

# The Dallas Morning News

## EDITORIALS

### Classrooms in Need: Texas is still short on certified teachers

Don't let the flop of one idea that attempted to expedite new teachers into the classroom obscure the success of other programs to accomplish somewhat the same goal.

[DallasNews.com/Extra](#)  
[Read the Dec. 12 story](#)  
[Read the Texas Public Policy Foundation report](#)

Over 18 months, only one new teacher has received emergency certification for immediate classroom placement under new rules hatched by the state's teacher certification board.

The program had the backing of the governor but not of school districts. Taking on rookies with emergency certification means taking on full responsibility for developing and mentoring them – a bureaucratic plunge administrators are unwilling to take.

Even as that program fizzles, 2005 marks the first year that alternative certification exceeds traditional undergraduate programs in producing newly certified teachers. This year's score:

alternative certification, 9,900; traditional college, 8,586.

The more startling trend is that alternative certification nearly quadrupled the annual number of certified teachers compared to 2000, while the traditional college track is in decline. Alternative certification is open to college grads who enter the classroom with provisional training and certification and go on to take prescribed education.

While open to interpretation, these figures say the following to us: Teaching has less allure for those planning traditional four-year college programs and greater attraction for those already in the workforce and looking for something else.

The sad bottom line for Texas is that neither route has helped the state fill its most critical classroom needs – teachers in math, science, computer science, special ed and bilingual ed. A recent four-year study showed that more than a quarter of Texas instructors were teaching out of field.

Lawmakers will gather in Austin next year to try to beat a court deadline for overhauling the state's antiquated system of financing education.

The antiquated system for hiring and paying Texas' nearly 300,000 teachers ought to be judged by its shortcomings and addressed as well.

A thought-provoking new report by the free-market Texas Public Policy Foundation should be required reading. It argues that the teacher compensation system is rigid and unresponsive to market conditions.

State leaders need to confront the reason that superintendents can't attract the right talent for the classroom in a state of 22 million people.

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