



Transition to Teaching Evaluation Report 2006-07

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**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart**

OMB No. 1890-0004
Exp. 10-31-2007

PR/Award # (11 characters): U350A040011

SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data

1. Program Objective [] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

1. To place TTT participants as teachers of record* in high-need schools in high-need LEAs

Project Goals:

- ▶ To train and support eligible mid-career professionals and recent college graduates in the pursuit of teacher certification and becoming highly qualified teachers in high needs school.
- ▶ To train and support current HCPS teachers who are non-education majors with temporary certificates and who are in the pursuit of teacher certification and becoming highly qualified teachers in high need schools.

1.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of new participants in year 3 (October 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007) <i>[Please report raw number.]</i>	GPRA_1	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		100			161	161/100	161%
1.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of participants in years 1–3 (October 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007) <i>[Please report raw number.]</i>	GPRA_1	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		300			618	618/300	206%
1.c. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of new teachers of record in year 3 (October 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007) <i>[Please report raw number.]</i>	GPRA_1 /Project	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		100			148		
1.d. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of teachers of record in years 1–3 (October 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007) <i>[Please report raw number.]</i>	GPRA_1 /Project	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		300			590		
1.e. Performance Measure		Actual Performance Data					
Percentage of all TTT participants who became teachers of record in high needs schools (October 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007)	GPRA/Project				590	590/618	95%

OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION:

The holistic purpose of the evaluation of the Hillsborough County Transition to Teaching Program is to determine the progress that the project has made toward achieving its stated goals. However, to be truly useful, a comprehensive evaluation must address multiple, specific questions:

1. To what extent have qualified participants been contacted and recruited? (*Performance Indicators 1.1 and 2.1*)
2. To what extent have the teacher preparation programs (PTTP and ACP) delivered high quality relevant training? (*Performance Indicators 1.2 and 2.2*)
3. To what extent have the program participants been provided with effective, ongoing support as they worked to complete their preparation programs? (*Performance Indicators 1.3 and 2.4*)
4. Have participants finished the requirements of the program and secured their licensure? (*Performance Indicators 1.4 and 2.3*)
5. Have participants remained in high needs schools in Hillsborough County? (*Performance Indicator 2.5*)
6. To what extent have project participants provided effective instruction in high needs schools in Hillsborough County? (*Performance Indicator 2.6*)
7. To what extent have the students in the classrooms of project participants achieved as compared to the students in the classrooms of traditionally trained and experienced teachers in their schools? (*Performance Indicator 2.7*)
8. What information from evaluation should be used to use make improvements or adjustments to the program?

To answer these questions, the evaluation plan for Hillsborough County Public Schools Transition to Teaching Grant is aligned with O'Sullivan's (2004) Collaborative Evaluation Model and consists of four evaluation processes: 1)Input and Process Evaluations; 2)Immediate Outcome Evaluation; 3) Implementation Evaluation, and 4) Impact Evaluation. While the methodology of the Collaborative Evaluation model may, on the surface, appear identical to traditional evaluation processes, the emphasis on stakeholder engagement at each juncture separates collaborative evaluation practices from traditional models such as the Stufflebeam's CIPP Model (2001). While the CIPP evaluation model provides the underpinnings of comprehensiveness and flexibility, the Collaborative Evaluation Model yields improved data quality, report writing and evaluation use (O'Sullivan, p. 23, 2004). Ongoing scrutiny of formative evaluation results coupled with the regular facilitated sharing of diverse perspectives on evaluation results promotes more thoughtful and effective practice. Additionally, the internal capacity to consume and conduct evaluations is also increased (O Sullivan, 2004).

In the case of the Transition to Teaching Evaluation, the Input/Process Phase examined the availability and accessibility of the resources that must be in place in order to set processes in motion and sustain them, including recruitment, selection and hiring processes. The Immediate Outcome Evaluation Phase focused on both the quantity and quality of "short-term" outputs that occurred. The Outcome Evaluation also studied the "customer satisfaction" of the participants. During the Implementation/Utilization Phase, evaluation activities centered on the use of the program components for securing professional certification, as well as program activities designed to support the application of knowledge and skills in classroom instruction. Finally, the Impact Phase of the evaluation study searched for evidence of long-term outcomes or systemic changes that may occur over time by analyzing the relationship of the Transition to Teaching Program to the improvement of personnel capacity and ultimately, student achievement. All four evaluation processes are linked by provision of continual feedback for making program improvements.

Quantitative data for the evaluation was collected by the Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) Transition to Teaching Program Coordinator in collaboration with the district's Human Resources, Assessment and Evaluation and Certification Departments and St. Petersburg College. All quantitative data was reviewed and analyzed by the external evaluator, Dr. Mariann Schudde.

The qualitative data concerning program quality and classroom implementation was collected from project participants as well as their school-based administrators and project mentors through structured and open ended surveys and semi-structured focus group protocols. The qualitative data was also coded and analyzed by the external evaluator.

Limitations of the Evaluation:

The qualitative data collected for this interim evaluation was self-reported through surveys and focus groups. Unfortunately, the financial and time resources required for the direct observation of training activities and teacher classroom performance using a validated protocol were not available. In order to increase reliability, the evaluator has sought to triangulate data sources. Until achievement data is available for the students of the alternatively certified teachers of record, the evaluation findings can only indicate initial trends and provide early guideposts for strategic program improvement.

