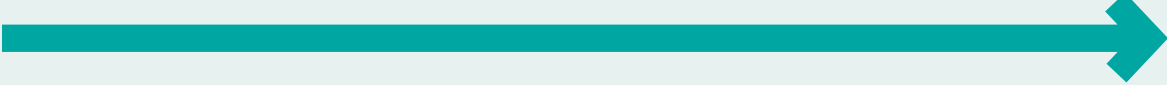


Believe PREPARE



LOUISIANA'S NEXT GENERATION EDUCATORS



INCREASING MENTORING FOR LOUISIANA'S ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION TEACHING CANDIDATES: A TOOLKIT



You have in your hands a Toolkit that provides guidance and tools to help make adjustments to teaching assignments, class schedules, and teacher support systems within a school to provide significantly more time for their post-baccalaureate or “alternate certification” teaching candidates to practice with an expert mentor teacher. School system leader, school leaders, and teacher preparation provider partners can use this how-to-guide as they develop effective partnerships and programs that prepare roughly half of all teachers in Louisiana who complete post-baccalaureate or “alternate” certification training programs.

In June 2017, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) directed the Louisiana Department of Education to study and report on the program requirements of the Certification-Only Program, as outlined in [Bulletin 996, Standards for Approval of Teacher and/or Educational Leader Preparation Programs](#).

Research shows that **structured support from and practice with a strong mentor teacher has a significant impact on teacher success and student growth**.¹ Given that most alternate candidates enter their first year in the classroom with minimal practice, mentoring is essential.

In September 2017, the Department studied and reported on the issue of post-baccalaureate or “alternate certification” preparation in [Access to Full Preparation in Rural Communities](#) and established a pilot grant program aimed at improving post-baccalaureate preparation in rural school systems. Through the pilot, **eight rural school systems are partnering with preparation programs to implement innovative approaches to post-baccalaureate preparation**, which include significantly more time to practice with a mentor teacher.



In December 2018, the Department released [Full Preparation for All Teachers: Mentoring in Alternate Preparation Programs](#), a report highlighting important lessons learned from these pilots thus far that offer insight into how Louisiana can strengthen alternate certification candidates’ experiences. On average, the pilots offer candidates **structured practice and mentoring for one period per day, every day, during the entire school year** and provide time for co-teaching, collaborative planning, and observation and feedback sessions.

The pilots triple the amount of mentoring that these teachers typically receive, making the preparation experience **substantially more supportive than what current policy requires**.

This Toolkit describes strategies that school systems have used, in partnership with teacher preparation providers, to provide increased support for alternate certification candidates, including shifts in scheduling and staffing plans.

1 Goldhaber, D., Krieg, J., & Theobald, R. (2018). Effective like me? Does having a more productive mentor improve the productivity of mentees? CEDR Working Paper No. 11232018-1-1. Retrieved from <http://cedr.us/papers/working/CEDR%20Working%20Paper%20No.%2011232018-1-1.pdf>;
Ingersoll, R. M., & Strong, M. (2011). The Impact of Induction and Mentoring Programs for Beginning Teachers: A Critical Review of the Research. *Review of Educational Research*, 81(2), 201–233. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1127&context=gse_pubs

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APPENDIX I: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

REPORTS

Access to Full Preparation in Rural Communities

<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2017-believe-and-prepare-rural-report.pdf>

Full Preparation for All Teachers: Mentoring in Alternate Preparation Programs

https://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2018-believe-and-prepare-post-baccalaureate-preparation-report.pdf?sfvrsn=9e2691f_4

RESOURCES

Believe and Prepare overview

<https://www.louisianabelieves.com/teaching/believe-and-prepare>



Case Study: Exemplar School

This case study demonstrates how school leaders, in partnership with school system leaders and preparation provider partners, can make adjustments to teaching assignments, class schedules, and teacher support systems to provide alternate certification teaching candidates with more time to practice with an expert mentor teacher.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Antoinette Junior High School² is a 360-student 6-8 school in rural Louisiana. It has three grades of 120 students.

Antoinette JHS has 15 teachers (three per subject – Math, ELA, Social Studies, Science, and Exploratory)

- Four teachers are uncertified alternate certification candidates (2 Math and 2 ELA)
- Two teachers are mentors enrolled in a state-approved mentor training program (1 Math and 1 ELA)

| FAST FACTS | |
|--------------|-----|
| Students | 360 |
| Grades | 3 |
| Teachers | 15 |
| • Candidates | 4 |
| • Mentors | 2 |
| • Other | 9 |

PROGRAM DESIGN

Each of the four alternate certification candidates spends one period per day co-teaching with a mentor in their subject area. Each mentor supports two candidates.

