

## **Douglas County School District Re. 1** **Waiver Licensure and Endorsement Program Renewal Report** **Prepared for State Board of Education**

This report is intended to provide information for the Colorado State Board of Education, as it considers a renewal of the waivers to Douglas County School District Re. 1, granted in November 2006. This waiver has enabled us to be innovative and creative in meeting specific district needs with regard to hiring in hard-to-fill areas. We believe the responses to the questions, provided by CDE staff, are comprehensive enough to demonstrate continuous improvement in this rigorous and comprehensive program as we seek a renewal of the waivers granted by the Colorado State Board of Education. Please see the attached description of that action, along with additional data and documentation that will support your positive consideration and continued endorsement of our program.

On November 3, 2010 the Colorado State Board of Education approved Douglas County School District's Alternative/Waiver Teacher Licensure Program as a Statewide Alternative Teacher Licensure Program. The renewal of the Alternative/Waiver program submitted to the Colorado Department of Education on November 3, 2010 won the 2011 Legacy Foundation's, Commissioner's of Education Award for Teacher Preparation. While the alternative program fits many of the hiring needs in Douglas County School District, the waiver still allows the district to fill in a timely manner needed qualified personnel for hard to fill positions.

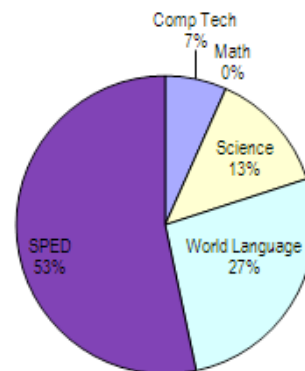
### How many candidates have participated in this program?

#### **2007-2008 Cohort** **Graduated June 2009**

8 Special Education teachers  
 9 content teachers  
 1 left program after year one

**Total: 16**

2007-2008 Cohort Participants



#### **2008-2009 Cohort** **Graduated June 2010**

8 SPED Teachers
 

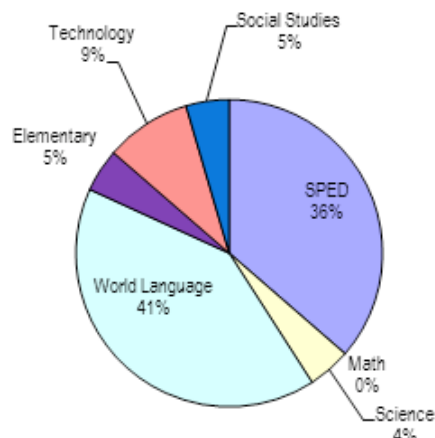
- 1 from 2007-2008 Cohort

 14 Content Teachers
 

- 2 from 2007-2008 Cohort

**Total: 22**

2008-2009 Cohort Participants

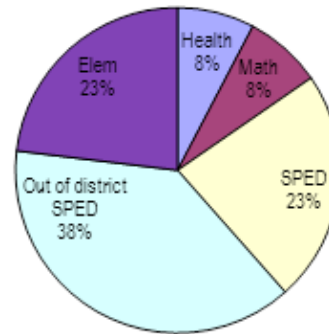


2009-2010 Cohort Participants

**2009-2010 Cohort  
Scheduled to Graduate 2010-2011  
DCSD Waiver Program**

3 SPED Teachers  
2 Content Teachers  
4 Cherry Creek School District SPED Teachers  
1 Kiowa School District SPED Teacher

**Total: 10**



Permission was granted from CDE to enroll 4 Cherry Creek Teachers into the Douglas County Alternative/Waiver Program to assure continuation of programming in Cherry Creek. Cherry Creek would have lost 4 highly qualified Speech Language Pathologist who needed to have a Special Education License to meet the needs of their students. Each of these teachers had over 8 years of teaching experience.

