

POLICY BRIEFS

Meeting the Teacher Education Accountability Challenge

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The Demand for Alternative Teacher Licensing in Ohio

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Introduction and Rationale

Due to initiatives from NCLB and the Ohio Department of Education, the Alternative Educator License (AEL) was developed to attract non-traditional candidates into teaching, especially into specific subjects and districts, to ensure that there is a “Highly-Qualified Teacher” in every classroom. Between January 2000 and June 2004, 502 AELs were issued by the Ohio Department of Education. This brief will address two major questions:

- 1) What subjects are AELs teaching? and
- 2) Where are the AEL recipients teaching?

Data and Methods

The information presented is based on Ohio Department of Education licensure data, as analyzed by members of the AEL research team. This team is a part of the larger Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP).

TQP has enlisted all 50 colleges and universities that prepare teachers to engage in a series of research studies designed to explore the practices and characteristics of teachers who add value to their students’ achievement

and to use this information to inform changes in teacher preparation, induction, and professional development as well as to enable districts to better utilize student and teacher assessment data to improve teacher quality.

The study explored the data first in terms of the AEL licenses that were issued. Secondly, the types of school districts where they started their teaching assignment (e.g., rural, urban, suburban, along with low, moderate or high poverty) were examined. School district identification was based on the 1996 Typology developed and used by the Ohio Department of Education.

Chi-Squares were utilized to determine if any relationships exist between the subject area of the AELs and the school district size (urban, suburban, small or rural) and between the subject area of the AELs and the socio-economic status (SES) of the school district.

Findings

Presented below are tables and charts from the original report so that readers can draw their own conclusions. Chart 1 contains a breakdown of the main area where people were seeking alternative licensure. Areas with less



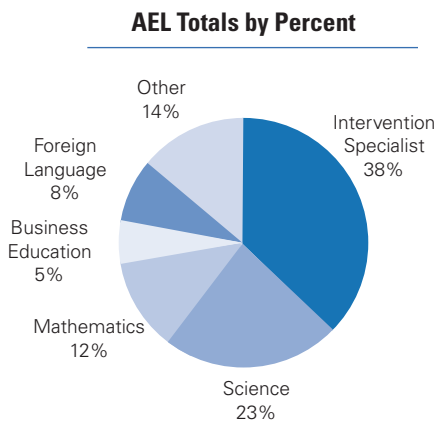
*Meeting the Teacher Education
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The Teacher Quality

Partnership is a research partnership of Ohio’s 50 colleges and universities providing teacher preparation programs.

The mission of this P-16 collaboration is to raise students’ academic achievement by developing a clear, research-based understanding of how teachers are prepared and continue to be developed during their formative first years in classroom.

Chart 1: AEL Subject-Area Categories



* Categories that contained at least 25 AEL recipients

than 25 applicants were grouped into “Other,” as reflected in Chart 1. More than one-third of the Ohio AELs issued were for the subject area of intervention specialist (special education) (36 percent). Licenses in science accounted for 22 percent of the AELs, and mathematics accounted for 12 percent. These three subject areas comprised 70 percent of all Ohio AELs issued in the time period studied.

It is important to note that areas awarded the most licenses were the areas supported by grants from the state. Programs were initiated in Ohio beginning in 2002, with funding for recruitment, tuition and other support for individuals seeking alternative licensure in Mathematics, Science and Intervention Specialist. Table 1 shows that 93 percent of the AELs were issued after state funding was available.

Table 1: AELs Issued By Year

Year	Number of AELs Issued
2000	6
2001	29
2002	90
2003	344
2004	33*

* 2004 data represents January through June.

AELs awarded also were grouped by high, moderate and low SES. This breakdown is contained in Table 2 and examination of this table reveals that the vast majority (86 percent) of teachers awarded licensure through this alternative pathway went to moderate to low SES school districts (20 percent went to moderate SES districts and 66 percent went to low SES districts). When

moderate and low SES were combined in Table 2, the three largest licensure areas were Intervention Specialist (86 percent), Science (81 percent), and Mathematics (93 percent). Clearly the AELs are meeting a need by teaching in “hard to fill” positions funded by state initiatives, but what we see is that the most needy of children are being taught by individuals with the least teacher preparation (i.e., education courses).

Most notably, 52 percent of all Intervention Specialists AEL applicants were employed by urban school districts (Table 3). There also was a significant relationship between all subject areas and low SES school districts, with the exception of the technology education subject area (Table 3). The data showed that 77 percent of Intervention Specialists, 59 percent of Science, and 80 percent of Mathematics AEL recipients were employed by school districts with a low socioeconomic status (Table 2).

Another way to look at these data is by the ODE school district typologies. This breakdown is included in Table 3. Forty percent of the AELs are in urban schools. This is not surprising, giving the overlap between low SES and urban schools. The percentages between the other typologies were relatively even across categories.

