In the last five years, how many teachers have you hired who were certified through an alternative route to traditional preparation? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. 0                      B. 1-2                      C. 3-4                      D. 5-6  
E. 7-8                      F. 9-10 G. more than 10

7. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of classroom management? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. Well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
B. Above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
C. Equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
D. Well below that of traditionally-prepared new hires

8. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of leadership? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. Well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
B. Above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
C. Equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
D. Well below that of traditionally-prepared new hires

9. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of subject or content area knowledge? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. Well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
B. Above that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
C. Equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires  
D. Well below that of traditionally-prepared new hires

10. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers, how have AC teacher(s) fit to the school's culture? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. Well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- B. Above that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- C. Equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- D. Well below that of traditionally-prepared new hires

11. Compared to traditionally-prepared new teachers, how would you rate the over-all performance of the AC teacher(s) in the area of relationship with parents? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. Well above that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- B. Above that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- C. Equal to that of traditionally-prepared new hires
- D. Well below that of traditionally-prepared new hires

\*12. Have the AC teachers whom you have hired stayed at your school at rates equal to those traditionally-prepared newly hired teachers? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. AC teachers have stayed at the school about as long as other newly-hired teachers
- B. AC teachers have left sooner than other newly-hired teachers
- C. AC teachers have stayed longer than other newly-hired teachers

\*13. To what extent has the hiring of AC teachers helped solve the problem of finding enough qualified teachers to fully staff your school? Circle the letter of the best answer.

- A. We have not had any problems finding enough qualified teachers.
- B. We have had some problems finding enough teachers, but AC programs have not had a significant impact on the problem.
- C. We have had some problems finding enough teachers and AC programs have been somewhat helpful in addressing our need for teachers.
- D. We have had some problems finding enough teachers and AC programs have been very helpful in addressing our need for teachers.

\*14. In what subject areas are the AC teachers whom you have hired teaching? Circle all letters of all the answers that apply.

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| A. Multiple Subjects     | E. Elementary Education     |
| B. Mathematics           | F. Bilingual Education/ESOL |
| C. English/Language Arts | G. Science                  |
| D. Special Education     | H. Other                    |

\*15. What is the average age of the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs?

- A. 20-30      B. 30-40      C. 40-50      D. over 50

\*16. Have the teachers whom you have hired from AC programs been:

- A. mostly men?      B. mostly women?      C. roughly equal numbers of both?

\*17. To what extent has hiring AC teachers affected the diversity of your teaching staff?  
Circle the letter of the best answer that apply.

- A. Hiring AC teachers have allowed us to increase the percentage of African American teachers.  
B. Hiring AC teachers have allowed us to increase the percentage of Hispanic teachers.  
C. Hiring AC teachers have allowed us to increase the percentage of other minorities on our staff.  
D. Hiring AC teachers have allowed us to increase the percentage of more than one of the above groups.  
F. Hiring AC teachers have not increase the percentage of minority teachers in our school.

\*18. From which backgrounds are the AC teachers whom you have hired?

- A. Most are from business or industry  
B. Most are from the military  
C. Most are from the field of education (e.g. former teachers, former support staff)  
D. Most are recent college graduates — non-education majors  
E. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

19. What qualities or strengths characterize the AC teachers whom you have hired?  
Circle all answers that apply from the following list.

- A. Maturity  
B. Real life experiences  
C. Knowledge of subject matter  
D. Genuine interest in children  
E. Excellent work habits  
F. Dedication  
G. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

20. Of the qualities or strengths mentioned in Question 19, which do you think is the most influential one? Please write the answer here. \_\_\_\_\_

I realize your time is valuable and want to thank you very much for taking a few minutes to tell me about your experiences with AC teachers whom you have hired. Your responses will be helpful in analyzing the perceptions and attitudes Florida principals have on AC teachers. The questions identified with an asterisk (\*) were taken from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory's (NCREL) survey entitled "Understanding the Job of a School Principal: A Study of Current Principal Practices, Principal Preparation, and Alternative Teacher Certification." Previous authorization to use this survey has been granted by Dr. Ray Legler, NCREL's Senior Program Associate. Once again, thank you!



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