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*Believe*  
PREPARE   
ANNUAL REPORT





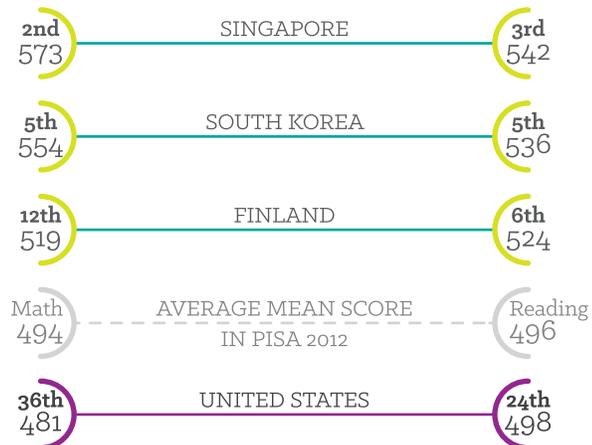
# Background

Educators prepare a nation's children for a productive life, to contribute to that nation's economy, and to weave into that nation's social fabric. Recognizing the value of teachers, many educationally high-achieving nations have made significant structural changes to the education profession.

Take, for example, Singapore, South Korea, and Finland. These nations have the world's top performing students, as measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)<sup>1</sup>, an international assessment of academic performance. In 2012, the most recent year of published results, students from those three countries all scored above the international average on mathematics and reading. Students in the United States scored below average in mathematics and barely above average in reading.

<sup>1</sup> PISA is an international assessment administered to 15-year-old students that measures advanced thinking and communication skills in mathematics, reading, and science.

## World's Top Performing Nations (Mean Score & Rank)



While there are many factors that set these nations apart from the United States, what also stands out is that these nations think quite differently about their educator workforce. In part, their approach to teacher recruitment and preparation has fostered a teaching profession that is widely considered prestigious<sup>2</sup>. In these nations, instructional expertise is valued and leads to meaningful career advancement opportunities, including opportunities to train aspiring teachers. The positive effects of such systems are evidenced by their students' results.

<sup>2</sup> Byron Auguste, Paul Kihn, Matt Miller. "Closing the talent gap: attracting and retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching." McKinsey & Company, 2010. ([http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Closing\\_the\\_talent\\_gap.pdf](http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Closing_the_talent_gap.pdf)).

## Recruitment

Teacher preparation programs in these nations are highly selective, identifying individuals based on traditional markers of academic promise as well as on personal qualities that predict success in the classroom, including perseverance, the ability to motivate others, passion for children, and organizational and communication skills.

- South Korea's prospective teachers must score in the top five percent of high school graduates on their college entrance exam to be admitted to a teacher preparation program.
- In Singapore, prospective teachers must score in the top 30 percent.
- In Finland, teacher training program applicants are typically in the top 20 percent.<sup>3</sup>

## Hands-On Training: Apprenticeships and Residencies with Expert Mentors

These nations' approaches to teacher preparation are centered on extensive, hands-on training experiences. Mentor teachers – the most accomplished in their field – lead those training experiences.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

## Assuring Teacher Preparation Program Quality

Significant shifts have also been made in the way that government agencies work with teacher preparation programs to ensure success. One model exists in the United Kingdom's inspectorate system. In the mid-1980's, a paper-based program review was replaced with an on-site review, called an "inspection." During the visit, inspectors:

- Observe teacher candidates as they participate in coursework, field experiences, and conversations with mentors.
- Discuss preparation experiences with current and former participants
- Meet with school system leaders in order to gauge the quality of partnerships with schools.

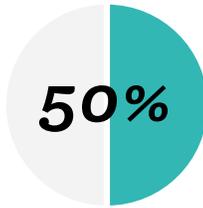
Since inspection was introduced, teachers' preparation experiences have improved. Over 90 percent of first-year teachers surveyed in 2012 judged their training to be "good" or "very good" compared to survey results from 1980s, "when dissatisfaction levels were high."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

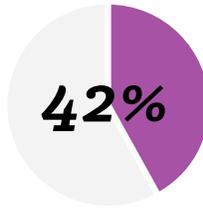
# Moving Forward in Louisiana – Believe and Prepare

Educators in Louisiana seek to build a teaching profession as prestigious and valued as it is in the nations previously mentioned, and have identified ways to improve the ways in which teachers are recruited, prepared, and certified.