Also, since many of the paraprofessional participants had just begun the program, only the those enrolled in upper level classes were surveyed for this evaluation. Though triangulation of data from participants, project staff and the university advisor builds support for the reliability of the outcomes, continual monitoring and the inclusion of all paraprofessional participants in data collection will be necessary for unequivocal confidence in the evaluation results as the study moves forward.

Program Description of ACP for Degreed Candidates:

The ACP professional development courses are taught by qualified district instructors. Course content is research based. Depending upon the objectives of each component, participants engage in lecture/discussion, varied media activities, large/small group activities, independent learning activities, and simulations. Outside assignments may include reading and research, keeping a reflective journal, case study analysis, and hands-on application activities.

The required ACP professional development courses include:

- **Transition to Teaching (24 hours)**
- **Integrating Technology in Education (18 hours)**
- **Effective Classroom Management - (24 hours)**
- **Effective Teaching Strategies (18 hours)**
- **ACP Reading to Learn (60 hours)**

Each of the ACP professional development courses are offered in five to six locations so that they are convenient and easily accessible to teachers in every quadrant of Hillsborough County. As a result of the Year 2 program evaluation, summer ACP classes were added to the evening and Saturday class schedule to accommodate the varying and busy schedules of ACP candidates.

Participant evaluation is based on the rubric scores of posted portfolio artifacts evidencing competency on the targeted objectives and Florida's Educator Accomplished Practices. Students must score no less than 80% on each summative measure.

In addition to the required courses described above, ACP teachers are provided induction training (Harry Wong) prior to the opening of school, and additional site-based training in ethics, crisis intervention and diversity strategies throughout the year.

Indicators of Project Progress for Goal 1:

Performance Indicator 1.1: Recruitment and Hiring of Degreed Non-Education Candidates For The Transition To Teaching Program

Current recruitment methods for recruiting mid career changers and recent college graduates to the ACP include advertising through flyers at local schools, the distribution of ACP literature at new teacher hiring events, and maintaining a grant website. Word of mouth continues to be a primary and an effective means for recruiting of participants. Participants reported that information about the Transition to Teaching Program was readily effectively marketed and readily available.

In order to participate in the Alternative Certification Program (ACP), alternative route candidates initially secure a teaching position in a Hillsborough County high needs school. This requires that candidates first apply to the State for a temporary certificate in their chosen field. Participants then undergo a rigorous screening process that includes the completion of an online application and clearance through the district Human Resources Department. The applicant then interviews with the school principal to secure a teaching position. Upon appointment as a teacher of record in a high needs school, the alternative route teacher may then enroll in the *ACP Transition to Teaching Program*. While the process is sometimes time consuming, 92% of the ACP participants reported satisfaction with the application process.

In the first three years of the grant, 590 *Transition to Teaching* ACP candidates were hired as teachers of record in the district's high need schools. Approximately 76% were mid career changers while the remaining 24% were recent college graduates. These degreed *ACP Transition to Teaching* participants have come from all walks of life. While the greatest number report that they were previously employed in service industries, approximately 11% have degrees in the sciences, mathematics and/or technology. The demographic break down for the *ACP Transition to Teaching* participants is as follows:

Ethnicity:	Gender:	Instructional Level
59% White	28% Male	39% Elementary School
28% African-American	72% Female	24% Middle School
9% Hispanic		15% High School
4% Other		1% K-8
21% K-1		

One hundred percent of those entering the ACP were employed as teachers of record in high need schools, initially on temporary certificates.

School-based administrators remain key persons in the recruitment and hiring of ACP participants. As indicated in Table 2 the 2007 administrator survey revealed that high school and middle school principals are most informed and supportive of the ACP. Secondary administrators also have the greatest shortages of highly qualified teachers and are most enthusiastic about hiring alternative route teachers.

Table 2: Principal Knowledge and Support of ACP Program: Agreement Rates

	All Principals Surveyed	Elementary School Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Principals
Number Surveyed:	139	70	44	25
I am familiar with the opportunities available for teachers on temporary certificates to complete their teaching credentials through the Alternative Certification Program (ACP).	85%	83%	80%	96%
There are teachers on temporary certificates in my school pursuing their teaching credentials through ACP.	90%	80%	100%	100%
I am familiar with the requirements of the ACP Program.	82%	74%	86%	96%
During the employment interview, I discuss the ACP Program with non-certified teacher candidates.	72%	65%	79%	81%
After hiring, I remind teachers on temporary certificates about the ACP Program.	85%	85%	86%	84%
I clearly communicate the importance of participating in mentoring activities to all of my ACP teachers.	80%	82%	80%	73%
The ACP mentors are effective in providing ongoing support to ACP teachers.	66%	61%	77%	62%
I don't hesitate to hire applicants who have entered teaching through alternative routes.	45%	32%	60%	96%
I expect that I will continue to have shortages of highly qualified teachers at my school.	48%	37%	55%	67%

Performance Indicator 1.2: Provision of High Quality Professional Development for ACP teachers:

