

FEBRUARY 2010

TO: Personnel Director
FROM: Rebecca Justeson, Ed.D,Carolynn Reynolds, Ph.D.
SUBJECT: Program Description

THIS IS A DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTERNATIVE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION PROGRAM IN WHICH THIS CANDIDATE COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A PRELIMINARY MULTIPLE SUBJECT CREDENTIAL (2042). IT IS NOT A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.

This beginning teacher completed the Professional Preparation year in an award-winning, alternative, NCLB compliant, NCATE and CCTC approved student teaching program at California State University, Chico. This experience differed from similar ones in several significant ways.

First, as a field-based program, the public school calendar was followed. This meant students reported in mid-August, worked through semester break in January, and did not finish until the end of the public school year. This added about eight weeks to the regular University calendar.

Second, candidates were involved in the classrooms full days, full time from the very first until the very last day of public school. Seminars were held two afternoons a week early in the year and then only one afternoon a week during the remainder of the year. This allowed candidates to become full contributing members of the classroom instructional teams.

Third, instead of the usual one or two placements, students in this program were on a trimester schedule and were able to teach in three different classrooms. Grade levels, teaching styles, and schools were varied, affording each candidate a broad set of experiences. Students had opportunities to experience conventional and Open-Structured philosophies, rural and urban settings, and a variety of socioeconomic and cultural groups. At least one placement was in a classroom with at-risk students and one was in the lower primary grades where beginning reading was a significant focus.

All candidates used thematic teaching and practiced a variety of instructional and management strategies. Candidates have been prepared in both systematic and literature-based approaches to reading instruction, strategies for inclusion of second language and special needs children, and instruction based on the California content standards. The California Standards for the Teaching Profession and the Domains of the Teaching Performance Expectations provided the basis for both the theoretical and practical aspects of this program.

Fourth, acceptance into this program was through a rigorous process involving screening of paperwork and other academic requirements, an interview with University and public school faculty, prerequisite courses in the introduction to teaching and to special populations, and a commitment to the additional time and effort associated with this particular program.

All these factors, plus others, have combined to make this program a challenging one. The newly certified teachers who have completed this year-long program have a realistic view of teaching, a wide range of experiences, and a demonstrated commitment to the excellent practice of their chosen profession. The assignments they have fulfilled reflect the breadth, depth, and quality of their entire professional preparation experience with emphasis on their work with children. This work, and their portfolios, provide an appropriate basis for a Beginning Teacher Support and Assistance program.