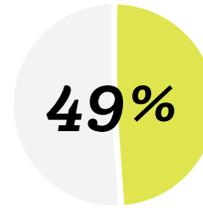
*Teachers with one to five years of experience indicated they<sup>5</sup>...*



*...were not fully prepared for the realities of a classroom*

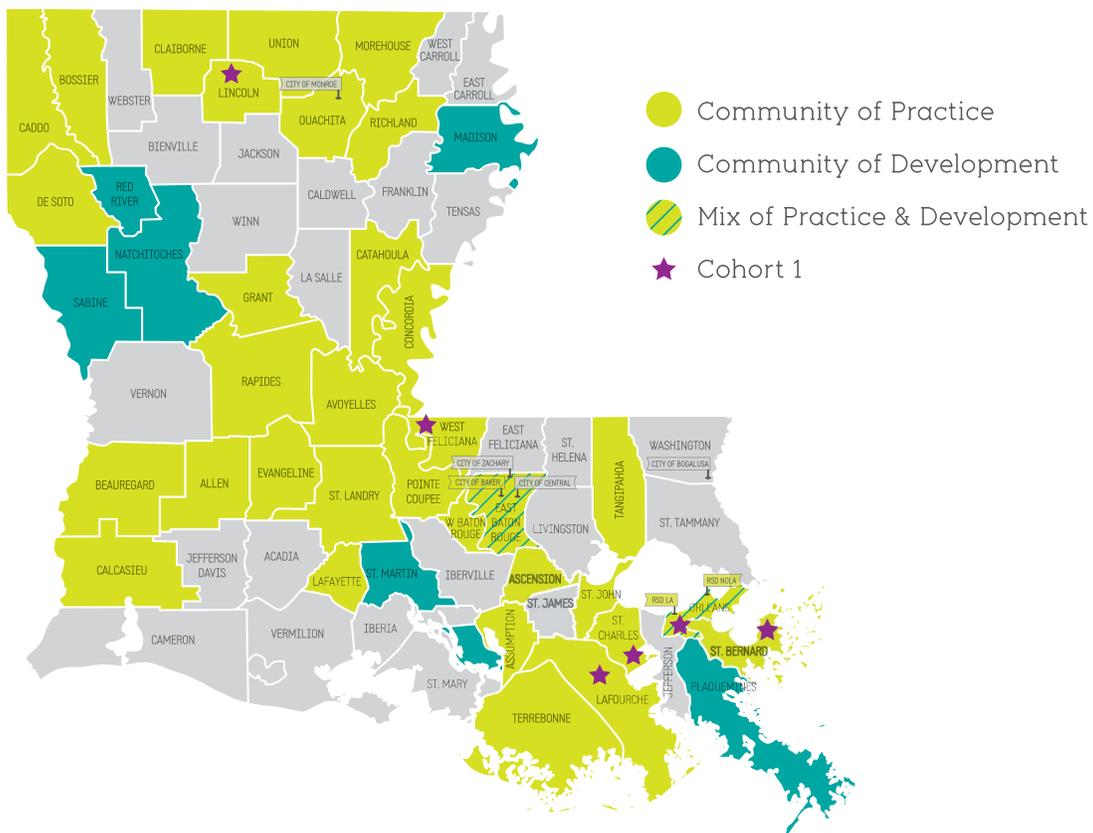


*...were not prepared to teach students with diverse needs*



*...did not know how to analyze data in order to set goals and plan instruction*

Through the **Believe and Prepare** pilot program, these leaders have begun to implement shifts in teacher recruitment and preparation that address changes in expectations for student and teacher success and provide teacher candidates with a rigorous, practice-based preparation experience. These pilot programs have recruited highly-skilled mentor teachers to, alongside university faculty, build aspiring teachers' knowledge and skills.



Cohort 1*	Cohort 2	Cohort 3 (projected)	TOTAL
137 teacher candidates 76 mentor teachers	150 teacher candidates 96 mentor teachers	565 teacher candidates 649 mentor teachers	852 teacher candidates 821 mentor teachers

\* Includes initial and continuation grant periods.