According to a survey data collected upon course completion, participants gave high ratings to the professional development classes offered as part of the Transition to Teaching Program. Overall, participants communicated a 95% satisfaction rate on a 13 item structured survey. The sample of item responses in Table 3 (page 6) is indicative:

Table 3: Satisfaction Rates for ACP Courses

	Transition to Teaching Program Courses:					
	Teacher Induction	Classroom Management	Reading to Learn	Technology	Transition to Teaching	Teaching Strategies
I learned important content through this professional development activity.	96%	98%	90%	98%	96%	98%
This professional development has provided sufficient knowledge for implementing new teaching strategies in my classroom.	96%	96%	87%	89%	97%	98%
The knowledge/ strategies learned through this professional development activity are applicable to my students needs.	96%	97%	84%	95%	97%	98%
The use of technology in this professional development supported my learning.	90%	94%	74%	98%	83%	82%
The program instructors are knowledgeable of the content.	100%	100%	93%	100%	99%	99%

The Mean Agreement Rate for all evaluation items in all courses for 2006-2007 was 95%. It should be noted that in response to Year 2 course evaluations, the Classroom Management course was restructured and the student satisfaction rate rose 4% from 93% in 2005-2006 to 97% in 2006-2007. Although this change may not be statistically significant, it is indicative of the projects disposition to use evaluation data to continually improve programming. Next to the Classroom Management class, participants found the Transition to Teaching and the Teaching Strategies to be the most useful. While still receiving an overall satisfaction rating of 86%, the Reading to Learn course was the least valued of all ACP classes.

While some focus group participants believed there to be some redundancy in course content, most thought that the repetition was useful for strengthening concepts and providing context for application.

Of all satisfaction indicators included on the survey, participants were most appreciative of the quality of the ACP instructors. The following comments are illustrative:

“The instructors made this class enjoyable and very informative. Since they have different areas of expertise, it really gave us all a variety of information and their perspectives.”

“_____ is a dynamic instructor. She made the hours go by so quickly, and delivered information in a way that made it easy to digest. I learned a lot from her and would repeat this class again if she was the instructor.”

Challenges/Modifications for Goal 1:

Challenge – Achieving Greater Participant Diversity While current recruitment techniques have produced more than a sufficient number of participants, Hispanic alternative route candidates are substantially under-represented, comprising just 9% of the ACP participants within a district where the student population that is 28% Hispanic. The program would also benefit from a pool of candidates with more diverse experiential backgrounds.

In order to expand the experiential and ethnic diversity of the ACP participants, the project coordinator is working to build partnerships with Troops to Teachers and HCPS “Super Vets” Programs.

It is also recommended that the staff explore relationships with local Hispanic organizations in order to develop effective strategies for identifying and hiring high quality Hispanic candidates.

Challenge – Building Principal Confidence in the Effectiveness of Alternative Route Candidates at the Elementary School Level Although 96% of high school principals surveyed agreed that they “don’t hesitate to hire applicants who have entered teaching through alternative routes”, just 32% of the elementary principals were comfortable with that statement. While teacher shortages are not as critical in elementary high needs schools as in secondary schools, elementary schools could also benefit from the infusion of new perspectives from teachers who have not been traditionally trained, especially in the critical need area of exceptional student education.

District experience suggests that the success of alternative route teachers is the best tool for changing attitudes toward non-traditionally trained teachers. It is therefore recommended that the Transition to Teaching staff explores strategies for highlighting the stories of outstanding elementary teachers who are ACP graduates.

Challenge – Assessing Participant Competence While ACP participants agreed that their “ACP classes provided the knowledge and skills that I need to be an effective teacher,” a system that assesses and documents skill development is not currently in place. The ACP office is taking the following actions to address this need:

- An online tracking system for documenting the 12 Florida Accomplished Practices is currently being developed. The new tracking system will allow participants to create an online portfolio of specifically defined artifacts that evidence mastery of the 12 Accomplished Practices.
- By July 2007, the content committee will define the required artifacts for each of the ACP courses. Standardized scoring rubrics for each artifact will also be developed.

- Prior to program completion, participants must complete the online portfolio artifacts achieving at least 80% on the scoring rubric in order to document their mastery of the 12 Accomplished Practices.
- ACP course instructors will attend a face-to-face training session. This session will prepare them to use the tracking system with their participants. It will also give them information to score participants' artifacts and then provide feedback.

Summary of Goal 1 Performance:

The ACP TTT Program has made substantial progress in fulfilling the Program Goal 1 and the related project goals. HCPS has greatly surpassed its 3-year goal of 240, and placed 590 highly qualified teachers in high needs schools throughout the district over the first two and a half years of the grant period.

Transition to Teaching participants have found the program to be a very positive experience. They report that the classes offered have been relevant and delivered effectively. They praise the program for providing the camaraderie that allows them to learn together and from each other. *TTT* participants continually commend the program coordinator for his organization skills, his teaching effectiveness, and his tireless support. Program completers overwhelmingly agree that the *TTT Program* has made them better teachers!



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SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

2. Program Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

2.To ensure TTT participants achieve state certification²/licensure in an expedited manner (within three years.)