These data and the analysis are from an unpublished manuscript, written by the five authors mentioned, and are the first detailed look at the ODE data on alternative licensing in Ohio. The complete article has been submitted for review by the Ohio Journal of Teacher Education (OJTE).

Table 2: Nominal Data Showing Subject Areas in Each SES Level

Subject	High SES	Moderate SES	Low SES
Intervention Specialist	12	21	113
Science	16	20	52
Mathematics	4	7	43
Foreign Language	7	10	14
Business Education	3	7	13
Technology Education	4	5	3
English	1	2	7
Other*	12	14	32

* AELs that were individually broken down by category had 10 or more, those that had less than 10 were placed in the "Other" category.

** Other = Language Arts, Fine Arts, Social Studies, P.E., Library Media, Industrial Tech. and Psychology/Sociology.

Table 3: Nominal Data Showing License Area in Each Typology

Subject	Suburban Typology	Urban Typology	Small City/Town	Rural Typology	JVS, ESC and Unknown	Totals
Intervention Specialist	12	95	21	18	35	181
Science	16	34	16	22	14	102
Mathematics	4	38	3	9	13	67
For. Language	7	9	8	7	5	36
Business Education	3	5	7	8	2	25
Technology Education	4	2	4	2	2	14
English	1	2	2	5	6	16
Other	12	16	16	14	3	61
Totals	59	201	77	85	80	502
Percentage	12%	40%	15%	17%	16%	

* AELs that were individually broken down by category had 10 or more, those that had less than 10 were placed in the "Other" category.

** Other = Language Arts, Fine Arts, Social Studies, P.E., Library Media, Industrial Tech. and Psychology/Sociology

CONCLUSIONS

What subjects are AELs teaching?

- More than one-third of all of the Alternative Educator Licenses issued in Ohio during this time period were for Intervention Specialists (including mild to moderate, moderate to intensive, and hearing impaired licenses). These comprised 36 percent of all the licenses issued from January, 2000 – June, 2004.

- Science was the second largest field for AEL with 22 percent and mathematics was third with 11 percent. The three areas combined correspond to 70 percent of all AELs issued in Ohio. These were subject areas that represented the largest teacher shortage areas in the state.
- The Ohio data shows that 7 percent of the AELs issued were for foreign language; 4 percent in business education, 3 percent in English, with the remaining subject areas



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representing 15 percent of the AEL licensing.

- There are greater numbers of AEL recipients only in subject areas that have been supplemented with state-funded programs and initiatives.

Where are the AEL Recipients Teaching?

- About one-third of the AELs were identified as teaching in the major urban areas that are categorized by very high poverty while rural areas hired 17 percent of the AEL recipients who identified their district.
- More than half (54 percent) of all of the teachers who identified a teaching location between 2000 – 2004 were listed as teaching in a high poverty or very high poverty district.
- Educational Service Centers and Joint Vocational Schools, together employed 7 percent of the AEL recipients.
- When we combined the high and very high SES typologies, we found 13 percent of the AEL teachers were hired in those districts.

Potential Recommendations

Policy and grant makers alike are interested in the description of the individuals participating in this route to teaching careers. Is the AEL attracting talented, high-quality individuals and producing effective teachers? Is this a feasible way to truly make an impact on teacher shortages? How do the AEL teachers compare in effectiveness to teachers trained in more traditional university programs? Further study will address the effect of AELs on student achievement and determine if there is an increased participation of teachers of minority backgrounds, as a result of the alternative licensure programs.

AEL is a part, albeit a small part, of the answer for meeting the needs of school districts in subject areas where there is a need for more, highly-qualified teachers. Therefore, it is recommended:

Policy Recommendations

1. Continue to develop grants and programs to recruit qualified AEL candidates in urban and rural areas, as well as in areas of math, science, and special education.
2. Offer further incentives to attract those with specific college educations back into teaching:
 - a) Financial incentives to pay for coursework
 - b) Financial incentives to draw them into “high need” districts in urban and rural areas.
 - c) Work with TQP, or another group, to compare teacher effectiveness in the classrooms of AEL and traditionally licensed teachers.
3. Continue the requirement of completing education courses and passing the Praxis tests.
4. Develop an “Entry Year” program specifically addressing the needs of AEL teachers.

Research Recommendations

5. Determine whether the AEL programs have increased the number of minority teachers in “high need” urban areas.
6. Determine whether the AEL is attracting talented and high quality individuals and producing effective teachers.
7. Clearly a disproportionate number of AEL recipients go to low SES districts. Therefore their students’ achievement must be assessed to insure that the AEL policy is not contributing to the achievement gap between low SES and high SES districts.