<sup>5</sup> "Partners in Preparation." Louisiana Department of Education, 2014. (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/partners-in-preparation-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=6>).

**Below is a summary of what can be learned from these pilot programs. A list of each pilot, including its focus, is [available here](#).**

### **1. Yearlong apprenticeships prepare aspiring teachers for classroom realities**

The majority of Believe and Prepare partnerships have developed a yearlong apprenticeship or residency experience for teacher candidates. These practice opportunities are akin to training experiences in similarly dynamic professions, such as medicine or architecture. They enable prospective teachers to experience a full year in the life of a classroom teacher under the tutelage of the best teachers in Louisiana. These yearlong experiences prepare teachers for the reality of leading a classroom

### **2. Expert mentor teachers are a crucial component of successful apprenticeships**

The quality of an apprenticeship or residency depends on the quality of the host or mentor teacher. In Believe and Prepare pilot programs, school system and preparation program leaders have partnered to recruit mentor teachers who have achieved exceptional results with students. Oftentimes, as in the New Orleans College Prep and Relay Graduate School of Education pilot program, mentor teachers audit teacher candidates' coursework or serve as university instructors. Many participate in nationally-recognized training programs, exposing mentors and trainees to leading-edge teaching and coaching practices. These mentor teachers are paid for their work and, oftentimes, have instructional leadership responsibilities beyond new teacher mentoring.

In short, the mentor teacher role is a defining factor in the success of a yearlong apprenticeship. For that reason, Believe and Prepare partners have carefully identified mentor teachers and have provided for their professional growth.

### **3. Aspiring teachers learn best when theory is combined with practice**

Teacher candidates and the school leaders who work with them have indicated that new teachers do not receive enough practical coursework in teaching methods, classroom management, and working with students who have special needs.<sup>6</sup> Most agreed that prospective teachers also need more training on how to interpret student assessment data.

6 "Partners in Preparation." Louisiana Department of Education, 2014. (<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/partners-in-preparation-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=6>).

Believe and Prepare partnerships have begun to address these needs by converting theory-based coursework into professional practice experiences, as in Rapides Parish's partnership with Louisiana State University at Alexandria. Theory is applied to and learned through hands-on work with students and with colleagues. These experiences lead to greater preparedness for Louisiana classrooms.

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## **CONCLUSION**

These lessons learned from Believe and Prepare pilots and from leading nations will form the basis for changes in policy intended to grow these practices statewide. In the next year, the Department will ask BESE to consider regulations that ensure all teacher candidates participate in teacher preparation programs that:

- **Include at least a FULL YEAR OF PRACTICE through an apprenticeship or residency, as is required in professions like medicine and architecture.**
- **Are DESIGNED AROUND CORE TEACHING SKILLS – competencies – versus discrete course topics or “seat time” requirements, as is becoming more common in fields like engineering and computer science.**
- **ARE REVIEWED TO ENSURE that practice experiences, including the program’s approach to mentor recruitment and training, are of HIGH QUALITY.**



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# Areas Needing Additional Research and Focus

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While Believe and Prepare pilot programs have advanced many practices in teacher preparation, other areas need additional focus.

## ACADEMIC PRESTIGE OF TEACHER CANDIDATES

While Louisiana's teacher corps is exceptionally committed and talented, many of Louisiana's most academically-promising students do not consider a career in education. Through updated approaches to recruitment, there is an opportunity to attract a larger share of prospective teachers who have strong track records of academic success, as is the case in nations where the teaching profession is highly valued.

There are limited ways to measure the extent to which programs are recruiting students of academic promise. While not a perfect representation, performance on college admissions examinations is one way to gauge academic and career potential.

Some Louisiana educator preparation programs recruit these academically-exceptional students into the teaching careers at high rates. Two programs recruited prospective teachers whose average ACT score matched or exceeded the TOPS performance level (23). These programs should be rewarded for recruiting Louisiana's most academically-promising students into the teaching profession.