2.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of participants receiving certification in year 3 (October 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007).	GPRA_2	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		100			66		
2.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of participants receiving certification within three years (October 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007).	GPRA_2	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		300			208		
The percentage of TTT participants receiving licensure within 3 years (October 1, 2004 – April 30, 2007).	GPRA					208/618	34%

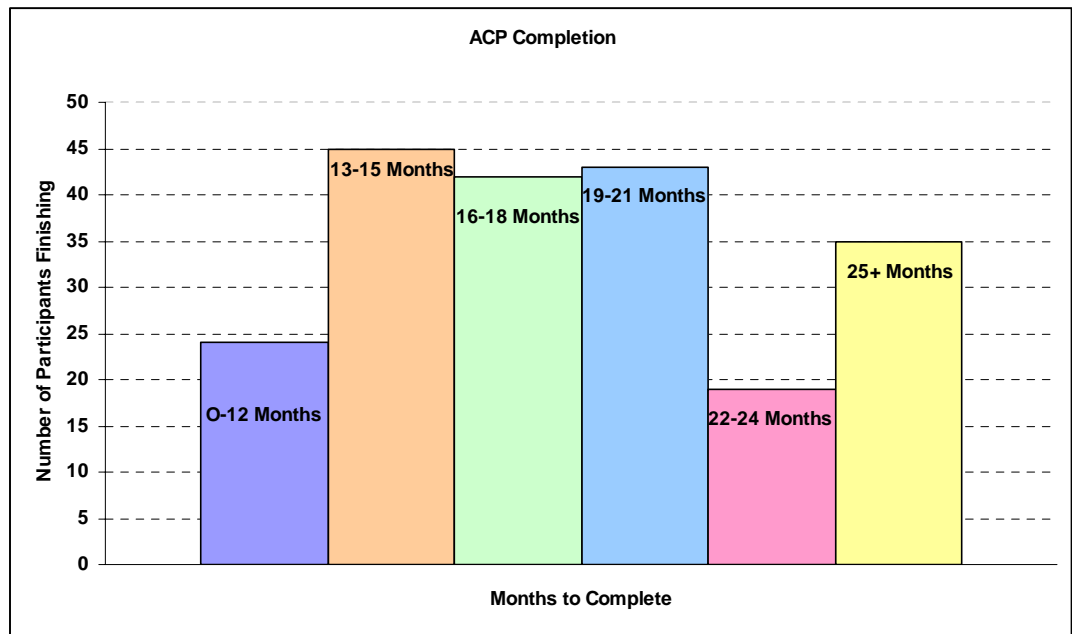
Indicators of Project Progress for Goal 2:

Performance Indicator 2.3: Certification of Highly Qualified Teachers For High Needs Schools

Of the 590 ACP teachers of record hired through the first 3 years of the project, 208, or 35% have completed the requirements for full certification including ACP classes, a portfolio evidencing competency in Florida’s 12 Educator Accomplished Practices and the attainment of a passing score on the Florida State Professional Educators Test. Seventy-five percent of the participants in the first year of the grant are now certified. The remaining 25% are on target to finish by June 30, 2007.

Of the 208 participants that have completed their certification requirements, most finished the ACP within 18 to 19 months (Completion mean = 18.91, median= 18, and mode= 18). One third complete the requirements in 15 months or less. However, nearly 17 % of the participants took more than 2 years to finish.

Figure 2: Months Required for ACP Completion



Challenges/ Modifications for Goal 2:

Accelerating Completion of Full Certification The State of Florida allows 36 months for alternative route teachers to become fully certified. In HCPS, most participants finished the ACP within 18 to 19 months. Seventy-five percent of the grant Year 1 participants are now certified with the remaining 25% on target to finish by June 30, 2007. However, while flexibility in scheduling according to individual needs is a likely contributor to the programs high retention rate, nearly 17 % of the participants took more than 2 years to finish.

In order to encourage all ACP teachers to secure their full certification in a highly accelerated manner, the ACP program began offering a full complement of classes during the summer. It is expected that these additional classes will support timelier program completion.

Summary of Goal 2 Performance:

The ACP TTT Program has made substantial progress in fulfilling Goal 2. Of the 590 teachers of record placed in high needs schools, 208 have secured full teacher certification in Florida. In other words, within the first two and a half years of the grant, HCPS TTT Program has fulfilled 69% of its 5-year project goal of certifying 300 alternative path teachers. The remaining 382 degreed participants are on track to complete the ACP within the next year.



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SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data

3. Program Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

3. To ensure that TTT participants are retained in high-need schools in high-need LEAs as teachers of record for three years.

3.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of new TORs between October 1, 2004 – September 30, 2005 (three years ago which is year 1).	GPRA_3	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
					226		
3.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
The number of new TORs between October 1, 2004 – September 30, 2005 who remain as TORs October 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007 (three years later).	GPRA_3	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
					202		

Indicators of Project Progress for Goal 3:

Performance Indicator 3.1.: Retention of ACP Teachers for at Least 3 Years

Of the 226 degreed alternative route candidates who were hired as teachers of record in Year 1, 89% (N=202) have remained in high needs schools in HCPS. For grant Years 1 and 2 the overall retention rate in high needs schools is 94% (N=442).