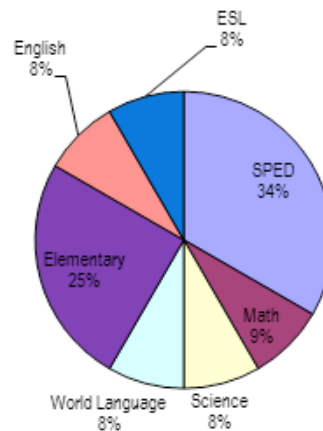
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2010-2011 Cohort Participants

**2010-2012 Cohort  
Scheduled To Graduate June, 2012**

3 SPED Teachers  
6 Content Teachers

**Total: 9**

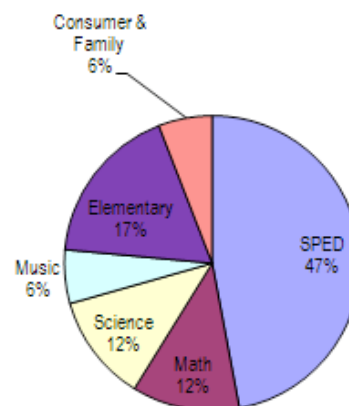


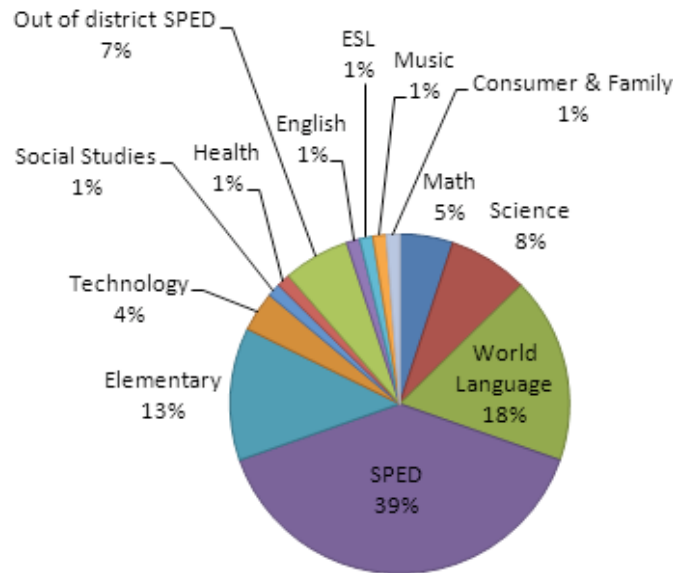
2011-2012 Cohort Participants

**2011-2012 Cohort  
Scheduled to Graduate June, 2013**

8 SPED Teachers  
9 Content Teachers

**Total 17**





## 2007-2012 Summary of Participants

### Breakdown of Programs offered by the Douglas County Alternative/Waiver Program

The following programs exceed CDE guidelines of at least **225 hours** of classroom instruction, assignments and activities to be completed in two to three years based on the recently approved Statewide Alternative Program (November 3, 2010) and State Board of Education waivers given to Douglas County School District in November 2006. The programming is the same for candidates in the alternative and waiver program. The difference is in the enrollment of candidates for the programs and the **statutes waived for hiring, issuing of statement of eligibility and hiring a professional in residence for needed expertise in curriculum offerings.**

#### Classroom Observations/Mentoring – a minimum of seven formal observations per year by:

- Building Principal
- DCSD Waiver/Alternative Program Administrative Coordinator
- Building Resource Teacher and/or Mentor assigned to program participant
- 100 hours of mentoring over two years as required by the Colorado Department of Education

### Statewide Alternative Licensure Program – Two Year Program approved by CDE on November 3, 2010

- Must meet requirements for Statement of Eligibility, 24 hours of content or PLACE or PRAXIS exam

**DCSD Waiver Program** – CDE approved a new alternative licensure program on November 3, 2010. Two - three year program – Douglas County School District and Douglas County Charter Schools Content Waiver Program

- Must be hard-to-fill (Secondary Science, Secondary Math, World Language, Vocational/Technical and any content needed to offer quality programming)
- Teacher must pass PLACE or PRAXIS or have 24 hours of content to qualify for program.
- Douglas County issues the Statement of Eligibility but teacher must apply for the alternative license required of all waiver and alternative programs.
- Teacher may be less than a 1.0 FTE but qualify for teaching license from the Colorado Department of Education after completing the two year program. An additional year in the

alternative/waiver programming assures the teacher has met the requirements in meeting the 1.0 FTE required by the Colorado Department of Education.

