

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Tennessee General Assembly passed legislation in 2007 requiring that the State Board of Education produce an assessment on the effectiveness of teacher training programs. The law requires that the report includes data on the performance of each program's graduates in the following areas: placement and retention rates, Praxis II results, and teacher effect data based on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) scores. This year's report card includes several additional indicators for each program; more information on the changes and additions can be found in the following section.

The information contained herein is to establish a baseline for teacher training programs and for the public to evaluate and review program effectiveness, based on specific measures of quality as defined by Tennessee Code Annotated 49-5-108.

Tennessee is working to improve teacher preparation with several First to the Top initiatives. As part of this work, the *Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs* has been redesigned so that it is a more effective tool for evaluating the state's teacher preparation programs. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) was given primary responsibility for the redesign process as well as future publication of the report card because of the agency's relationships with the higher education programs as well as data collection ability.

Redesign Process

Over the past year, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission has worked in collaboration with the teacher training programs, the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, and other key stakeholders to redesign and improve the report card.

The following changes have been put into effect for the 2011 report:

- The individual program reports include a summary page with information about the teacher training program as well as demographic and academic information on program completers.
- The program reports also include a map of where the most recent cohort of completers is currently teaching.
- There are additional documents to help the reader understand the data – the *Glossary of Terms* and *How to Read the Program Reports*.
- The Executive Summary includes specific findings from the data.
- There is now a Tennessee State Profile with statewide data and program comparisons.

- Teacher training programs reported student data directly to THEC, ensuring that programs have the ability to accurately claim completers.

The following changes are in progress:

- The report will be available online in a user-friendly portal that will enable comparisons across programs and years (December 2011).
- Teacher training programs will receive individual feedback reports in addition to the public report card to help identify specific strengths and weaknesses and areas that can be improved (April 2012).
- Teacher effect data will be included for all completers as new value-added measures are developed for the teacher and principal evaluation system (November 2012).

Explanation of Data

Teacher Effect Data

The SAS Institute, Inc. performed the analysis of teacher effect data for beginning teachers (defined as those with 1 to 3 years of experience) from all teacher preparation programs in the state. The goals of the study were: (1) to identify teacher training programs that tend to produce new teachers who are highly effective and programs that tend to produce new teachers who are very ineffective, and (2) to determine if a program is above or below the reference distribution for each level of effectiveness with a fair and reliable statistical test. The report differentiates between the performance of traditionally licensed and alternatively licensed teachers in comparison to three reference populations. A more detailed explanation of how to interpret the reference populations can be found in *How to Read the Program Reports*.

Placement and Retention Results

The report contains placement and retention analysis for the 2006-07 through the 2009-10 cohorts of completers teaching in public K-12 schools in Tennessee. The Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville compared data on the 2009-10 completers as reported by the programs to THEC against the Tennessee Personnel Information Reporting System (PIRS) database in order to determine the placement and retention of teachers from specific programs. The reports include the percent of completers teaching in their first year after program completion as well as those teaching in their second year, which helps to capture those who waited a year before beginning to teach. The report also includes the percentage of completers teaching for three consecutive years, and retention for three out of four years, which again helps to capture those who may take a year off but return to teaching in Tennessee public K-12 schools.

Praxis Results

Teacher candidates are required to take the Praxis II exams in order to be eligible to teach in Tennessee. Praxis II exams are offered in multiple content areas. Tennessee requires that teacher candidates take Praxis examinations to be recommended for licensure and receive endorsements in specific fields. More detailed information on Praxis results can be found on the state's annual Title II report to the federal government.

Limitation of the Data

Currently, the value-added analysis is only available for teachers in the tested subjects and grades, which represents about 35% of the 2009-10 completers from teacher training programs. The state is working on developing value-added measures for all educators as part of the new teacher and principal evaluation system; these measures will be included on the report card as soon as they are available. The placement and retention rates do not represent all graduates who continued in the teaching field because the PIRS database is limited to those teaching in public K-12 schools in Tennessee; information is not included on teachers who went on to work in private schools or schools out of state. Additionally, there are missing data for the majority of charter schools in the state. The State Department of Education is working with the Local Education Agencies to remedy the gaps in reporting.

Findings

Profile Information

- There are data for about 30% of 2009-10 completers for ACT Composite scores. These data show that the average ACT Composite score for traditionally licensed teachers is 22.8 while it is 23.9 for alternatively licensed teachers. The scores range from 13 to 36 for all completers, with an average of 22.8. The following programs had completers with an ACT Composite score of 14 or less: Middle Tennessee State University, UT Martin, East Tennessee State University, and University of Memphis.
- The majority of 2010 graduates from teacher training programs in the state are white females from Tennessee. Of the 5,061 completers, 87% are white, 76% are female, and 89% are from Tennessee.
- 1,818 completers received the Elementary K-6 endorsement. Early Childhood Education PK-3 had the next highest number of completers, with 372. Tennessee indicated its commitment to improving STEM education in the state's Race to the Top application. This year, only 446 total completers received one or more endorsements in a STEM field.

Placement and Retention

- Teacher retention within the first four years after completing the teacher training program is comparable to the national trends. About 60% of graduates teach in a public school in the

state in their first eligible year, and about 60% continue teaching for three out of the following four years. About 50% teach for three consecutive years.

Teacher Effect Data

- Traditionally licensed teachers, which represent the majority of completers, have lower student achievement gains than veteran teachers in grades 4-8 Math, Reading/Language Arts, Social Studies, as well as the overall TCAP Composite score.
- Traditionally licensed teachers in high school courses tend to perform at the same level as veteran teachers with the exception of Biology I, where they tend to have higher student achievement gains.
- Alternatively licensed teachers tend to perform at the same level as veteran teachers in all grade levels and subjects with the exception of Science, where they tend to have higher student achievement gains.
- Only three programs tend to produce teachers (traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers combined) with higher student achievement gains than veteran teachers – Teach for America Memphis, Teach for America Nashville, and Lipscomb University.
- Significantly more programs have a tendency to produce teachers (traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers combined) with lower student achievement gains as compared to veteran teachers (see page 13 for a list of those 14 programs).
- When comparing beginning teachers to other beginning teachers (traditionally and alternatively licensed teachers combined), there are nine programs that have a tendency to produce teachers with higher student achievement gains.
- Several programs are producing teachers that are not performing as well other beginning teachers in that state. The programs that have a tendency to produce teachers with lower student achievement gains in comparison to other beginning teachers are: TN State University, TN Technological University, UT Martin, South College, TN Wesleyan, Middle Tennessee State University, Memphis Teacher Residency, Trevecca Nazarene University, and Union University.