## MEETING TEACHER WORKFORCE NEEDS

Another area for focus is the extent to which the supply of teachers meets schools' needs. Across the state, persistent shortages exist in mathematics, science, special education, and English as a Second Language classrooms. In these subjects, up to eight percent of teachers do not hold a standard teaching certificate in their assigned subject area.<sup>7</sup>

Some teacher preparation programs have responded to school systems' needs by producing large numbers of teachers in mathematics, the sciences, and other in-demand subjects. These programs should be rewarded for their efforts.

## QUALITY RATINGS FOR TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Prospective teachers, school system leaders, and preparation program leaders need a clear depiction of teacher preparation program quality in order to make informed choices about where to train or whom to hire. In addition to providing information on the extent to which programs meet workforce needs and recruit academically exceptional students, a quality rating and reporting system for preparation programs would provide information on the results of on-site reviews.

On-site reviews examine the quality of a program's coursework, practice, and mentoring through the eyes of a student. To better understand how such an approach might be used, over the next year the Department will pilot an on-site process modeled on the United Kingdom's inspectorate process. The Department will report on the results of this pilot next spring.

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<sup>7</sup> Temporary Authority to Teach (TAT), Our of Field Authority to Teach (OFAT), or no certificate.

## NEXT STEPS

In the next year, the Department will take what has been learned through Believe and Prepare pilot programs and propose policy changes to BESE that ensure all teacher candidates participate in a professionally prestigious, next-generation teacher preparation program. Such policy changes would ensure that teacher candidates:

- Experience at least one full year of practice through an apprenticeship or residency as part of their teacher preparation program.
- Participate in a teacher preparation program that is designed around and requires mastery of core teaching skills – competencies – versus discrete course topics or “seat time” requirements.

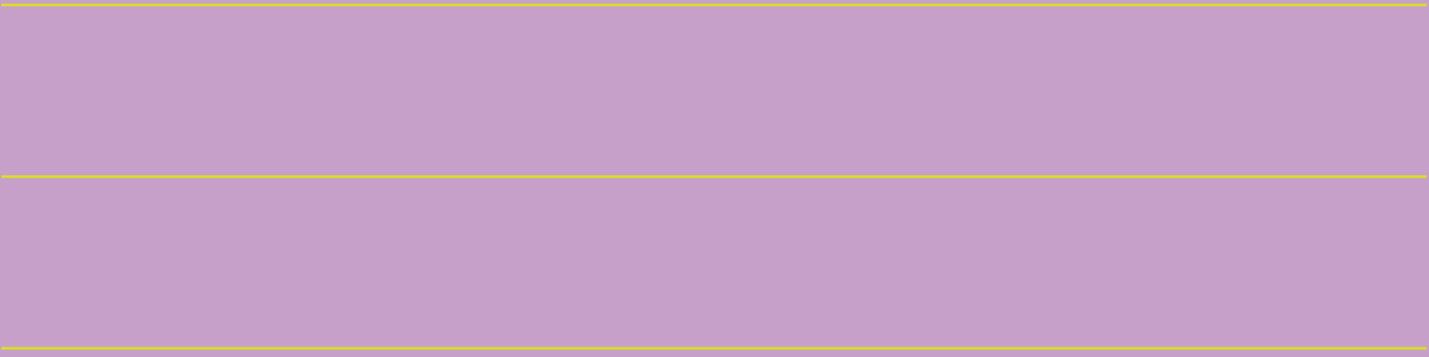
Additionally, BESE will be asked to consider a quality rating and reporting system that is based on multiple measures of teacher preparation program quality.

As was announced earlier this year, the Department will substantially expand the Believe and Prepare pilot program and report on what has been learned. Together with the first and second cohorts, this [third cohort](#) of the Believe and Prepare program will prepare several hundred mentor teachers and grow the number of new and preparing teachers in a one-year practice experience to over 1,000 in the 2016-2017 school year.

In addition to publishing a [toolkit](#) that will serve as a “how-to guide” for developing yearlong residencies and strong mentor teacher cadres, the Department will report on the on-site program review pilot.

By making improvements to the way that teachers are prepared and certified, and by building career advancement opportunities for the state’s most talented teachers, Louisiana is strengthening the teaching profession and ensuring that the state’s next generation of teachers is prepared to succeed on day one in the classroom.





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