Performance Indicator 3..2: Provision of Ongoing, Effective Support for ACP Teachers

Each new teacher in HCPS has a support team that includes an administrator and a peer teacher. The school-based support team is the source of assistance with lesson planning, strategic use of instructional strategies, and development their required portfolio documenting effective use of Florida’s Accomplished Practices for Educators.

Ideally, all teachers of record in the Transition to Teaching Program are also assigned a grant funded ACP mentor during their first year as teacher of record. The ACP mentors are retired educators with a wealth of experience hired by the TTT grant to visit participants on a regular basis to provide support and assistance. In addition to classroom experience, all ACP mentors also have supervised teachers as principals and/or district administrators. As independent consultants, ACP mentors are not regular employees of the school or tied in anyway to the Teacher Performance Appraisal System. As a result, early career teachers are often more comfortable in sharing the difficulties that they are having with the ACP mentor.

ACP mentor support included formal and informal observations with written feedback and other types of assistance as requested by the ACP candidate or the school-based support team. The ACP mentor also functioned as “the second line of defense” in cases where the school-based support team may not have been providing sufficient mentoring or where early career teachers were not comfortable seeking school-based help. Once they began, all ACP mentors maintained a least monthly interaction with their mentees. Moreover, 63% report interacting with their mentees at least two times each month and 11% indicated that they communicate with their mentees on a weekly basis. Participants and their mentors conferenced at the school, over the telephone and via e-mail. Mentors reported that in addition to giving specific feedback, providing encouragement was one of their primary functions and strategies.

Currently there are 21 mentors who serve all 401 of Hillsborough County’s ACP participants in their first year as teacher of record. Of these 401 participants, 148, or 37% are Transition to Teaching participants assigned to high needs schools. For the 2006-2007 school year, 121 or 82% of the first year teachers of record in the Transition to Teaching Program were assigned mentors. Unfortunately, the mentors were assigned in early January, with first visits often not taking place until mid-January or later. While mentor assignments were especially late in 2006-2007, this has been a chronic problem throughout the first three years of the grant.

Upon the assignment of mentors, survey and focus group data evidences effective support. In a summative survey of their ACP experience, participants reported generally positive attitudes toward their ACP mentor and the support they received from them as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Participant Satisfaction with Mentoring Support

	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
My principal has stressed the importance of my participation in mentoring.	69%	16%	15%
I value the time I spend with my ACP mentor.	71%	11%	15%
My ACP mentor is knowledgeable about curriculum, instruction and assessment.	78%	13%	9%
My ACP mentor is available to provide assistance when I need it.	77%	12%	11%
I feel comfortable when communicating with my ACP mentor.	81%	10%	9%
I have a close, professional relationship with my ACP mentor.	63%	20%	18%

Performance Indicator 3.3: Impact on Effective Teaching Practices

While student achievement is the ultimate indicator of effective teaching practices, there is indirect evidence that indicates that the ACP has had a positive impact on instruction in high needs schools in Hillsborough County. Prior to the implementation of the ACP, many

classrooms were taught by out- of- field teachers, teachers on temporary certificates or, in some circumstances, substitute teacher. The ACP has provided 202 fully certified teachers for classrooms in high needs schools.

Additional evidence data gathered from ACP mentors through surveys and a focus group indicated that overall, experienced mentors believed that the first year ACP teachers were highly knowledgeable of subject matter, technology, and questioning techniques. Not surprisingly, mentors suggested that more work on lesson planning and differentiation of instruction was needed.

Finally, the reappointment of 98% of ACP teachers also suggests that ACP programming provides candidates the training that they need to be successful.

Challenges/ Modifications for Goal 3:

Challenge – Initiating Mentoring Services at the Beginning of the School Year, or Immediately Upon ACP Program Entry As indicated in Table 4 (pg. 12), participants reported generally positive attitudes toward their ACP mentor and the support they received from them in a summative survey of their ACP experience. However, it should be noted that only 63% of the participants reported having a close professional relationship with their ACP mentor and just 77% said that their mentor was available to provide assistance when needed. This may be explained by the fact that alternative route teachers have not been assigned an ACP mentor until they are well into their teaching experience, sometimes as late as the second semester. In addition to delaying the opportunity to build a meaningful relationship between mentor and mentee, the delay of mentor assignment is especially unfortunate because new teachers usually need the most help in the first few weeks of school. Since the schedules of school-based support are usually overloaded early in the year, new teachers are often left to “fend for themselves” with only inconsistent help from a “merciful” colleague.

While some of this difficulty may be partially due to the failure of ACP participants to complete required paperwork for entry into the ACP program, the responsibility for establishing effective support lies with both the school-based support team and the Transition to Teaching staff.

To address this difficulty, the ACP Office is initiating practices to ensure that participants receive a mentor at the beginning of the school year. The goal is for the mentoring process to begin during pre-planning for participants already enrolled in the program. This includes those who attend the information meeting at New Teacher Orientation (NTO) and submit their application before pre-planning begins. For participants joining the program after the school year has started, mentors will be assigned within two weeks of the receipt of their application to join the program.

It is also recommended that administrators in high needs schools impress upon their alternative route teachers the importance of enrolling in the ACP program immediately upon hiring.

