Prairie View A&M University
Whitlowe R. Green College of Education

Alternative Teacher Certification Program

Mentor Orientation Handbook
Prairie View, Texas
Alternative Teacher Certification Program (ATCP)
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Prairie View A&M University and the Local Cooperative Teacher Education Center are sponsors of the Alternative Teacher Certification program. This sponsorship came about as a result of requests from area school districts. The program began in the 1991-92 school year. The program sponsors certification in all content areas of Secondary Education and Special Education EC-12.

All accepted applicants in the Alternative Teacher Certification program must meet the state mandated minimum requirements of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited university, an overall GPA of 2.5, 24 semester hours in a teaching field (Prairie View offers all content areas of secondary education - grades 8-12). Those seeking certification in Special Education EC-12 must have a minimum of 3 semester hours per course in the following: English, social studies, math, and science. In addition to the coursework requirement, an applicant must demonstrate evidence of competence in reading, writing and math on SAT, ACT or THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment) with a minimum score of 230 in reading, 230 in writing and 230 in Math.

During Phase I, candidates will receive a letter of acceptance to the program. They will be invited to attend a New Intern Orientation Session explaining all aspects of the program including:

Integrated Field Experiences in Certification Area (30 clock hours) in a public school
- 12 hours of University Coursework
- Review Educator Ethics form and sign
- Review Intern Commitment form and sign
- Set up a personal account on the Educational Testing Service website and get a TEA ID number

Candidates who complete Phase I successfully will be provided with a letter authorizing them to seek employment in a Texas Education Agency approved school district as the teacher of record for one year.

As in other alternative programs, interns placed as the teacher of record will be supported during the internship year by a mentor teacher who will provide day to day support and technical assistance. District administrators will also be available to support interns. Other Prairie View A&M staff, such as the University Supervisor, will also be available to the intern. The ATCP, as developed by Prairie View A&M University, has an extensive network of intern support built into the program as well.

Mentors will be required to complete the Texas A&M System Online Academic Mentor Training on the PACT website (http://tap.tarleton.edu/pact). The principal or principal’s designee will observe the intern a minimum of two (2) times each semester, to include two (2) walkthroughs and the formal PDAS appraisal.

How do teachers trained through ATCP compare to other teachers? The data available at present indicates that ATCP teachers score as well as traditionally trained teachers on evaluation instruments, have a high retention rate in the profession, and express a high degree of professional competence.
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF MENTORS

**Mentor:** An experienced, CERTIFIED teacher in the same subject area, or at the same level, for which the intern is to be certified.

- Each intern will be assigned a mentor.
- Selection of mentor teachers will be based on the criteria listed below. It is the responsibility of the principal to select the mentor.
  
  **Mentor Criteria:**
  - Has knowledge of the Alternative Certification Program
  - Agrees with the ATCP philosophy
  - Uses good interpersonal skills
  - Has the ability to demonstrate and verbalize effective teaching practices
  - Is a good role model
  - Is knowledgeable in the area of certification
  - Uses best, up-to-date teaching practices
  - Maintains good attendance
  - Must be certified in the area and/or at the level of the intern (special education and learning resources mentors must be assigned to a certified teacher in the same program as the intern)
  - Is the trainer of trainers
  - Is tolerant, diplomatic and flexible
  - Is willing to serve and to attend training
  - Has planning period at the same time as intern (when possible)
Mentor Role & Responsibilities

The Plan: The Expectations

The mentor will:
- Complete mentor training requirements. (PACT online)
- Maintain a protective, coaching relationship with their first year teacher.
- Provide continuous assistance during the year on instructional design, instructional delivery and classroom management.

The Support System Framework: Beliefs

- The first year teacher needs to be welcomed as a friend and colleague.
- The first year teacher needs an empathetic mentor who will listen to concerns.
- The first year teacher needs praise and respect from the mentor.
- Confidentiality and courtesy are critical attributes to the relationship.
- Personalize your relationship by: showing an interest in the first year teacher, inviting him/her to activities and sharing experiences, strategies and materials.

Mentor Training

New Mentors:
Required six (6) hours of documented training:
- Complete the Texas A&M System Online Academic Training on the PACT website (http://tap.tarleton.edu/pact).
- Attend a three (3) hour professional growth/mentor-related workshop in assigned school, district or Region IV.
- Complete the Mentor Log Form: return the log to the University ATCP Office on the specified date.

Experiences Mentors:
Required three (3) hours of documented training:
- Select one option from the three (3) hour Individual Plan:
  - Credit for a current university course being taken; or
  - Present a workshop in your school or district; or
  - Attend a three (3) hour professional growth-related workshop within your own district.
- Complete the Mentor Log and return the log to the University ATCP Office on the specified date.
Mentor Role & Responsibilities (Cont.)