- **Hope Online Learning Academy Co-op Charter teachers, mentors** (Waiver program for two – three years to meet the state statute of 51% classroom instruction time)
  - Must meet CDE guidelines for licensure
  - Teacher must pass PLACE or PRAXIS within the first year of program or have 24 hours of content.
- **Special Education Teachers** – Two Year Program - Douglas County School District, neighboring school districts and rural Colorado districts
  - Special Education Generalist Statement of Eligibility from CDE or Colorado Licensed Teacher
  - Where applicable the teacher must pass PLACE or PRAXIS exam in elementary education within the first year of program
  - Teachers employed outside of Douglas County School District will be required to follow the requirements set by CDE for entry into an alternative licensure program.
  - University Colorado Denver has approved Douglas County School District Special Education Waiver Program and will award a Master's Degree in Special Education to those teachers completing 16 hours with UCD
- **Professional in Residence** – for professionals outside of education that teach only one or two classes to meet the curriculum needs of Douglas County students.

**What changes have you made to the program based on your experiences in implementing the pilot program?**

#### **Cohort Model**

Instead of candidates being responsible for taking classes at their own pace, we have moved to a cohort model often found in university programming. This adjustment was made to help ensure waiver teachers were progressing at an appropriate pace toward completion. Waiver teachers were often unable to obtain enrollment in DCSD staff development classes due to the large number of district teachers wanting seats in those same classes. Classes and meetings that cover the eight standards required by the Colorado Department of Education for licensure are now often scheduled exclusively for waiver teachers and meet their individual program needs. All teachers in the waiver or alternative program will take the same basic classes based on the Eight Colorado Teacher Performance Standards which have been approved by the Colorado Department of Education.

#### **Continuous Improvement and Quality Assurance of Alternative/Waiver Programming**

The classes are reviewed and updated yearly to meet the changes in best practices for educators. Backward Planning to guide instruction and implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills have guided our changes for program improvement. An example would be a new class developed (Reading in the Content) to meet the Literacy needs of Secondary Teachers. This gives specific (math, science) secondary teachers the time to take a more advanced class in Math instruction. By working to continuously improve the required content in the alternative program, we are able to provide quality programming and meet the individual needs of all teachers.

#### **Retired Teachers as Mentors**

A Douglas County School District retired Teacher is employed as a mentor for Hope Online licensure candidates. This teacher has the time and experience to coach, observe, and model effective teaching for candidates new to the profession. Retired teachers are not limited to plan time or other time issues as are regular teachers currently employed in the school. The teachers in the waiver/alternative program

have been overwhelmingly satisfied with the personalized instruction and guidance they receive from their retired teacher mentor. Our current retired teacher who was previously employed in Douglas County was recommended by her principal as a highly qualified veteran teacher. This teacher was the Building Resource Teacher at her school and is still licensed and up to date in best practices.

**Our request is that retired teachers may be hired to also mentor candidates in special education as well as content. These teachers will have been in good standing with the district at time of retirement and are able to devote the 50 to 100 hours per year the teacher candidate is in the Douglas County School District Alternative/Waiver Program.**

**What would you consider the strengths of the program?**

- The program is online for convenience including: flexibility of time for teachers and instructors, archived information, and content is easily updated as standards and requirements change. The program exceeds the 225 hours required by CDE. Classes are synchronous and asynchronous and the instructors are available to meet students' individual needs.
- Literacy classes developed for the new alternative program helped us win the 2011 Legacy Foundation's Commissioner of Education Teacher Preparation Award
- Candidates are given direction and formally observed in the classroom by their mentor, the Administrative Coordinator for the Alternative Program, the building resource teacher and the school administrative evaluator a minimum of 6 times per year. Written feedback is given after each observation.
- The Alternative/Waiver Administrative Coordinator meets individually in the fall and spring with the waiver/alternative program candidate and school administrator to monitor the candidate's progress and areas of concern. Adjustments to the candidate's program are based on these meetings. Additional meetings are scheduled on an as needed basis. These meetings may be initiated by the waiver/alternative candidate, the administrator, the mentor, or the building resource teacher.
- The Center for Innovation and Development continues to provide oversight to the effectiveness of the program, along with a stringent set of hiring guidelines to ensure quality candidates and fidelity in the approval process.
- Classes focused on research-based best practices and content were created by qualified teachers in special education and K-12 curriculum for the Statewide Alternative Program. These classes are also available to licensed teachers in the district. The interaction between veteran teachers and alternative/waiver teachers has proved invaluable in gaining insight as to what constitutes a highly effective classroom teacher.
- The program results in stable employment and quality of teachers for the district, ensuring a district commitment to the continuation of our sustainable alternative licensure program.