Challenge – Recruiting Additional Qualified and Effective ACP Mentors With 21 mentors and 401 of Hillsborough County’s ACP participants in their first year as teacher of record the mentor-to-teacher ratio is 1-to-19. While survey and focus group data generally evidences excellence of practice and sincere dedication by these highly experienced individuals, 19 mentees or more are clearly too many to service, as evidenced by the 18% of the first year ACP participants who were not assigned mentors during the 2006-2007 school year.

Currently the ACP staff is working to recruit and hire additional mentors with commensurate skills and experiences. In the case of continued mentor shortages, Transition to Teaching ACP participants should be given priority for mentor assignment, especially since they are working with many at-risk students in high needs schools.

In order to encourage consistency in mentoring practices, all ACP mentors will complete face-to-face and online training sessions to increase their effectiveness as mentors. Several mentors suggested that the training also includes updates of the program and current best practices, continued Florida Performance Management System (FPMS) updates, training in the use of additional observation tools, and sessions where the mentors could share instruments and activities that they have found helpful in supporting and developing their mentees.

As the mentor cadre grows, the ACP staff should also consider developing and distributing a mentoring guidance document that explicitly defines roles and standards of practice.

Summary of Goal 3 Performance:

The ACP TTT Program has made substantial progress in fulfilling Goal 3. The overall retention rate for the program is 94%. A total of 202, or 89%, of the Year 1 Teachers of Record have remained teaching in high needs schools for 3 years.

Current research indicates that a key element in teacher retention is the provision of effective mentoring. HCPS TTT is working to implement a comprehensive mentoring program. The current project mentors have distinguished expertise in teacher support and development. As the project staff hires and assigns additional mentors in a timely manner, it is reasonable to expect that the current noteworthy retention rate will improve to an outstanding level.



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4. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

To support eligible paraprofessionals in the pursuit of a Bachelors Degree and full teacher certification by establishing a partnership between Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPSPS) and St. Petersburg College (SPC).

4.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
Number of paraprofessionals with a two year degree who are on track to complete a Bachelors degree and certification and secure a teaching position in a high-needs school (Year 3)	Project	Target for 10/1/06 through 9/30/07			Actual Performance Data for 10/1/06 through 4/30/07		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		10	/		13	13/10	130%

4.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
Number of paraprofessionals with a two year degree who are on track to complete a Bachelors degree and certification and secure a teaching position in a high-needs school. (Years 1-3)	Project	Target for 10/1/04 through 9/30/07			Actual Performance Data for 10/1/04 through 4/30/07		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		30	/		28	28/30	93%

Program Description of Degree/Certification for Paraprofessional Candidates:

With support from the Transition to Teaching Office, highly qualified paraprofessionals with Associates of Arts degrees or 60 undergraduate credits apply for admission to St. Petersburg College. Prior to beginning course requirements for a degree in their chosen field, education students must have completed all General Education Requirements and the lower-division state mandated prerequisites that include Introduction to Education, Teaching Diverse Populations, and Introduction to Educational Technology.

As part of the college's partnership with the Transition to Teaching Project, St. Petersburg College offers all upper level education courses at convenient school sites throughout the district. While not a true cohort model, these classes scheduled specifically for the Hillsborough County paraprofessionals facilitate strong peer relationships and support.

Indicators of Project Progress for Goal 4:

Performance Indicator 4.1: Recruitment and selection of Experienced Paraprofessionals For A Program Leading To The Completion Of A Bachelor's Degree In Education And Full Certification.

Information about the *PTTP* was disseminated through e-mails and mailings to school principals and announcements made at administrative meetings. Interviews and surveys indicated that participants most often learned of the program through the flyer placed on an office bulletin board. Often the encouragement of their principal or of a colleague motivated them to attend the information session. Since school-based administrators are the key persons for informing paraprofessionals about the *PTTP* program, a survey assessing their knowledge and support was distributed and collected at principal meetings in spring of 2007. As indicated in Table 1, just over half of the principals surveyed were familiar with the *PTTP* program. While fewer paraprofessionals reside in high schools, high school principals reported having the most knowledge of the *PTTP* program.

Table 1: Principal Knowledge and Support of *PTTP* Program: Agreement Rates

	All Principals Surveyed	Elementary School Principals	Middle School Principals	High School Principals
Number Surveyed:	139	70	44	25
I am familiar with the opportunities available for paraprofessionals to complete their teaching degree through the Transition to Teaching Program.	51%	60%	49%	73%
I am familiar with the required qualifications for paraprofessionals who wish to participate in the Transition to Teaching Program.	35%	43%	30%	62%
I have discussed the Transition to Teaching Program with qualified paraprofessionals at my school.	43%	51%	41%	54%
There are paraprofessionals in my school pursuing their teaching degrees through the Transition to Teaching Program.	38%	40%	35%	67%
I make sure that paraprofessionals in the Transition To Teaching Program have school-based support as they work to secure their teaching credentials.	67%	78%	55%	59%

One hundred per cent of the *PTTP* participants surveyed or interviewed reported that the tuition assistance was the most critical element for encouraging them to fulfill their sometimes lifelong desire to be a teacher. The following comment is representative:

“My husband has lost his job, but I’m going to be able to do what I’ve always wanted to do - Teach! The tuition scholarship has made all of the difference.”