Sample Schedule for 1 Mentor and 2 Candidates:

| Teacher | P1 | P2 | P3 | Lunch | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 |
|-------------------------|----------|----|----|-------|----|----|----|----------|
| Candidate A (6th & 7th) | Planning | 6a | 6b | Lunch | 6c | 7a | 7b | 7c |
| Mentor (6th & 8th) | Planning | 6a | 8a | Lunch | 8b | 6d | 6e | Planning |
| Candidate B (7th & 8th) | Planning | 7d | 8a | Lunch | 7e | 8c | 8d | 8e |

Planning:

To accommodate planning, the mentor teacher and her candidates have the following dedicated time:

- a 90-minute planning block to prepare for the week, which consists of one joint, 60 minute planning period per day and one additional 30 minute planning period once per week before or after school, and
- one additional planning period for the mentor to prepare for her coaching sessions with the candidates, as well as her own classroom lessons.

In the sample schedule above, the mentor co-plans with both candidates during the first period of the day and has one additional, independent planning period during the last period of the day. The mentor may decide to schedule the additional 30 minutes before or after school.

Uses for Planning Time:

- Co-create lessons
- Practice delivering lessons
- Share feedback
- Debrief co-teaching

² Antoinette JHS is a fictional school based on patterns observed in the Believe and Prepare Rural Communities Grant pilots focused on strengthening post-baccalaureate or “alternate certification” preparation in Louisiana.

Co-Teaching:

To accommodate co-teaching, the mentor teacher and her candidates have the following dedicated time:

- at least one period per day when the mentor teacher observes each candidates' classroom and co-teaches.

In the sample schedule above, the mentor co-teaches during one of Candidate A's 6th grade classes, and co-teaches during one of Candidate B's 8th grade classes. She has no other responsibilities except to work with her candidates.

Uses for Co-Teaching Time:

Team teach together

- One teaches and the other observes
- One lead teaches and the other pulls small groups

MAKING THE CHANGE

Antoinette JHS made the program design work without additional funding by increasing class size, which meant offering fewer sections of each course. When co-teaching occurs, the adult to student ratio is reduced compared to a classroom setting with one lead teacher in the room for the duration of the class period.

| Pre-Implementation | Post-Implementation |
|--|---|
| One teacher per grade per subject | Mentor supports candidates across two grades |
| All teachers teach all their periods alone | Mentor co-teaches with each candidate for one period per day |
| All teachers have one period per day to independently plan | Mentor and candidates have one daily co-planning period, and mentor has an additional independent planning period daily |
| Six sections per grade (avg class size 20) | Five sections per grade (avg class size 24) |

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPACT

ALTERNATE CERTIFICATION CANDIDATES

Reduced teaching load

- Increased support and guidance on daily responsibilities
- Opportunities to build deeper relationships with students
- Increased level of confidence in ability to positively impact student growth and achievement during first years of teaching

Observation & feedback cycles

- Designated time to observe expert teacher
- Goal-setting and coaching that is customized to their needs
- Continuous growth in pedagogy, content knowledge, and classroom management

Collaborative planning

- Reduced lesson planning responsibilities
- Preparation to deliver higher-quality instruction

Class Loads:

The number of courses candidates and mentors teach is less than other teachers.

- The "typical" teacher lead-teaches six out of seven periods and plans for one period.
- Candidates lead-teach five out of seven periods and co-teach one period.
- Because the mentor has two candidates, the mentor lead-teaches three out of seven periods, co-teaches two periods, and plans for two periods.

STUDENTS

- Increased access to effective, experienced teachers with rapidly improving skills
- Access to lessons co-planned with expert teachers

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- A career ladder to the mentor teacher role
- An increased culture of collaboration
- Improved student behavior with added support in classrooms
- Higher retention rates

Implementing System-Level Supports for Alternate Certification Teaching Candidates

Below are three action steps to successfully launch training supports in a school system for alternate certification teaching candidates. The timing for implementation will depend on the planning processes of the school system but should likely begin during the winter and continue throughout the following school year.

STEPS

1. Design your program
2. Pair candidates and mentors
3. Provide yearlong support for candidates and mentors

This workbook will allow you to create a plan, define roles, and choose next steps. For each of the action steps, think about:

- Owners:** *Who* will be in charge of ensuring the action steps happen?
- Success metrics:** *What* will this person need to look for/observe/collect data on to make sure the plan is happening?
- Progress check-ins:** *When* will your team regroup to discuss progress on the plan and change course, if necessary? What existing meeting structures can you use for this “stepback” time, and if there are none, what meeting structures will you need to create?

1. DESIGN YOUR PROGRAM (SEE [CASE STUDY FOR EXAMPLE](#))

Decision 1

How will we create protected time for mentors and candidates to spend together?

- Can class size increase in any grades or subject areas to reduce the number of sections needed for a course?
- Do any teachers have more non-teaching periods than the contractual minimum?
- Are there other staff in the building who could teach a prep (ex. an AP, a coach)?
- Are there positions that could be eliminated to free up money in the budget to hire more teachers?
- Are there other areas in the budget that could be cut to free up money to hire either more teachers or a school-system level coach/mentor role?

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

| |
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Decision 2

How will candidates spend their time with their mentors? *This can be revisited throughout the year to respond to candidate needs and can vary across candidates.*

- Co-teaching (at least 1 period per day)
- Collaborative planning (recommend 90 consecutive minutes per week)
- Cycles of observation and feedback (recommend at least every 2 weeks)

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

Decision 3

How will we involve our school community and communicate the purpose of these shifts?