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<th>The Building Blocks: The Action Steps</th>
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<td>● Observe the first year teacher teaching regularly and serve as an instructional coach and provide constructive feedback.</td>
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<td>● Familiarize the beginning teacher with school procedures (first day, daily, six weeks, end of semester) and review school rules and regulations (school district policy, school handbook, permanent record folders, textbooks, attendance, scheduling procedures, etc.)</td>
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<td>● Assist the first year teacher in obtaining necessary materials, resources and equipment (curriculum guides, textbooks, lesson plan books, grade books, required forms, etc.)</td>
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<td>● Help the first year teacher write lessons plans for the first day/week including the development of appropriate instructional objectives.</td>
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<td>● Assist in setting up the classroom: bulletin boards, furniture arrangement, centers, traffic patterns.</td>
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<td>● Help the first year teacher develop a classroom management system to be implemented in the classroom (clear/specific rules, consequences, rewards, routines to facilitate student movement).</td>
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<td>● Help the first year teacher understand the importance of firmness and consistency in implementing a classroom management plan.</td>
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<td>● Plan times for the first year teacher to observe you demonstrating the lesson cycle, varied instructional strategies for dealing with the different learning styles, and classroom management techniques.</td>
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<td>● Teach the first year teacher how to evaluate the following during an observation: purpose of lesson, strategies leading to student success, levels of difficulty, pacing, and relation of the lesson to the curriculum.</td>
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<td>● Assist the first year teacher with organization and prioritization of paperwork.</td>
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<td>● Encourage the first year teacher to contact parents early and often.</td>
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<td>● Help the first year teacher prioritize concerns and keep things in perspective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Encourage the first year teacher to use effective instructional strategies.</td>
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<td>● Suggest varied evaluation techniques of assessing student learning.</td>
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<td>● Explain and model how to facilitate student learning using the teacher assessment instrument.</td>
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<td>Familiarize the first year teacher with the community (services, activities, culture and population, resources, convenient restaurants, markets, etc.)</td>
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First Year Intern Teacher
Program Requirements

The ATCP Intern Should:

- Know and follow the rules, regulations and policies of the campus and/or district in which he/she is employed.

- Maintain an ethical and professional attitude toward all members of the school community.

- Be available for regular planning and feedback sessions with the mentor teacher and university supervisor.

- Prepare adequate lesson plans in advance of teaching assignments and share copies with the mentor and/or university supervisor.

- Attend all of the required college courses, training, seminars, workshops, and/or review/study sessions which are scheduled during the internship year.

- Maintain a 2.5 grade point average in college course work with no grade less than a “C”.

- Turn in all required and/or requested ATCP documentation in a timely manner.

- Continually conduct self-assessment of professional growth.


- Assume responsibility for making effective contributions to the on-going curriculum.

- Complete required pre-assignment classroom observations.

- After assignment to a school, conduct observations of mentor and other master teachers. Discuss observations with mentor.
WHAT INTERNS NEED TO KNOW IMMEDIATELY

Implementing School’s Instructional Philosophy

- Where and when does the teacher turn in lesson plans?
- What are the essential elements for the assigned subject area and grade level?
- What is the professional code of ethics?

People

- Administrative team – Who is on the team and what are their duties?
- Department head/grade level chairman – Who are they and how can they help the teacher?

Policies and Procedures

- The teacher’s job description – What is the scope? Where is a copy?
- Securing the building – Should the intern have keys and where are they obtained?
- School supplies – Is there a budget? What does the school supply? What is the teacher expected to supply?
- Obtaining textbooks – Where? When? Why?
- Discipline procedures – Where can the teacher obtain a copy of campus policies?
- Hours – What time is the building open for work? What are the teacher’s duty hours?
- Teachers lunch period – When is it? What responsibilities does the teacher have during the lunch period?
- Grading – What are the policies and procedures for assessing students and assigning and recording grades?
- Permanent record cards – Where are they kept and what is the procedure for their use?
- Fire drills – What is the exit plan for each classroom?
- Schedules – Where can a teacher get a copy of the schedules for bells, music, physical education, nurse, counselor, lunch periods, buses, learning resource center?
- Equipment – What machines may teachers use? Where are they? How are they operated?
- Smoking policies on campus – When and where may teachers smoke?
- Telephones – Which one(s) may the teachers use?
- Coffee – Is there a school coffee club? Where can coffee be bought?
- Absences – Whom does the teacher call? What constitutes allowable absences?
- Maps – Where can the teacher obtain a campus map (showing restrooms, lounge, workroom, learning resource center, cafeteria)?
- Parent conferences – How often should teachers contact parents? How often should conferences be held?
- Teacher Handbook
AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
AND

______________________________
Alternative Teacher Certification Mentor Teacher

______________________________
Address

______________________________
Telephone Number

The PVAMU Alternative Teacher Certification Program agrees to accept the above named mentor for the school year, and the mentor agrees to participate in the Alternative Teacher Certification Program.

The mentor agrees to serve as a mentor teacher for ____________, Alternative Certification intern. Mentor will be governed by, and discharge the duties required by, the school laws of Texas and such local rules and regulations as are in effect at this time or may be adopted by the school district while the mentor is participating in the Alternative Certification Program.

The Alternative Certification Program agrees to pay to mentor a stipend of $500.00, payable at the conclusion of service as a mentor. Should the Alternative Certification candidate, to whom the mentor is assigned, not complete the program then the mentor will receive a pro rata portion of the $500.00. The portion will be commensurate with the percentage of the program completed by the Alternative Certification Intern.

The mentor agrees to fulfill all mentor teacher responsibilities to the best of the mentor’s ability. This will include:

- Mentors will be required to complete the Texas A&M System Online Academic Mentor Training on the PACT Website (http://tap.tarleton.edu/pact).
- Participating in a minimum of six times (per year) of technical assistance/observation of instruction of the intern. The mentor will be allowed release time from his/her class responsibilities.
- Allowing the intern to observe the mentor’s classroom a minimum of six times per year.
- Providing technical assistance/support/encouragement to the intern throughout the internship year.
- Abiding by policies, rules, and regulations of the campus and district.
- Providing remediation for the intern whenever needed and when the intern does not obtain a score of “meets expectations” on the PDAS appraisal.
- Notifying appropriate staff members, who will be identified during the training, of problems concerning the interns as soon as the problem arises.
- Meeting all other requirements of the Alternative Certification Department.

The mentor must adhere to all requirements for documentation and to timelines established by the program in order to be compensated at the end of the internship.

Mentor ______________________ SSN ______________________ Date ______________________

Alternative Certification Staff Member ______________________ Date ______________________

Please sign and return one copy to the University ATCP Office. Retain the second copy for your records.