The application process for paraprofessionals requires attendance at an orientation session, the completion of the application for admission to St. Petersburg College, the documentation of support from their principal and a supervising teacher and the completion of a portfolio based on Florida's Accomplished Practices. The SPC admissions test is waived for PTTP participants. Application sessions that provide assistance in securing additional financial aide and in completing application portfolios were scheduled to support interested candidates. Participants reported that although the compilation of the portfolio was time consuming they believed it to be a worthwhile process and a valuable preparation for the work that they would do in their SPC classes.

Performance Indicator 4.2: Provision Of High Quality Teacher Preparation Program For HCPS Paraprofessionals

All of the PTTP participants surveyed reported that their SPC coursework was relevant and provided the knowledge and skills that they would need to be successful teachers. Focus group participants talked about knowledgeable and caring professors, and challenging, but important content. They gave examples of lessons learned that they are already using with students in their work as paraprofessionals, especially in the areas of classroom management and asking effective questions.

While finding the assignments time consuming, PTTP participants appreciate the fact that the location of classes at county schools saves them the time that would normally be required for commuting. PTTP participants also feel that there should be some credit given for their classroom experience, but at this time, state regulations do not permit the waiving of the internship experience at the undergraduate level. Nevertheless, they are appreciative that HCPS continues paying them their paraprofessional salary while they complete a traditional internship experience.

PTTP participants have achieved an average GPA of 2.9 in their classes at SPC.

Performance Indicator 4.3: Provision of Ongoing, Effective Support for Paraprofessional Students

PTTP participants report receiving ongoing support from multiple sources, including the Program Coordinator, the university advisor, school-based administration, family members, and members of their PTTP cohort.

Participants had high praise for Scott Richman, the Program Coordinator. In addition to visiting their schools to provide help and encouragement as needed, Mr. Richman provides support for paraprofessional participants through bi-weekly e-mails and quarterly cohort meetings.

The efforts of the grant-funded university advisor, Caroline Poulin, were also appreciated by the PTTP participants. Ms. Poulin maintains close contact with students by visiting them at their schools on a regular basis (at least twice each semester and weekly if necessary) and attending their first class at the beginning of each semester. She continually checks to make sure that they have the resources needed for success, even delivering textbooks so that they do not have to make the long trip to the university bookstore. Perhaps most importantly, in crisis situations Ms. Poulin acts as a liaison and trouble-shooter between students and professors, facilitating understanding and helping students to maintain momentum even when difficult personal situations threaten their goals (house fire, death of family member, divorce).

The retention rate for the paraprofessional portion of the Transition to Teaching grant is 97%.

Performance Indicator 4.4: Paraprofessionals Securing Bachelors Degrees and Credentials for Teaching in High Needs School:

There are currently 28 highly qualified paraprofessionals enrolled in the Paraprofessional Degree/Certification Program at St. Petersburg College, 8 of who are enrolled in upper division coursework with the remaining 21 completing pre-requisite coursework. It is expected that the first PTTP graduates will be ready for employment as teachers of record in Hillsborough County high needs schools in December of 2009.

Challenges/ Modifications for Goal 4:

Informing Eligible Paraprofessionals of PTTP Opportunities Nearly 50% of the principals surveyed (N=139) were not familiar with the opportunities available for paraprofessionals to complete their teaching degree through the Transition to Teaching Program. While the schools of some of these principals may not be experiencing critical teacher shortages, a district-wide perspective suggests the importance of all principals encouraging talented paraprofessionals to secure their teaching credentials. This is especially true since paraprofessionals are one of the most productive groups for the development of ESE teachers which are a critical shortage area.

In order to better inform principals about the PTTP program and to “get the word out” directly to paraprofessionals, the following actions have been taken:

- The Program Coordinator has scheduled school based meetings with administrators to provide additional information concerning program benefits and requirements.
- The Program Coordinator has scheduled information sessions specifically targeted for paraprofessionals in strategic geographic areas throughout the district.
- Rather than targeting only paraprofessionals employed at high needs schools, eligibility has been extended to all qualified paraprofessionals throughout the district providing that they agreed to teach in high needs schools for 3 years upon program completion.

The following measures are also recommended for meeting this challenge:

- Provide school-based administrators with a “Paraprofessional Packet” and encourage them to meet with all of their paraprofessionals during pre-planning to explain the benefits of TADD Program and PTTP involvement and encourage their participation.
- Explore additional strategies for contacting paraprofessionals in all schools directly.

Increasing the Pool of Eligible Paraprofessionals While many paraprofessionals report having long term aspirations to secure their teaching credentials, evaluation data reveals that most are ineligible because they do not hold an associates degree or 60 undergraduate credits. In an effort to tap the potential of additional, previously ineligible paraprofessionals for becoming effective teachers high needs schools, especially in the area of exceptional student education, the TTT Program Coordinator and the HCPS Title I Director have worked collaboratively to develop the Title I Associate Arts Degree Program (TAAD). Through TAAD, dedicated, experienced paraprofessionals can attend Hillsborough Community College (HCC), complete their Associates Degree and then move into the PTTP. The funding necessary for HCC tuition is provided through the District Title

I Program. Proactive monitoring by a community college advisor and the TTT Program Coordinator provides the encouragement these students need to secure the necessary credentials for employment as highly qualified teachers in high needs schools.