- What impact will increased supports for alternate certification candidates have on our school system and school climate?

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

2. PAIR CANDIDATES AND MENTORS

Decision 1

Who will our mentors be?

- Enrolled in or completed state-approved mentor training
- Highly effective teacher according to qualitative and quantitative indicators (ex. observations, VAM)
- Content (grade and subject) expertise in areas where there will be alternate certification candidates
- Sufficient number to support all candidates (ex. 1 mentor per 3 alternate certification candidates)

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

Decision 2

How will we pair candidates and mentors?

- Teach a common grade and subject area
- Located at same school or mentor has protected time to travel

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

3. PROVIDE YEARLONG SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATES AND MENTORS

Decision 1

How will we ensure that the protected time for candidates and mentors is used well? Who will do this?

- Observations
- Surveys/interviews
- Student data

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

Decision 2

What ongoing supports will we provide to mentors to support them and build their expertise?

- School system staff person to coach mentors
- Professional development for mentors

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners

Decision 3

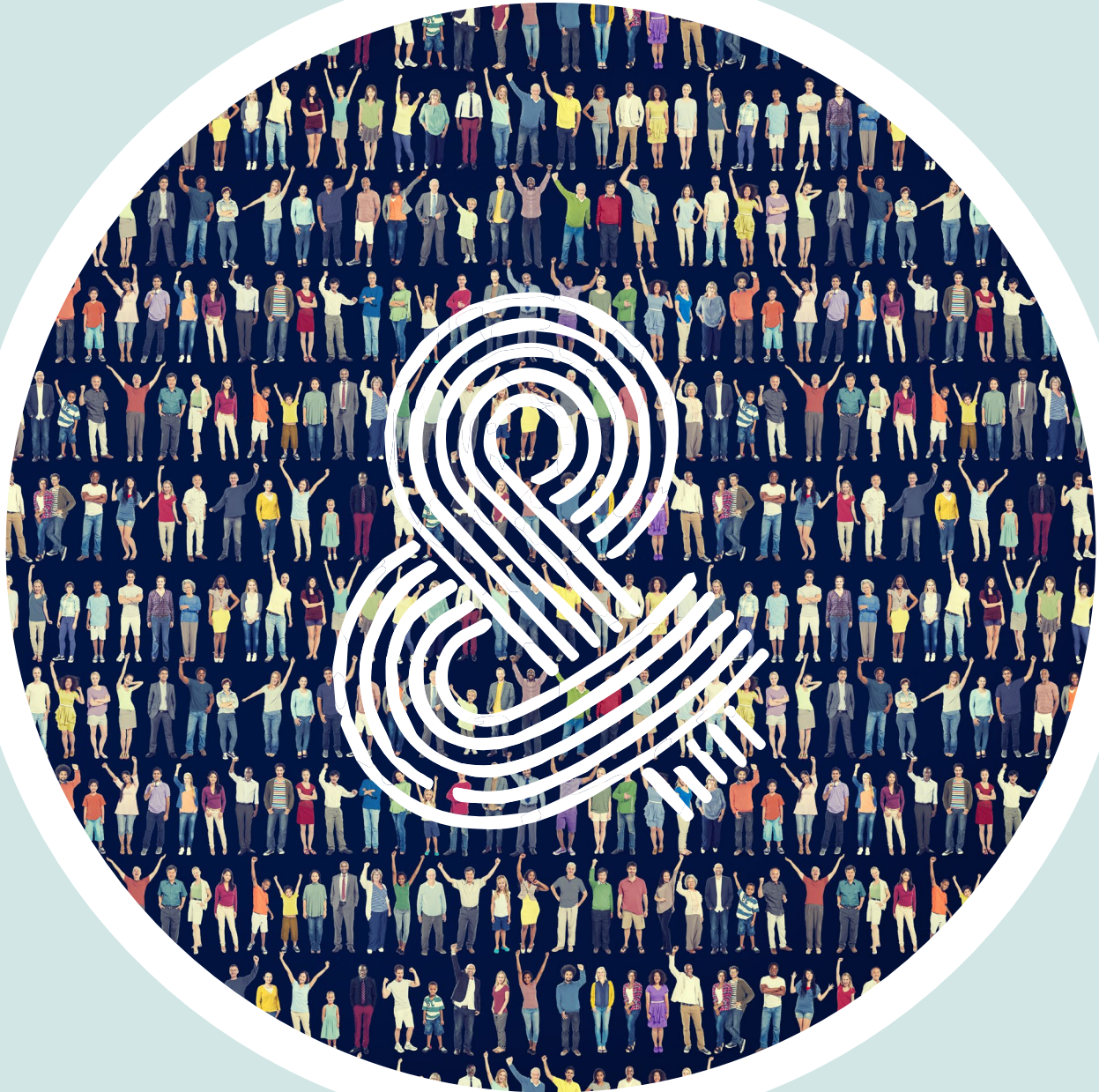
How will we differentiate supports over the school year and what metrics will we use?

- Change amount of time
- Change type of activities
- Shift some supports to mid-year hires

Our Plan, Next Steps, and Owners



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