There are currently 24 paraprofessionals enrolled in the TAAD Program. The first TADD graduate will matriculate to St. Petersburg College under the PTTP program this fall.

Challenge # 3 - Accelerating Degree Completion Typically, students who hold full time jobs while going to school complete 12-15 credits per year. The PTTP program is structured so that participants can comfortably complete 21-24 credits each year; thereby accelerating degree completion. However, in most cases, program completion has been delayed because of prerequisite course requirements. Prior to the Spring Semester of 2007, the State of Florida required the completion of 3 prerequisite pedagogy classes and 3 prerequisite content courses prior to admitting students with an Associate of Arts degrees to upper division education courses. Thus, PTTP participants often had to complete an additional 18 credits, impeding their progress toward degree completion. As a result, the first PTTP candidates only able began their upper division coursework this Spring (2007) and will, for the most part, not complete their internship until the Fall of 2009. While SPC has been careful not to further burden students with AA degrees from accredited institutions with additional prerequisite requirements, it cannot waive the State regulations.

Fortunately, the State of Florida dropped the requirement for the additional content pre-requisites as of January 2007, reducing the additional preparatory credit by 50%. While many students will still need to take classes for 1-2 semesters prior to beginning their upper division coursework, this reduction of State-mandated prerequisites will significantly reduce the time necessary for degree completion.

It is also recommended that SPC and the PTTP office explore strategies for offering the State-mandated pre-requisite pedagogy courses in compressed and/or online formats allowing motivated candidates to complete preparatory coursework in a timely manner.

Challenge # 4 – Improving Academic Performance The overall average GPA of the paraprofessionals in their upper division classes at SPC is 2.9. While 5 participants achieved a GPA above 3.0, 3 did not achieve a B average. Although grades did improve in the spring of 2007 to 3.69 for the semester, it is recommended that tutoring be made available for students who may be struggling, especially early in the program when they are transitioning back into academia.

Summary of Goal 4 Performance:

In its first two and a half years, the Paraprofessional Transition to Teaching Program (PTTP) has made substantial progress toward the fulfillment of the Goal 4 as stated in the grant proposal. Currently, 28 paraprofessionals are pursuing their bachelors degrees at St. Petersburg College. A strong, collaborative partnership between Hillsborough County Public Schools and St. Petersburg College has resulted in convenient access to high quality courses and effective ongoing support for PTTP participants. The SPC advisor reports that the PTTP students are highly motivated and provide excellent role models for traditional SPC students. The achievements of the paraprofessional participants thus far suggest that upon graduation they will be effective, motivated teachers for students in high needs schools in Hillsborough County.

As school level administrators become more aware of this element of the Transition to Teaching Program, TADD participants complete their Associates degrees and paraprofessional participants share their enthusiasm with their colleagues, it is expected that paraprofessional enrollment will increase this summer and fall, and the HCPS Transition to Teaching Program will surpass its paraprofessional enrollment goal for the first 3 years of the grant.



**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart**

OMB No. 1890-0004
Exp. 10-31-2007

PR/Award # (11 characters): U350A040011

SECTION B - Budget Information

As of April 30, 2007, Hillsborough County Public Schools (HCPS) has expended 183,877.33 of Grant Year 3 funds. HCPS will spend an estimated 356,208.26 during the 5/1/07 – 9/30/07 budget period. The total estimated expenditures for the 10/1/06 – 9/30/07 budget period will be 540,085.59. This total represents an overage of 146,310.59 based upon the original budget proposed when the grant was received.

During the 10/1/04 – 9/30/05 budget period of the grant, HCPS had \$95,627.47 in unexpended funds. During the 10/1/06-9/30/07 budget period, HCPS will spend 31,340.47 of these funds leaving 64,287.00 in unexpended funds which will be carried over to the 10/1/08-9/30/09 budget period. These funds have not been expended due several factors. One factor is our partner organization's billing procedures. In many instances, HCPS was billed for services six to nine months after services were rendered. Hillsborough Community College also went through staff changes and did not bill HCPS for tuition until the semester after students had attended.

Hillsborough County Public Schools planned to expend the 64,287.00 in unencumbered funds during the 2004-2006 budget period. However, during Year 1 of the grant, only five (5) paraprofessionals enrolled in the program. During Year 2 of the grant and through April 30, 2007 of Year 3, HCPS added twenty-four (24) additional paraprofessionals to the program; many of whom have only recently enrolled in school. We expect to enroll at least 5 more paraprofessionals before the end of the budget period on 9/30/07. With these participants enrolled in school, the district will expend the additional funds and continue to add additional paraprofessionals.

SECTION C - Additional Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

See INSTRUCTIONS FOR GRANT PERFORMANCE REPORT (ED 524B). Use as many pages as necessary.

Please use this space to include information on any anticipated outcomes or benefits from your project and/or to alert your program officer to any additions or changes that you wish to make during this or the coming performance period. These changes or additions may include:

- Your eligible LEAs or participant, with appropriate information demonstrating eligibility;
- Grant activities approved in the original application;
- Key personnel—indicate names, titles, and percentage of time (level of effort) for the requested key personnel and attach resumes for the proposed key personnel.